

OPINION 128

Nycteribia, 1796, PUPIPARA, AND *Spinturnix*, 1826, ACARINE

SUMMARY.—Under Suspension of the Rules *Nycteribia* Latreille, 1796, with *pedicularia* Latreille, 1805, as type, and *Spinturnix* von Heyden, 1826, with *myoti* Kolenati, 1856, as type, are hereby placed in the Official List of Generic Names.

The specific name *vespertilionis* of all authors is hereby invalidated for the following generic names: *Acarus*, *Acrocholidia*, *Celeripes*, *Dermanyssus*, *Diplostaspis*, *Gamasus*, *Hippobosca*, *Ichoronyssus*, *Liponyssus*, *Listropoda*, *Megistopoda*, *Nycteribia*, *Pediculus*, *Penicillidia*, *Periglischrus*, *Phthiridium*, *Pteroptus*, *Sarcoptes*, *Spinturnix*, *Strebla*, on the ground that the application of the Rules would produce greater confusion than uniformity.

PRESENTATION OF CASE.—Prof. J. M. Aldrich, United States National Museum, has submitted the following case for consideration:

Latreille proposed the genus *Nycteribia* in "Précis des caractères génériques des Insectes", 1796, p. 176, mentioning only *Pediculus vespertilionis* Linn. In his "Histoire naturelle des Crustacés et des Insectes", vol. 14, p. 403, 1805, he again briefly describes the genus, and gives a partial description of *Nycteribia pedicularia*, new species, which he figures on pl. 112, fig. 14. He places *Pediculus vespertilionis* L. under *pedicularia*, apparently as a synonym.

Now it is a fact mentioned by Speiser, "Ueber die Nycteribiiden", Königsberg, 1901, p. 2, that *Pediculus vespertilionis* L., 1758, is an acarid, and not a nycteribiid in the usual sense of the term.

Latreille in 1796 evidently did not know what *vespertilionis* L. was, since his reference to long tarsi indicates a nycteribiid in the usual sense. His second reference, however, is accompanied by a figure which makes the intention clear.

Up to the present time *Nycteribia* has universally been accepted as a genus of Diptera, suborder Pupipara, and there has been no attempt within a hundred years, as far as I know, to "correct" the nomenclature by transferring the genus to the Acarini. Hence no confusion will arise if the Commission of Nomenclature shall decide upon a Suspension of the Rules in this case, and shall designate *vespertilionis* Latr. 1796 (non Linn.; *pedicularia* Latr. 1805) as type of *Nycteribia*. I request that this be done.

DISCUSSION.—This is probably the most confused case of nomenclature which has ever been submitted to the Commission for study and Opinion, and as such it calls for radical action in order to prevent further confusion.

At the request of the Secretary and under his personal supervision this case has been very carefully studied by one of his assistants, Benjamin J. Collins, M. S., who has summarized the results of his study in Bulletin 155, National Institute of Health, United States Public

Health Service, pp. 743-765, figs. 1-11, 1931. This printed article, a copy of which is mailed to each Commissioner, is hereby included as a portion of the Discussion.

The chief points at issue are the following:

1. *Pediculus vespertilionis* Linn., 1758a, 611, was described as a hexapod, namely, genus *Pediculus*, but the most definite part of the original is the inclusion of a bibliographic citation of an illustration or figure of the "Fledermauss-Lauss" of Frisch, 1728; this illustration is clearly that of an octopod. It seems highly probable that Linnaeus actually had in mind a hexapod in addition to this octopod of Frisch, and for purposes of nomenclatorial argument this is adopted as premise.

2. Scopoli, 1763, interpreted *Pediculus vespertilionis* as an octopod and transferred the species to *Acarus*. This view was adopted by Linnaeus, 1767.

3. Latreille, 1796, proposed a hexapod genus *Nycteribia*, with monotype "*Acarus vespertilionis* Linn. Fab. *Pediculus* Linn." In 1805 Latreille proposed for *Nycteribia vespertilionis* a new specific name, *Nycteribia pedicularia*, thus accepting the premise that Latreille's 1796 specimens of *Nycteribia* belonged to the Insecta, *sensu restricto*. The species *pedicularia* is objective synonym of the hexapod *vespertilionis* as of Latreille, 1796.

In 1826 von Heyden proposed *Spinturnix* as a new genus in the Acarines, with type by original designation "*Acarus vespertilionis* Scop. (non Lin.)", i. e., *vespertilionis* Linn. of Scopoli as restricted to the acarines in 1763, not the hexapod *vespertilionis* Linn. as of Latr., 1796a, which under Art. 31, International Rules, is a dead name.

Nycteribia vespertilionis remained with the insects for more than a century, but in 1902 Oudemans transferred *Pediculus vespertilionis* (namely the type species of *Nycteribia*) to *Spinturnix* (an acarine).

4. Under a strict interpretation of the Rules as applied to the foregoing premises the insect genus *Nycteribia* is based on an erroneously determined species, since *vespertilionis*, a compound species of 1758, was definitely assigned to the Acarines in 1763.

The question now arises whether *Nycteribia* should not be transferred to the Acarines, since its type species (*vespertilionis*) is an Acarine, or whether *Nycteribia* should be left in the insects on the ground that Latreille's specimens were insects. This brings up a controversial point which has produced great confusion in zoology and which is open to different interpretations. The most practical method of settling these cases is by Suspension of the Rules, the decision in each case being made upon the merits of the individual case.

From 1796 down to date the specific name *vespertilionis* combined with *Spinturnix*, *Nycteribia*, and allied generic names presents such extreme confusion in synonymy that tables of subjective synonyms are difficult to understand.

5. We have before us a practical problem to settle. If attempts be made to work this case out on theoretical grounds an agreement is hopeless. The only practical solution the Secretary sees is to settle the case under Suspension of the Rules, holding in mind the preservation of that portion of the nomenclature which is practically universally accepted and eliminating from all further consideration that portion which is hopelessly confused in subjective interpretations.

The proof sheets of Mr. Collins' study were laid before the International Commission in its meeting in Padua, and the Commission adopted the following in the minutes of its meeting for August 30, 1930:

The case of *Nycteribia* vs. *Spinturnix* was discussed on basis of galley proof by Collins (Washington) and the Secretary was instructed to prepare an Opinion in favor of Suspension of the Rules.

In harmony with the foregoing instructions from the Commission the Secretary submits this Opinion and recommends the adoption of the Summary given above as the Opinion of the Commission.

Opinion prepared by Stiles.

Opinion concurred in by eleven (11) Commissioners: Apstein, Bather, Cabrera, Chapman, Horvath, Ishikawa, K. Jordan, Silvestri, Stephenson, Stiles, Stone.

Opinion dissented from by no Commissioner.

Not voting, seven (7) Commissioners: Bolivar, Handlirsch, D. S. Jordan, Pellegrin, Richter, Stejneger, Warren.



International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature. 1936. "Opinion 128 Nycteribia, 1756, Pupipara, and Spinturnix, 1826, Acarine." *Smithsonian miscellaneous collections* 73, 29–31.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/35815>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/149400>

Holding Institution

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

Sponsored by

Smithsonian

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: NOT_IN_COPYRIGHT

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.