PROPOSED VALIDATION UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS OF THE GENERIC NAMES "LIGIA" FABRICIUS, 1798, (CLASS CRUSTACEA, ORDER ISOPODA) AND "CARCINUS" LEACH, 1814 (CLASS CRUSTACEA, ORDER DECAPODA)

By the late ALIDA M. BUITENDIJK and L. B. HOLTHUIS
(Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden, The Netherlands)

(Commission's reference Z.N.(S.)209)

The object of the present application is to secure authority from the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature for the continued use of the well-known generic names Ligia Fabricius, 1798 (Class Crustacea, Order Isopoda) and Carcinus Leach, 1814 (Class Crustacea, Order Decapoda) in their accustomed sense.

Rathbun pointed out in 1904 (Proc. biol. Soc. Wash. 17 : 172), that the generic name Ligia Weber, 1795 (Nomencl. ent. : 92) preoccupies, and therefore renders invalid, the generic name Ligia Fabricius, 1798 (Suppl. Ent. syst.: 296, 301). Weber in his list of names—he gave no descriptions—was the first author to publish the name Ligia. In using this name, he cited with it the name Cancer, which he placed in brackets (parentheses), to indicate that the species placed by him in the genus Ligia were referred by Fabricius to the genus Cancer Linnaeus. Under the generic name Ligia, Weber cited three specific names, namely Ligia inflexa, Ligia 3-cuspitata and Ligia granaria. The first two of these specific names were at that time nomina nuda, but the trivial name (granaria) comprised in the third of these names had already been published, in the binominal combination Cancer granarius, by Herbst in 1783 (Versuch einer Naturgeschichte der Krabben und Krebse 1 : 107, pl. 2, fig. 28); this name had been referred to also by Fabricius in 1793 (Ent. syst. 2 : 442). We see therefore that at the time when Weber first published the generic name Ligia, he cited under that name the trivial name of only one previously described and named species, viz. Cancer granarius Herbst, 1783. That species is therefore the type species of the genus Ligia Weber, 1795, by monotypy.

The nominal species Cancer granarius Herbst, 1783, was based upon the "langwerpig-vierkante Zee-Krabbe" of Slabber (1769-1778, Naturkuundige Verlustigingen : 159, pl. 18, Fig. 1), since Herbst’s figure is a copy of that given by Slabber, and his description of this species is an abbreviated translation of Slabber’s Dutch text. It is now known that Slabber’s “species” (and therefore Herbst’s) is merely the megalopa stage of the common shore crab Carcinus maenas (Linnaeus, 1758 (= Cancer maenas Linnaeus, 1758, Syst. Nat. (ed. 10) 1 : 627). From the taxonomic standpoint, the genus Ligia Weber, 1795, is identical with the genus Carcinus Leach, 1814, and accordingly the name Carcinus Leach is a subjective junior synonym of, and falls to, the name Ligia Weber. After Weber (1795) the generic name Ligia was never used for a genus of Brachyura. On the other hand the generic name Carcinus came into general use for the extremely common shore crab (Cancer maenas Linnaeus) from the coasts of the North Atlantic.
The name *Ligia* Fabricius, 1798, was published by that author for a genus of Isopods, represented by *Oniscus oceanicus* Linnaeus, 1767 (Syst. Nat. (ed. 12) 1 : 1061), which was selected as the type species of this genus by Latreille in 1810 (Consid. gén. Crust. Arach. Ins. : 423). It has ever since been generally used by authors in this sense up to the time of the publication of Rathbun’s paper in 1904. Since then, it has been discarded by some American authors in favour of the name *Ligysa* Rafinesque, 1815 (Analyse Nature : 101). This name is quite unfamiliar to European authors, while at least one American author (W. G. van Name), who for a time used this name later (1936) reverted to the name *Ligia* Fabricius in his monographic work, “The American Land and Fresh-water Isopod Crustacea” (Bull. Amer. Mus. nat. Hist. 71).

In the light of the considerations advanced above, it is considered most advisable—in view of the enormous confusion which otherwise is inevitable—that the Commission should suppress, under its plenary powers, the generic name *Ligia* Weber, 1795, and should validate the generic name *Ligia* Fabricius, 1798, with *Oniscus oceanicus* Linnaeus, 1767, as its type species (by subsequent selection by Latreille (1810)) and should place this name, so validated, on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology.

The adoption of the foregoing proposal, by eliminating the name *Ligia* Weber, 1795, will serve the further important purpose of removing one of the two causes which at present invalidate the well-known and still commonly used generic name *Carcinus* Leach, 1814 (in Brewster’s Edinburgh Ency. 7: 390) (type species, by monotypy: *Cancer maenas* Linnaeus, 1758). Before however the name *Carcinus* Leach could become the valid generic name for the common shore crab, it would be necessary for the Commission to use its plenary powers to suppress the earlier name *Carcinus* Latreille, 1796 (Precis Caract. génér. Ins. : 197), which, as pointed out by Rathbun in 1897 (Proc. biol. Soc. Wash. 11 : 164), at present makes Leach’s generic name *Carcinus* an invalid junior homonym. On the authority of Stebbing (1888. Rep. Voy. Challenger, Zool. 29 : 1669), we may conclude that the genus *Carcinus* Latreille, in the original description of which no species was cited by name, is synonymous with *Gammarus* Fabricius, 1775 (Syst. Ent. : 418), and thus belongs to the Amphipoda. The name *Carcinus* Latreille has never been used by any subsequent author, and its suppression under the plenary powers would therefore encounter no difficulty whatever.

Rathbun’s re-discovery (1897) of the long-neglected name *Carcinus* Latreille, 1796, and, more particularly, her substitution (1897) of the new generic name *Carcinides* Rathbun for the generic name *Carcinus* Leach for the common shore crab, led to a break in the uniformity of the practice of carcinologists in naming the common shore crab; some authors (e.g., Pesta; Monod) followed Rathbun in discarding the name *Carcinus* Leach in favour of the name *Carcinides* Rathbun, 1897; while others (e.g., Bouvier, Lebour, Gurney, Balas) continued to use the name *Carcinus* Leach, notwithstanding the fact that, as rightly pointed out by Rathbun, this name is invalid. That, in spite of this, the name *Carcinus* Leach has continued to be used by the
great majority of carcinologists—only a few using the name *Carcinides*—
is striking evidence of the general reluctance to abandon the use of this name.

In order to prevent the great confusion which would follow the strict
application of the *Règles* in the present case, and to put an end to such con-
fusion as has already arisen through the adoption by a limited number of
workers, of the changes recommended by Rathbun, we ask the International
Commission on Zoological Nomenclature:

(1) to use its plenary powers:—

(a) to suppress the under-mentioned generic names both for the
purposes of the Law of Priority and for those of the Law of
Homonymy:—

(i) *Ligia* Weber, 1795;
(ii) *Carcinus* Latreille, 1796;

(b) to validate the under-mentioned generic names:—

(i) *Ligia* Fabricius, 1798;
(ii) *Carcinus* Leach, 1814;

(2) to place the under-mentioned generic names on the *Official List of*
Generic Names in Zoology, with the type species severally specified
below:—

(a) *Ligia* Fabricius, 1798 (type species, by selection by Latreille,
1810: *Oniscus oceanicus* Linnaeus, 1767) (gender of generic name: feminine);
(b) *Carcinus* Leach, 1814 (type species, by monotypy: *Cancer maenas* Linnaeus, 1758) (gender of generic name: masculine);

(3) to place the under-mentioned generic names, proposed in (1) (a)
above to be suppressed under the plenary powers, on the *Official
Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology:—

(a) *Ligia* Weber, 1795 (suppressed under (1) (a) (i) above);
(b) *Carcinus* Latreille, 1796 (suppressed under (1) (a) (ii) above);
(c) *Carcinides* Rathbun, 1897 (an objective synonym of *Carcinus*
Leach, 1814);

(4) to place the under-mentioned trivial names on the *Official List of
Specific Trivial Names in Zoology:—

(a) *maenas* Linnaeus, 1758 (as published in the binominal combina-
tion *Cancer maenas*);
(b) *oceanicus* Linnaeus, 1767 (as published in the binominal combi-
nation *Oniscus oceanicus*).

View This Item Online: [https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/43930](https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/43930)
Permalink: [https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/33475](https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/33475)

**Holding Institution**
Natural History Museum Library, London

**Sponsored by**
Natural History Museum Library, London

**Copyright & Reuse**
Copyright Status: In copyright. Digitized with the permission of the rights holder.
License: [http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/)
Rights: [https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions](https://biodiversitylibrary.org/permissions)

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](https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org).