

BRAUERIA 28

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Dear Trichopterologist,

There are increasing difficulties with field work in many countries. More and more states are totally banning collecting and export of insects (the last example known to me is Nepal), no matter whether for commercial butterflies and big beetles, or for Thysanoptera, Trichoptera and the like. Collecting permits are refused or given only after a boring administrative procedure. We know instances of some countries where the material was confiscated by the customs despite given permission, with the excuse that this permit was given by the wrong ministry, and it has happened that embassies had to be involved to prevent their citizens from imprisonment. In my own work, I have always tried to contact scientists in the respective country and proposed to make the study together, which was very successful e.g. in Thailand, and I continue these efforts. I have made many studies in co-operation with colleagues from such countries which can be seen from my publication list. At the present state of knowledge, scientists in many countries outside Europe and North America have no chance to identify insects because the literature and the reference collections are in Europe or America, and they have no adequate microscopes and similar instruments. This situation is improving only very slowly. But even when the colleagues are willing to co-operate, the officials may make difficulties. Recently the government of one of these countries (its name is withheld) has forbidden their universities and institutes to invite foreign scientists...

It is evident that eradication of threatened species must be prevented. Turtles, crocodiles and elephants are threatened, so may be some large and attractive beetles and butterflies with high prices in insect bazaars. Some years ago, an animal merchant told me that lastly he could get "only" 1500 Greek Tortoises (*Testudo hermanni*), a species still common, and this was not enough to satisfy the market. In such cases, collection and export must be forbidden to protect the animals. But on the other hand, caddisflies are endangered by destruction of their biotopes, and certainly not by collection. The caddis faunae of many countries are largely unknown, and first samples usually include a high percentage of new species. Governments of many countries have never heard of caddisflies. In one of these countries, an official told me that caddisflies do not exist in his country... (but he gave me all necessary permissions in a very friendly and accommodating way).

What will be the result of banning collection and refusing permission? Collecting will certainly continue. A total control of collection and export of small insects like Trichoptera is impossible, and there are enough people who come as tourists collecting illegally and selling the material abroad. Some countries are requiring that holotypes of new species must be deposited in a collection in the country itself. But which serious scientist would like to give his holotypes to countries where well curated collections of international standard do not exist, and where the valuable material is not available to the scientific community and will soon deteriorate. We know enough examples for that.

The only result of these restrictions will be that foreign scientists will keep off from indigenous colleagues to avoid difficulties. I wonder whether these restrictive governments have ever considered this aspect.

Another chapter from the never-ending story of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature: Obviously in a compromise to satisfy the demand of a part of the scientific community, the Commission has accepted one exception from the condition that a work which contains nomenclatorial acts "must be produced on paper, by a printing method .. or by hectographing or mimeoprinting". Article 8.6 of the fourth edition is as follows: "From a work produced after 1999 by a method other than printing on paper to be accepted as published within the meaning of the Code, it must contain a statement that copies (in the form in which it is

published) have been deposited in at least 5 major publicly accessible libraries which are identified by name in the work itself." Names published electronically in the Internet are not available (Art. 9/8), but I understand that laser-printed CDs are acceptable. Let us think of a practical case.

An author in the country of Tarockania publishes a work on CD in the system Tarockanius which is not compatible with any other system, and deposits five copies in five University libraries in Tarockania. Copies of this CD are available only in Tarockania because the custom of this country do not permit the export of CDs. Even worse: the Code does not state that the author must deposit those copies, only that the paper must contain such a statement! Nevertheless the nomenclatorial acts in this paper are available according to the Code, although recommendation 8B says that authors and publishers are strongly urged to ensure that a new scientific name or nomenclatorial act is first published in a work printed on paper. So why has the commission permitted this way of publication if it urges the authors and publishers not to use it??

My personal opinion is that obscure publications of this and similar kinds should be neglected, whether they fulfil the conditions of the Code or not.

Information distributed by means of electronic signals has certainly important advantages. Publications containing nomenclatorial acts must be generally and permanently available, so it may be a matter of discussion whether publications in the internet will fulfil this condition. Firstly, for reading internet texts one needs complicated and expensive equipment which is not available for everyone and at any time. Secondly, and more important: scientific books and journals may be read immediately by anyone who is able to read, without particular instruments, and may be read in the same manner centuries later without particular adaptation. Electronic devices are, in contrast, subject to frequent changes. Remember the importance and general use of gramophones and tape recorders only 20 years ago, which can now be played only by rare surviving apparatus; and remember that computer diskettes, ten years old, are not understood by recent systems. It is extremely unlikely that a text, stored now in the internet, is still available in 200 years or can be read by the then available systems.

On the other hand, another problem was not solved by the 4th edition. Theses and dissertations sometimes contain important nomenclatorial information including the description of new species. For reasons unknown to me, such theses are considered by the scientific community as not published, even if they do not include a disclaimer (Art. 8.2). Many of them are obtainable (Art. 8.1.2), are produced in a satisfying method (Art. 8.1.3), and only Art. 8.1.1 may be matter of discussion whether they are issued for the purpose of providing a public and permanent scientific record, because their first purpose is certainly to ensure an academic graduation or the like to the author – but this is the same with "normal" publications. Normally, nomenclatorial acts of this kind of theses are soon published by the authors in a scientific journal, so then this second publication is considered the valid version. But many of us know instances of theses of high scientific standard with the description of new taxa, and the authors are not able or willing to publish these in a journal again. The Code of ethics (Appendix A) says that one should give the authors "a reasonable period (not less than a year)" for the publication, but what to do if many years have elapsed and the author does not respond or cannot be found? To occupy the names after ten years or so, or to neglect the thesis, or what else? My personal feeling is that in such cases the thesis should be considered a publication according to Art. 8.1.

Your contributions to the discussion of these and other points of the Code are welcome for the next number(s) of Braueria.

Yours sincerely,



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