

**THE HOLOTYPE OF *MOCOA SPECTABILIS* DE VIS, 1888.** *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* 35(1): 34. 1994:- In a review of the skinks of the *Saproscincus challengerii* complex in southeastern Australia, Sadlier et al. (1993) claimed that *Mocoea spectabilis* de Vis, 1888 was a senior synonym of *Lampropholis basiliscus* Ingram & Rawlinson, 1981, and thus the available name for the taxon. This was based on their identification of the 'lectotype' of *Mocoea spectabilis* (Queensland Museum specimen QMJ19743), which was declared by Wells & Wellington (1985). Sadlier et al. (1993) also identified the 'paralectotypes' as follows: QMJ255 and QMJ19742 = *Saproscincus basiliscus*, QMJ244 = *S. galli* Wells & Wellington, 1985. I do not disagree with the identifications of Sadlier et al. (1993). However, I disagree that QMJ255 and QMJ19742-3 were part of a type series for *Mocoea spectabilis*. I assert there was only a holotype, QMJ244.

Firstly, de Vis's (1888: 819-820) description of *Mocoea spectabilis* was only of one specimen: multiple specimens were not mentioned. That is, there was a holotype, not syntypes. Secondly, as Covacevich (1971) noted, the measurements of QMJ244 fit those in de Vis's description. For example, de Vis's measurements and scale counts were as follows (with mine in brackets): pair of nuchals (pair), 7 supraciliaries (7), 22 midbody rows (22), fourth toe lamellae 20-24 (22-26), total length 134mm (134), head length 10.5 (10), body 42 (41), fore limb 10.5 (12), hind limb 18 (18) and tail 81.5 (83). This is nearly an exact fit and there is little doubt that this was the specimen de Vis (1888) had, and thus his holotype. Finally, QMJ244 is also listed as 'Type' in the Queensland Museum's register.

Wells & Wellington (1985) and Sadlier et al. (1993) did not say why they accepted syntypes for *Mocoea spectabilis*. However, I assume they — and Cogger et al. (1983) — were following Covacevich (1971) in her list of herpetological type-specimens in the Queensland Museum.

Covacevich (1971) listed QMJ255 and QMJ19742-3 with QMJ244, as syntypes but did not give her reasons for the decision under the entry for *Mocoea spectabilis*. However, she did give her criteria for determination of type status in the introduction, one of which was 'Notation in the register indicating that the specimen is a "Type" (or "co-type", "syn-type", etc.)'. QMJ255 was listed as 'Co-types' (originally 3 specimens: 2 re-registered as QMJ19742-3) in the Queensland Museum register on 27 August, 1912, and it would have been for this reason that she accepted these specimens as syntypes. However, this is the only evidence and it is not adequate. Article 72(b)(vii) of the International Code of Zoological

Nomenclature states that 'The mere citation of "Type" or equivalent expression, in a list of types, or in a catalogue of a museum, or on a label is not to be construed alone as evidence that a specimen is or is fixed as any of the kinds of types referred to in this Chapter'.

In summary, de Vis (1888) described *Mocoea spectabilis* from a single specimen, a holotype, which is QMJ244. The specimens of *S. basiliscus* (QMJ255 and QMJ19742-3) were not his type material and the recent lectotype designation of QMJ19743 by Wells & Wellington (1985) is invalid. Thus *Mocoea spectabilis* is a senior synonym of the taxon previously known as *Saproscincus galli* Wells & Wellington, 1985 and *S. spectabilis* (de Vis, 1888) the valid name for the taxon. Also, *S. basiliscus* (Ingram & Rawlinson, 1981) remains valid.

#### Acknowledgement

I thank Peter Jell and Robert Raven, Queensland Museum, for reading the manuscript and Mr E.P. Wixted for advice on Latin.

#### Literature Cited

- Cogger, H.G., Cameron, E.E. & Cogger, H.M. 1983. Amphibia and Reptilia. Zoological Catalogue of Australia 1: 1-313.
- Covacevich, J. 1971. Amphibian and reptile type-specimens in the Queensland Museum. *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* 16: 49-67.
- De Vis, C.W. 1888. A contribution to the herpetology of Queensland. *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales* (2)2: 811-826.
- Ingram, G.J. & Rawlinson, P. 1981. Five new species of skinks (genus *Lampropholis*) from Queensland and New South Wales. *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* 20: 311-317.
- Sadlier, R.A., Colgan, D.J. & Shea, G.M. 1993. Taxonomy and distribution of the scincid lizard *Saproscincus challengerii* and related species in southeastern Australia. *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* 34: 139-158.
- Wells, R.W. & Wellington, C.R. 1985. A classification of the Amphibia and Reptilia of Australia. *Australian Journal of Herpetology Supplementary Series* 1: 1-61.
- G.J. Ingram, Queensland Museum, PO Box 3300, South Brisbane, Queensland 4101, Australia; 17 March 1994.



Ingram, Glen J. 1994. "The holotype of *Mocoa spectabilis* De Vis, 1888."  
*Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* 35, 34–34.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/123567>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/303770>

**Holding Institution**

Queensland Museum

**Sponsored by**

Atlas of Living Australia

**Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: Permissions to digitize granted by rights holder.

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>.