

Figure 4. Variations in the barbules of the same feather.

A, from near fig. 1 E. — Pigmented matter chiefly in internodes.

B, from near fig. 1 F. — No true black coloring matter present.

C, from near fig. 1 G. — Shows 'bast-fibre' arrangement of brown granules.

D, from near fig. 1 H. — Pigmented material almost lacking in internodes. (Zeiss 4mm. apochromat. obj. and comp. ocular No. 4. — Feather mounted dry.)

Fig. 5. A barbule much like that shown in C fig. 3, but more magnified. (Zeiss 4mm. apochromat obj. and No. 6 comp. ocular. Mounted dry.)

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## ZAMELODIA AGAINST HABIA.

BY DR. ELLIOTT COUES.

IN creating the new generic name *Zamelodia* I said (Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, V, 1880, p. 98): "The genus *Hedymeles*, Cab., 1851, was based upon this species [*i. e.*, *Goniaphæa ludoviciana*], but cannot be used for it because of *Hedymela*, Sundev. (Öfv. Vet Akad. 1846, 223) for another genus of birds, the difference being merely dialectic. Cabanis seems to have proposed it simply because 'Habia Reich. 1850' was not classically correct. But *Habia* or *Abia* is said to be antedated by *Habia*, Lesson, 1831, and therefore untenable."

In an article entitled '*Habia* against *Zamelodia*,' Dr. L. Stejneger said (Auk, Oct. 1884, p. 366): "It is Agassiz (Nomcl. Zool., Aves, p. 34 (1843)) who first quotes 'Habia Less. Tr. d' Ornith. 1831,' — afterwards (Index Univers., p. 1 (1846)) 'correcting' it into *Abia*; but an inspection of Lesson's 'Traité,' etc., will show that *Habia*, as used by him, is only the French vernacular name applied to the birds of the genus *Saltator* Vieill., and Agassiz might just as well have cited 'Habia Vieill., Analyse, 1816,' for that is the place where Vieillot himself applies the name as the vernacular equivalent of the systematic name *Saltator* proposed simultaneously."

My duly appreciated critic then proceeded to prove "that *Habia* was not used by Lesson or Vieillot as a systematic generic



term." But in drawing the hasty inference from that fact, that "Reichenbach was, therefore, fully justified in applying it [*i. e.*, the name *Habia*] as he did, viz., as the name of the genus having the Black-headed Grosbeak for type," my commentator proved nothing but the fact that his knowledge of the case was deficient. Dr. Stejneger evidently thought he had put *Zamelodia* to sleep forever; but nothing is easier than to show his whole contention to be wrong. Meanwhile, *Habia* has displaced *Zamelodia* unjustly, in the A. O. U. Lists of 1886 and 1895, and very generally among American writers since 1884.

The Baron Georges Léopold Chrétien Frédéric Dagobert Cuvier's 'Règne Animal' was published in 1817, and in other years. In an edition of the 'Animal Kingdom' which was published in London in 1849, the ornithology of which was edited by Edward Blyth, *Habia* appears on p. 711 in the "Index of scientific names," as distinguished from the "Index of popular names"; and on p. 184 can be read in plain English as follows:—

"THE FINCH-TANAGERS (*Habia* Vieillot)—

"Have a thick, bulging, conical bill, as broad as high, the upper mandible of which is rounded above.

"Such are *Tan. flammiceps*, Pr. Max., *T. superciliosa*, *psittacina*, and *atricollis*, Spix, etc."

Now it is true, as Dr. Stejneger contended, and as nobody ever denied, that all the vernacular names in certain works of Vieillot and of Lesson are printed in a type which distinguishes them from the Latin names. Nobody doubts that 'Habia,' as used by Vieillot and Lesson, was intended as a French word (after the Spanish-American '*Habia*' of Azara), and as a vernacular equivalent of the genus-name *Saltator*; perhaps Cuvier himself so intended it in 1829. But what has that to do with Cuvier's (or his editor's later use of the name *Habia* as a systematic generic term for *Saltator* or anything else? Nothing. All the vernacular names in the English version of 1849 are typographically distinguished; and in the present case the author (or editor) uncontestedly adopts Vieillot's vernacular word *Habia* as the Latin name of a genus which includes certain South American Tana-



gers now referred to *Saltator* or elsewhere. *Habia* may or may not be tenable for some such birds; but obviously it cannot stand for any others; and consequently, on the principle that "once a synonym always a synonym," or by our rule for the rejection of homonyms, *Habia* Reich. 1850 falls to the ground, dragging with it the *dissecta membra* of Dr. Stejneger's worsted case.

According to the admirably lucid manner in which Dr. Stejneger's 'Analecta Ornithologica' were wont to be formulated, even when their author was mistaken, the present case may be thus stated:—

Genus *Zamelodia* COUES.

- 1850.—*Habia* REICH., Av. Syst. Nat. pl. lxxviii, fig. 14, June 1, 1850; type *Guiraca melanocephala* SW.; *nec apud* CUVIER, 1849; *nec* AGASSIZ, 1843; *nec Abia* AGASSIZ, 1846. (*Nec Abia* LEACH, GIEBEL, in entomology).  
1851.—*Hedymeles* CAB., Mus. Hein. i, June, 1851, p. 152; type *Loxia ludoviciana* LINN.; *nec Hedymela* SUND., 1846.  
1880.—*Zamelodia* COUES, Bull. Nutt. Orn. Club, V. Apr. 1880, p. 98; type *Loxia ludoviciana* LINN.  
1884.—*Habia* STEJNEGER, Auk, Oct. 1884, p. 367, *errore*.  
1886-95.—*Habia*, A. O. U. Lists, 1886-95, *errore*, and of misled American writers generally since 1884.

I gladly avail myself further of the incomparable Stejnegerian method of exposition to state that the species, according to Coues's Key, 2d-4th eds. 1884-90, p. 389, will stand—not as Dr. Stejneger, *l. c.*, says they will stand—but as:

244. *Zamelodia ludoviciana* (LINN.). ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK.

245. *Zamelodia melanocephala* (SWAINS.). BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK.

Dr. Stejneger's acquirements in Greek etymology seem to have failed him in discussing the meaning of *Abia*, as the Agassizian emendation of *Habia*, in 1846. The learned gentleman says that *Abia* would seem to be derived from ἄβιος, in the meaning of 'poor, without food.' He may be glad to be informed that *Abia* is directly from the Greek ἀ privitive and βία, force, power, might, bodily strength, being first introduced in zoölogy by Dr. W. E.



Leach for a genus of hymenopterous insects of the family Tenthredinidæ, and subsequently (1856) used by Dr. Giebel for a genus of neuropterous insects. While I am pleased to be able to compliment him upon the discovery that this entomological word "has no connection with the original *habia*," he is mistaken in saying that *Abia* and *Habia* are not the same word in ornithology; for *Abia* is simply a variant of *Habia*, introduced by Agassiz upon a mistaken notion of the etymology and correct form of Azara's name *habia*. If Dr. Stejneger will look in the Index of Gray's 'Handlist', he will find both forms in ornithology. The literal identity of *Abia* Leach and *Abia* Agassiz is simply fortuitous; the former is of Greek origin; the latter is not. I stated the matter correctly, some years ago, in the 'Century Dictionary': see under the words *Abia*, *Habia*, and *Zamelodia*.

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PRELIMINARY DESCRIPTIONS OF NEW BIRDS FROM  
MEXICO AND GUATEMALA IN THE COLLEC-  
TION OF THE UNITED STATES DEPART-  
MENT OF AGRICULTURE.

BY E. W. NELSON.

THE present paper is based upon specimens of Mexican and Guatemalan birds obtained mainly by myself and my assistant, Mr. E. A. Goldman, during explorations conducted for the Biological Survey of the U. S. Department of Agriculture during the last five years. In addition to this collection, numbering between four and five thousand specimens, I have had free access to the National Museum series of Tropical American birds for purposes of comparison. In the course of our work we have traversed Mexico from one end to the other, and have crossed the country six times from sea to sea. Specimens were obtained in many districts never before visited by an ornithologist, and although the collections were not exhaustive in any given place, yet the aggregate of series from numerous localities scattered over a large part of the country has afforded a great amount of interesting material.



Coues, Elliott. 1897. "Zamelodia against Habia." *The Auk* 14, 39–42.  
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