

(Class Insecta) should be validated by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature under its plenary powers with *Gryllus viridissimus* Linnaeus, 1758, and *Gryllus turritus* Linnaeus, 1758, as the respective type species of these genera. This action appears to be the best and almost the only way to avoid further unbearable confusion in the nomenclature of the Orthoptera.

**SUGGESTED ADOPTION OF A "DECLARATION"
RELATIVE TO THE NOMINAL SPECIES TO BE REGARDED
AS ELIGIBLE FOR SELECTION AS THE TYPE SPECIES OF
A GENUS ESTABLISHED WITHOUT CITED NOMINAL
SPECIES, IN CASES WHERE A SUBSEQUENT AUTHOR
WITHOUT CITING SUCH A SPECIES, GIVES A BIBLIO-
GRAPHICAL REFERENCE TO A WORK IN WHICH SUCH
SPECIES ARE CITED**

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(Commission's reference Z.N.(S.)499)

1. In his application relating to the type species of the genus *Trigonia* Bruguière, 1789 (Class Pelecypoda) Dr. L. R. Cox raises the question whether, in the case of a genus established without cited nominal species, a subsequent author who, while not citing any nominal species as being referable to the genus in question, gives a bibliographical reference to a previously published work or paper in which such species are cited by name is to be treated as having so referred the species in question and therefore as having created a situation in which those nominal species alone rank as originally included species and are accordingly alone eligible for selection as the type species of the genus by a subsequent author, acting under Rule (g) in Article 30.

2. Up to 1948, as Dr. Cox points out, the only ruling available regarding the species to be accepted as the type species of a nominal genus established without nominal species clearly referred thereto was that given in *Opinion* 46 (first published in the year 1912). That *Opinion*, as is well known, caused great difficulty (and much controversy), when attempts were made to apply its provisions in particular cases, owing partly to the mutually contradictory character of its component provisions and partly to the fact that those provisions rested not upon objective nomenclatorial facts but upon subjective (taxonomic) criteria and were therefore incapable of securing a result which would not be open to challenge by later authors holding different subjective (taxonomic) views. Having regard to these well-known defects in *Opinion* 46, the Inter-

national Commission gave special consideration to the problem dealt with in it, when in 1948 at its Paris Session, it had under consideration the question of recommending to the International Congress of Zoology the incorporation, subject to any necessary amendments or clarifications, in the *Règles* of the interpretations of individual Articles given in *Opinions* already rendered. The terms of the conclusions reached by the Commission in this matter, which were subsequently endorsed by the Congress, are set forth in the *Official Record of Proceedings* of the Commission at its Paris Session (1950, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 4: 159-160, 346).

3. The central feature of the decision referred to above is that, in the case of a nominal genus established prior to 1st January 1931 (*a*) with an indication, definition or description, (*b*) with no nominal species distinctly referred thereto, the first nominal species (whether one or more in number) to be distinctly referred to the genus by a subsequent author is, or are, to be treated as the sole originally included nominal species. Supplementary decisions flowing automatically from the foregoing decision were (1) that where only one nominal species was distinctly referred to such a genus on the first occasion on which any such species was so referred, that species automatically becomes the type species of that genus, by monotypy, and (2) that, where two or more such species were so referred, those nominal species alone are eligible for selection as the type species of the genus by some later author.

4. In the case cited by Dr. Cox, an author (Lamarck), when dealing (1799) with a genus previously established without any nominal species referred to it (*Trigonia* Bruguière, 1789), did not himself cite any nominal species as belonging to the genus in question but did give a bibliographical reference to a previously published paper (Hermann, 1781) in which nominal species had been cited. The question to be considered is whether action such as that described above creates a situation in which a nominal species has been "distinctly" referred to the genus in question. It seems to me that nothing less than the actual citation of the name of a nominal species as the name of a species belonging to the genus in question can properly be regarded as bringing a nominal species within the scope of the Paris decision, for, unless a nominal species is actually cited by name, it cannot be claimed to have been "distinctly" referred to the genus in question. I should accordingly conclude that the citation of a bibliographical reference to a book or paper containing the names of nominal species does not constitute a "distinct" reference of those species to the genus concerned.

5. Having reached this point, it is necessary to consider whether, if the foregoing is the correct interpretation of the decision taken by the Paris Congress, that decision is the one best calculated for the purpose in view. One of the great difficulties which arose in the application of *Opinion* 46 in individual cases was the constant doubt as to what species were to be regarded as originally included species. It was for the purpose of overcoming this difficulty and of providing a simple and readily applicable rule that in Paris the Commission recommended, and the Congress agreed, that, in the case of a nominal genus established without any species distinctly referred thereto, two criteria must be satisfied before any subsequent author can be accepted

as having referred a species or two or more species to the genus in question. These criteria were: (1) that the species concerned must be cited by name (*i.e.* that nominal species must be cited), (2) that those species must be "distinctly referred" to the genus in question. It would certainly be possible to relax the second of these criteria in such a way as to render it permissible to treat as having been distinctly referred to such a genus a nominal species which, although nowhere mentioned by name by the author concerned, was nevertheless so mentioned in some book or paper to which that author gave a bibliographical reference. My own feeling is that this would be a retrograde step. I hold this view for the following reasons. First, it would, I think, be a mistake, now that at last, as the result of the Paris decision, we have got a simple and easily applicable rule, to complicate that rule by admitting, as having been referred to a genus of the kind which we are considering, nominal species which were not in fact mentioned by the author and which it is only possible to infer that the author in question regarded as belonging to the genus, by reason of his having cited a bibliographical reference to a book or paper in which the names of those species appeared. In some cases, no doubt, such an inference would be fully justified, but in others the validity of such an inference might be very doubtful, for an early author—and we are concerned here almost exclusively with early authors—might easily give such a reference for the purpose of drawing attention to (say) some observation made by the author quoted without necessarily intending to refer to the genus with which he was dealing all the nominal species cited by the earlier author. Second, there is always the possibility in such cases that a bibliographical reference so given may be incorrectly cited (as Dr. Cox has shown actually happened in the case of *Trigonia* when in similar circumstances Lamarck in 1801 gave one certainly erroneous bibliographical reference and a second probably erroneous reference). Third, the books or papers to which in such circumstances bibliographical references are likely to be made will in almost every case be old books, mainly books published in the XVIIIth century; descriptions and figures given in such books are, as is well known, often difficult to interpret and in consequence genera having as their type species originally described and/or figured in such works are frequently indeterminate or at best based upon an insecure foundation.

6. For the foregoing reasons, it seems to me that an undesirable element of instability and consequently of confusion would be introduced into nomenclature if the Paris decision in this matter were to be relaxed in such a way that a nominal species that is not cited by an author, when dealing with a genus established without any nominal species referred thereto, but is mentioned in a book or paper, to which a bibliographical reference is cited by that author were to be treated as an originally included species. Any hard case that might arise (as in the case of *Trigonia*) by the maintenance of the Paris decision could properly be dealt with under the Commission's plenary powers. Such cases would, I am convinced, be much less numerous and the problems at issue much less complicated than would be those which would arise if the reverse procedure were to be adopted. Accordingly, I would suggest that, in order to remove any doubts which may exist in regard to the present position in this matter, the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature,

acting under the procedure prescribed in such cases by the International Congress of Zoology (1950, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* **4**: 136-137), should render a "Declaration" stating that, in the case of a nominal genus established prior to 1st January 1931, with an indication, definition or description without citation of any nominal species, the citation by a later author in connection with the name of such a genus of a bibliographical reference to a book or paper containing the names of nominal species is not to be treated as constituting a distinct reference of the nominal species concerned to the genus in question, it being necessary for this purpose for an author explicitly to cite by name a nominal species as being referable to the genus in question.

**PROPOSED USE OF THE PLENARY POWERS TO SUPPRESS
THE TRIVIAL NAME "CAESIUS" CLOQUET, 1818 (AS PUB-
LISHED IN THE BINOMINAL COMBINATION "COLUBER
CAESIUS") (CLASS REPTILIA, ORDER SQUAMATA)**

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During the course of a revisionary study of the African Green snakes commonly referred to the genera *Chlorophis* Hallowell, 1857 (*Proc. Acad. nat. Sci. Philad.* **1857**: 53) and *Philothamnus* Smith, 1847 (*Ill. Zool. S. Afr.*) (Rept.): pl. lix), I find that the trivial name (*irregularis*) of the commonest and most widely distributed member of the genus *Chlorophis* is antedated.

The trivial name *irregularis* Leach, 1819 (*in* Bowditch, *Miss. Ashanti*: 494 "Fantee, Gold Coast"), as published in the binominal combination *Coluber irregularis*, has been almost consistently applied (in combination either with the name *Ahaetulla* or the name *Chlorophis* or the name *Philothamnus*) to this common reptile since 1858 (Günther), occurring 113 times in the literature.

However, the stability of the name of this species is threatened by the trivial name *caesius* Cloquet, 1818 (*Dict. Sci. nat.*, Paris **11**: 201 "Region of Cape Verde"), as published in the binominal combination *Coluber caesius*, a name which has never been used by anyone, other than its original author Cloquet. The description of *caesius* conforms to that of *irregularis* in all respects, except that the number of its subcaudals is given as sixty-four, whereas the range for *irregularis* is from 97 to 121. I suggest that the tail of the type specimen of *caesius* was truncated, for quite a high percentage of these whip-tailed tree snakes lose the ends of their tails during life. When such a loss occurs early in life, the tail heals over and the terminal point is reproduced, so that the tail closely resembles its original condition.

In further support of the identification of *caesius* with *irregularis*, we have to note that, with the possible exception of *semivariegatus* Smith, 1847



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