

nomenclature employed in two 1960's publications that are both now in need of much revision. While both works are still useful, much of their nomenclature has been subsequently amended. Despite the fact that the two more recent key works I have referred to previously are by myself, they are generally regarded as being more relevant references to the currently accepted nomenclature in the PHORIDAE. Furthermore, I have since used the name *B. subsultans* in my book (Disney, 1994), which is now found in libraries across the world. While I sympathise with Brown's disquiet at the displacement of familiar names, to now suggest the resurrection of a synonym replaced 13 years ago, purely on the grounds he proposes, would seem to owe more to parochialism than to more defensible considerations. It would certainly set a most unfortunate precedent. If the Commission were to accept the suppression of the name *subsultans*, as proposed in the application by Brown & Sabrosky, it would merely create confusion, especially as my proposal in 1982 was made in accordance with the Commission's record at that time. I therefore expect the Commission to stand by the nomenclatural consequences of my proposed synonymy of 1982. If it rules otherwise, one would be forced to conclude that the Commission no longer believes in its own principles; it would therefore be entirely proper to ignore any such ruling.

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Comment on the proposed conservation of HEMIDACTYLINI Hallowell, 1856

(Amphibia, Caudata)

(Case 2869; see BZN **50**: 129–132; **51**: 153–156, 264–265, 341–342)

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It may seem strange that so many people have commented on the proposed conservation of the rather obscure name HEMIDACTYLINI, which at the time of the application had been used less than 20 times since the taxon was recognized less than 30 years previously. I think this can be explained. It is the aim of some zoologists to completely abandon the principle of priority and to free systematics from 'the tyranny of the past' (Savage, 1990a, b), and they see this as a test-case. The response

of the current Commission will enable the international community of zoologists to see what sort of leadership it is giving on the issue of priority versus so-called 'current usage'.

I wish to respond to a few of the points which have been raised by this case. First, MYCETOGLOSSINI Bonaparte, 1850 and HEMIDACTYLIINI Hallowell, 1856 are not objective synonyms, and additional family-group names may be needed in the future since the phylogeny of this salamander group is not yet well known. Thus neither name should be suppressed. Secondly, Smith & Wake take into account papers using HEMIDACTYLIINI which were not published until after I (Dubois, 1984) had shown this name to be invalid. If they had waited another ten years no doubt they could have invoked still more. This case shows how clearly 'current usage' can be deliberately rigged or manipulated, unlike priority. Smith & Wake suggest that when I rediscovered Bonaparte's name *Mycetoglossina* I should have proposed that the Commission reject this name as being 'forgotten'. Of course I could have done this, as I have in many other cases, if I had considered that 'stability was disturbed' or confusion caused (cf. Article 23b of the Code), but I maintain that 'stability' cannot be called upon to protect a name used by only nine authors in ten publications over a period of 18 years (1966–1984). It was therefore on purpose that I did not ask for rejection of *Mycetoglossina*. To call such actions 'mindless adherence to priority' (Smith & Wake, BZN 51: 341–342, para. 5) is an insult to the thousands of authors who have followed the principle of priority in replacing junior synonyms by senior ones, and thanks to whom stability has been reached for the very large majority of names.

I would like to contrast the present case with another amphibian example. Duellman & Wiens (1992) discovered that *Scinax* Wagler, 1830 was a senior subjective synonym of *Ololygon* Fitzinger, 1843, which since 1977 had been used in dozens (if not hundreds) of papers on hylid frogs. Probably by 'mindless adherence to priority' they replaced *Ololygon* by *Scinax*, and in Duellman's (1993) list this name is used for 76 species of which 11 had been originally described in *Ololygon*. I fully support the action by Duellman & Wiens. So far nobody has asked for the conservation of *Ololygon* by the suppression of *Scinax*, and it is interesting to speculate why in some cases a replacement of name is acceptable while in others it is not. Has this something to do with the 'importance' or influence of the author of the 'resurrection', or their country or continent of residence, or the distribution of the animals concerned (obscure tropical ones vs. Northern ones)? The only 'democratic' rule is that of priority, which when fully observed ensures final stability in the names of animals while respecting the equality of all scientists.

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