HYMENITIS [ILLIGER], 1807 (INSECTA, LEPIDOPTERA): REQUEST FOR SUPPRESSION UNDER THE PLENARY POWERS. Z.N.(S.) 1899

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Opinion 232 aimed to validate Mechanitis among other well-known names of Fabricius [31 December] 1807, by suppressing under the plenary powers the same names published in different senses slightly earlier in an anonymous review by [Illiger], 19 December 1807. For various reasons now obsolete, the name Hymenitis [Illiger], 1807 (which was not used by Fabricius) was left standing.

2. As a result, anomalies affect the following genera, of which the type-species are shown:

- Hymenitis [Illiger], 1807: \(-\) Papilio polymnia Linnaeus, 1758;
- Mechanitis Fabricius, 1807: \(-\) P. polymnia Linnaeus, 1758;
- Hymenitis Hübner, 1816: \(-\) Papilio diaphanus Drury, 1773;
- Greta Hemming, 1934: \(-\) P. diaphanus Drury, 1773;

the type-designations having been made, for the first by Hemming, 1934: 27–28, for the next two by Scudder, 1875: 212, 193, and for the last automatically since it was a replacement for the junior homonym by Hübner.

3. Thus despite the suppression of Mechanitis [Illiger], 1807, and the placing on the Official List (as name number 661) of Mechanitis Fabricius, 1807, the latter is still a junior objective synonym of the valid name Hymenitis [Illiger], 1807. The Code gives no guidance in such circumstances, but paragraph 34 (page xxiii) of the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology prompts this application.

4. Three alternative courses appear open, each inevitably involving use of the plenary powers:

(a) to adjust conveniently the type-species of Hymenitis [Illiger] so as to sink it as a junior objective synonym of some earlier genus;

(b) to suppress the name Hymenitis [Illiger] for the purposes of the laws both of priority and of homonymy, thereby salvaging Hymenitis Hübner and sinking Greta Hemming;

(c) to suppress it for the law of priority only, thereby upholding Greta Hemming.

(d) A fourth suggestion, to reject Mechanitis Fabricius after all, and substitute Hymenitis [Illiger] on the Official List can be dismissed at once, not only for obvious reasons but also because it would anyway lead to confusion. Mechanitis Fabricius has always been universally familiar, as was the name Hymenitis, but invalidly misapplied, until its replacement. This must not result in any adverse reflection on Illiger, whose proposal of Hymenitis as a new name of his own for five species placed by Hübner in two much larger polynominal genera was perfectly valid and showed considerable acumen. These five species are still all considered to be Ithomiids, and it is simply an accident of subsequent procedure which has resulted in its type-species having
been designated also for *Mechanitis* Fabricius, a genus which contained with it one Riodinid, two Heliconiids, and another Ithomiiid. Illiger suffered again when *Hymenitis* was misappropriated nine years later by Hübner and used for two other species, Hübner deploying Illiger’s five under *Ithomia*, *Ceratina* and *Mechanitis*. There is no way of repairing Illiger’s misfortune.

5. Course (a) proves impracticable, not one of the ten included names and synonyms having been included in an earlier genus. The choice thus rests between restoring *Hymenitis* Hübner (the first genus in his *Verzeichniss bek. Schmett.*), and preserving its replacement *Greta* Hemming. The latter, course (c), is considered preferable, since Hübner did misuse *Hymenitis* (or create a homonym), and Hemming was perfectly correct in replacing it by *Greta*, which name has now stood for 35 years.

6. I therefore request the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to take the following action:

(1) to use its plenary powers to suppress, for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy, the generic name *Hymenitis* [Illiger], 19 December 1807, *Allgem. Literatur-Ztg.* (Jena-) Halle 1807 (2) (303) : 1180;


(3) to place the following generic names on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology:

(a) *Hymenitis* [Illiger], 1807, as suppressed under the plenary powers in (1) above;

(b) *Hymenitis* Hübner, 1816, *Verz. bekannt. Schmett.* (1) : 8, a junior homonym of *Hymenitis* [Illiger], 1807;

(4) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the specific name *diaphanus* Drury, 1773, as published in the binomen *Papilio diaphanus* (type-species of *Greta* Hemming, 1934).

REFERENCES


Hemming, 1937 (*Hübner* 2 : 43–45) reproduces in facsimile the anonymous review [Illiger], 19 December 1807 : 1177–1180, which is cited in paragraph 6 (1) above.

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.part.9913
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