

The gender of the barbet genus *Tricholaema* Verreaux & Verreaux

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While preparing the Capitonidae section for *The Birds of Africa* (Vol 3), we came upon a nomenclatural problem involving use of the generic name *Tricholaema* Verreaux & Verreaux 1855. Those authors treated *Tricholaema* as feminine, clearly showing they intended it to be regarded as such in designating *Tricholaema flavipunctata* (now *T. hirsuta punctata*) as the type species of the genus. There was almost universal treatment of *Tricholaema* as feminine in the past century, and this century until the 1920's and 1930's. More recently, however, it has been treated as masculine (e.g., *T. leucomelas*) or neuter (e.g. *T. leucomelan*, *T. hirsutum*).

Tricholaema has as its roots the Greek "thrix" or "trichos", meaning hair, feminine, and "laemos", meaning throat, masculine. In rendering *Tricholaema* instead of *Tricholaemos*, Verreaux & Verreaux latinized the suffix from the Greek, and made it feminine. The International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (1985: 30), Article 30 (a) (iii) clearly states that "A genus-group name that is or ends in a latinized Greek word takes the gender normally appropriate to the Latin termination". Thus, *Tricholaema* is feminine and, as its authors intended, should be so treated.

The species of *Tricholaema* are: *T. hirsuta*, *T. leucomelaina*, *T. frontata*, *T. diademata*, *T. lachrymosa* and *T. melanocephala*. Wolters (1976) used the latinized "*leucomelaena*" for *T. leucomelaina*; we prefer the Greek usage in the species-group name, for the ending of *Tricholaema* is Greek (though latinized). The usage urged here begs the question of the generic separation of *Tricholaema* from *Lybius*. We (Short & Horne 1985: 264–266) clearly showed that *Tricholaema* merits generic separation from *Lybius* on the basis of at least 6 characters or character complexes.

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