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Astacus vindicated as the Lobster's genus

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ZEUXALTIS, subgenus novum.

Outline and neururation of *Zeuxidia*, but the secondaries thinly scaled and semitransparent, with the exception of a broad border encircling the wing and an arched series of six broad internervular elongated patches crossing the outer portion of the basal half from the costal vein across the discoidal cell to the submedian vein; the first three of these patches are much thickened and covered by broad flattened tufts of long hair.

Zeuxidia (Zeuxaltis) Pryeri, sp. n.

Primaries above nearly as in *Z. victrix*, but the apical area much wider between the blue arched belt and the outer margin, especially towards costa: the secondaries considerably paler owing to the thin scaling on these wings excepting in the borders and glandular patches; the first three of these pale in colouring, but almost concealed by blackish tufts of hair, the remaining three much more elongated and deep pitchy brown, the last (upon interno-median area) very much elongated; the costal, outer, and inner borders pitchy brown, the basal half of the submedian vein bearing a fringe of long hair; a very well-defined wavy blue submarginal band, partly concealing the brown outer border and emitting an oval elongated spot inwards upon the first median areole. The under surface resembles that of the allied species, which this insect corresponds with in expanse of wings.

♂. Sandakan, N.E. Borneo. Type coll. B. M.

The narrow wavy submarginal band of the secondaries and the different arrangement of tufts on the secondaries, as well as the curiously diaphanous character of these wings, due to the somewhat different structure of the scales, readily distinguish it from all the known forms of *Zeuxidia*, *Amathusia*, *Amathuxidia*, &c.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Astacus vindicated as the Lobster's Genus.

By the Rev. THOMAS R. R. STEBBING, M.A., F.R.S., F.L.S.

A CLEVER man invented a mechanical speaking figure, and subsequently, it is said, in a frenzy of disappointment at the results of his ingenuity, himself destroyed it. A similar course, apart from the frenzy, may be strongly recommended to Mr. Pocock for the treatment of his new principle in zoological nomenclature, "for selecting the type species of a genus when no type has been designated by the author." He says that it may be stated as follows:—

"When the name of a genus is the same as that of one of its component species, that species is the type of the genus."

Coupling this piece of legislation with the facts that Linnæus called the Swedish crayfish *Cancer astacus* and that this species was included with others by Gronovius and Fabricius in the genus *Astacus*, Mr. Pocock draws the conclusion that *Astacus astacus* (Linn.) is the proper designation of the Swedish crayfish, and that for the European crayfishes in general *Astacus*, and not *Potamobius*, is the right generic name.

In February last Professor Bell kindly directed my inexperienced attention to certain Rules and Recommendations put forth under the auspices of the British Association. On comparing these with the proposed improvement of them above quoted, one is forcibly reminded of Medea's advice to her cousins to restore their father's youth by cutting him up and boiling the pieces in a pot with other ingredients. The Stricklandian rule says, "A new specific name must be given to a species when its old name has been adopted for a genus which includes that species." The sensitive ears of Strickland's committee objected to such combinations as *Pyrhocorax pyrrhocorax*. Later on a revising committee, with Sir W. Jardine as reporter, agreed that when a specific name has been unhappily adopted as generic, "it is the *generic name* which must be thrown aside, not the old specific name." Both of these rules must be set aside to justify the use of *Astacus astacus*. But another Stricklandian rule says, "When the evidence as to the original type of a genus is not perfectly clear and indisputable, then the person who first subdivides the genus may affix the original name to any portion of it at his discretion, and no later author has a right to transfer that name to any other part of the original genus." Now, my contention is that the synonymy in the 'Fauna Suecica' of Linnæus, 1746, clearly and indisputably shows that the common lobster had a prescriptive right to be regarded as the type of the genus *Astacus*. But if on technical grounds that evidence be disallowed, then it was Leach who first subdivided the genus, and who, at his discretion—surely his very sound discretion—affixed the original name to that portion of it containing the common lobster.

As to the general question whether such forms as "*Astacus astacus*" are in any case permissible, an answer may be humbly suggested. When they have been actually used as the first binary combination of names applied to a species, in the interests of priority it would be well to let them stand, unless they have some other weakness besides the tautophonical. But a rule for introducing them into parts of zoology where they have not previously been used or perhaps even thought of will not, one may trust, obtain any currency, even though proposed by so sound and sagacious a naturalist as my friend Mr. R. I. Pocock. To take a single example, the *Pagurus aniculus* of Fabricius was changed by Dana, in accordance with the Stricklandian rule valid at the time (1852), into *Aniculus typicus*, and this, on Mr. Pocock's principle, would, "*ipso facto*," as he says, become *Aniculus aniculus*, to which any moderately intelligent echo could only reply "ridiculous, ridiculous!" And if that and various other objectionable results of the new principle were accepted, it still would not follow that "*Astacus*

astacus (Linn.)" could be upheld. The instances are numerous in which authors, in subdividing a genus, have borrowed the name of one of its old species and bestowed it upon one of the new genera, and in these it is natural to suppose that the species which supplied the name was regarded as the type. In Dana's *Aniculus typicus* this view finds definite expression. To the *Homarus vulgaris* of Milne-Edwards it is an additional objection that that distinguished author adopts for the generic name of the lobster the specific name which Linnæus applied to the crawfish. This would not of itself in any way invalidate the term *Homarus*, but it may contribute to our satisfaction in finding it on other grounds untenable. Now, when we turn from these examples to regard the proposal to call the Swedish crayfish *Astacus astacus* (Linn.), it really looks as if Mr. Pocock thought that Gronovius and Fabricius had borrowed the generic name *Astacus* from the Linnean species *Cancer astacus*. Yet the third volume of Seba's 'Thesaurus' bears the very same date as the tenth edition of Linnæus's 'Systema,' and was probably in print before it, though perhaps not issued till later; and this volume of Seba contains many species of *Astacus*, but not the *Cancer astacus* of Linnæus. The zeal for giving paramount authority to that unlucky species is peculiarly misplaced: neither in the genus nor in the species has it any decent right to the title *Astacus*. As Mr. Walter Faxon showed in 1884, through more than three centuries of modern science its accepted specific name almost without interruption has been *fluviatilis*. The genus *Astacus*, in the wide and vague extension given to it by naturalists earlier than Leach, was well known long before Linnæus was born, and nothing could be much more absurd than to give him, of all men, special rights over it because both generically and specifically he misnamed the Swedish crayfish.

In opening this controversy Professor Bell accused me of "courage" for having, as he supposed, in my 'History of Crustacea' altered the Latin names of the common crayfish and the common lobster. In defending *Astacus gammarus* as the name of the European lobster and *Potamobius fluviatilis* as the name of one of the European crayfishes I have sheltered my timidity behind successive authorities of the British Museum itself. Professor Bell was writing apparently in the interests of conservatism, to defend accepted names against innovation. His colleague comes forward to help him, and devises a principle which would make the time-honoured *Maia squinado* and many other well-known names unstable, and would almost justify one in borrowing Professor Bell's indignant eloquence to declare that it "will throw into confusion not only carcinological literature, but every text-book in every language under the sun." This will it do without in any way touching the position of the "priority purists" or giving them that "short shrift" their censor has so long wished them. One is tempted to believe that when, on the Kalends of March, the two augurs met in the corridors of the Museum, instead of rushing into Mr. Pocock's arms in a transport of gratitude, the professor must have eyed him with a glance of scornful suspicion and exclaimed—

"Non tali auxilio nec defensoribus istis."