

**Case 3226****Lacepède, B.G.É. de la V., 1788, *Histoire Naturelle des Quadrupèdes Ovipares*: proposed rejection as a non-binominal work**

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this application, under Article 11.4 of the Code, is to ensure nomenclatural stability by suppression of Lacepède's (1788) work *Histoire Naturelle des Quadrupèdes Ovipares* (and all subsequent editions of this work) as an unavailable, non-binominal work.

**Keywords.** Nomenclature; taxonomy; Lacepède; *Histoire Naturelle des Quadrupèdes Ovipares et des Serpens*.

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1. In 1788–89, Count Bernard Germain Étienne de la Ville Lacepède published a two volume work entitled *Histoire Naturelle des Quadrupèdes Ovipares et des Serpens*. These two volumes were the last two in Buffon's (1749–67; 1774–89) monumental and best-selling *Histoire Naturelle Générale et Particulière*. Lacepède's first volume (1788a) deals with the egg-laying quadrupeds (*Quadrupèdes Ovipares*) and the second volume (1789) deals with the serpents (*Serpens*). A later, smaller format edition of Lacepède's work appeared as the final volumes (1788b, 1790) of another edition of Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle*.

2. Buffon and his associates, including Lacepède, did not accept or use the Linnaean binominal system (see Stresemann, 1975, pp. 56, 94; Roger, 1997, pp. 311–312), although some of Lacepède's Latinized French vernacular names were employed by later authors. In particular, Bonnaterre (1789–90) gave most of Lacepède's taxa binominal names if an older binominal was not already available. In fact, Bonnaterre scooped Buffon and his associates by being the first in France to use binominal (Linnaean) names for many groups of animals.

3. Brongersma (1972; BZN 29: 44–61) in an application to the Commission demonstrated that Lacepède's *Histoire Naturelle des Serpens* was not consistently binominal and proposed that it be ruled an unavailable work. Subsequently in 1987 (Opinion 1463; BZN 44: 265–267), the Commission suppressed this work and its later editions, while conserving the long-established name *Crotalus piscivorous* Lacepède, 1789 (currently *Agkistrodon piscivorous*) notwithstanding that it was published in an unavailable work. However, the status of Lacepède's first volume (*Histoire Naturelle des Quadrupèdes Ovipares*) was not addressed.

4. The situation with the *Histoire Naturelle des Quadrupèdes Ovipares* is exactly parallel to that in the *Histoire Naturelle des Serpens*. All the names used in the text are in the vernacular, although binominal names of other authors (principally Linnaeus) are listed in the bibliographic footnote accompanying many species descriptions. Latin names are also used in the foldout table, labeled *Synopsis Méthodica Quadrupedum Oviparum* (between pages 618 and 619 near the end of the



volume). These names correspond to those presented in the foldout *Table Méthodique Quadrupèdes des Ovipares* located just before page 1 in the text. In the *Table*, the vernacular French or names in other languages used in the text are listed. In the *Synopsis*, the French vernacular names are translated into Latin (e.g., T.[ortue] Chagrinee becomes *T.[estudo] punctata*) but those derived from the common names of other languages are retained (e.g. 'Le Mabouya' becomes *Mabouya*).

5. Verification of these facts and those in the next paragraph is based on examination of four copies of Lacepède (1788a, 1789), two at the L.M. Klauber Library (San Diego Natural History Museum), one at the Allan Hancock Foundation Library (University of Southern California) and my personal copy. These copies differ slightly in the placement of the *Table Méthodique* and *Synopsis*. The page numbers given above are from my copy. I also know of one copy at the University of Michigan that lacks the *Synopsis*. This was apparently removed a considerable time after publication. I have also examined a copy of Lacepède (1788b, 1790) in the L.M. Klauber library whose contents do not differ from that of the quarto edition.

6. Although five columns in the *Synopsis* are headed by the term 'Genus', the names 'Testudo', 'Lacertus', 'Rana', 'Hyla' and 'Buffo' stand as translations of French vernacular names. Two additional columns lack genus headings and contain one species name each, 'B. Canaliculatus' and 'Sheltopusik'. In the columns, uninominal, binominal and trinominal names are listed depending upon the language of the vernacular used in the body of this work. Those derived from the French are preceded by an abbreviation T., B., R., H. or B.; those from other languages are uninominal. In the genus 'Testudo', there are 19 binominal, 4 uninominal and one trinominal species names. For the genus 'Lacertus', there are 29 binominal names, 25 uninominals and one trinominal. For 'Rana', there are 11 binominals and one uninominal; for 'Hyla' six binominals and a trinominal; for 'Buffo' 12 binominals and four uninominals. It is clear from these data that, as in the *Serpens* volume, Lacepède did not consistently use a binominal nomenclatural system in his *Quadrupèdes Ovipares*. Mayer & Lazell (2000) have recently reached the same conclusion. Thus, Lacepède (1788a) should join Lacepède (1789) as works rejected for nomenclatural purposes.

7. Buffon's original *Histoire Naturelle* series was enormously popular and many editions (the 'Suites à Buffon'), often duplicated in quarto, octavo or smaller format sets, and translated into other European languages (e.g. Bechstein, 1800–1802; Lacepède, 1802) appeared every decade until at least 1885. I have found reference to at least 15 different editions containing Lacepède's names. I have not seen copies of all these and there are probably several more. The later versions do not pose any nomenclatural threat to other species names because of Bonnaterre's (1789–1790) actions. Nevertheless, rejection of Lacepède's 1788a work, and all later editions of this work, promotes universality and stability since it would prevent attempts to preoccupy such generic names as *Lacertus* and *Buffo* in zoological nomenclature.

8. Just as in the case of the *Histoire Naturelle des Serpens*, a number of Lacepède's Latinized vernacular names from *Histoire Naturelle des Quadrupèdes Ovipares* have been adopted as valid from as far back as Gray (1831). Fortunately, suppression of the *Histoire Naturelle des Quadrupèdes Ovipares* does not affect these names as all were given proper binominals based on Lacepède's names in Bonnaterre's (1789–1790) binominal work.



9. The names in question in para. 8 are (in the order they appear in Lacepède's work):

*Testudo terrapen* Bonnaterre, 1789, p. 30 (currently *Trachemys terrapen*)

*Testudo subrubra* Bonnaterre, 1789, p. 27 (currently *Kinosternon subrubra*)

*Testudo punctata* Bonnaterre, 1789, p. 30 (currently *Lissemys punctata*)

*Testudo subrufa* Bonnaterre, 1789, p. 28 (currently *Pelomedusa subrufa*)

*Testudo subnigra* Lacepède in Bonnaterre, 1789, p. 30 (currently *Pelusios subniger*; see Opinion 1534; BZN 46: 81–82; 1989)

*Lacerta mabouya* Bonnaterre, 1789, p. 51 (currently *Mabuya mabouya*)

*Lacerta roquet* Bonnaterre, 1789, p. 54 (currently *Anolis* or *Dactyloa roquet*)

*Salamandra terdigitata* Bonnaterre, 1789, p. 64 (currently *Salamandrina terdigitata*).

10. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary power to rule that the work entitled *Histoire Naturelle des Quadrupèdes Ovipares* by Lacepède (1788), and any subsequent editions of this work, are not available for nomenclatural purposes, and that no name acquires the status of availability by reason of having been published in any of them;
- (2) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Works in Zoological Nomenclature the work entitled *Histoire Naturelle des Quadrupèdes Ovipares* by Lacepède (1788) and all subsequent editions of this work, as ruled in (1) above.

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Comments on this case are invited for publication (subject to editing) in the *Bulletin*; they should be sent to the Executive Secretary, I.C.Z.N., c/o The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, U.K. (e-mail: iczn@nhm.ac.uk).



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