Identification of two genera of Nemestrinidae

published by Bigot, together with some remarks on Dr. Wandolleck's paper on that family,

by *C. R. Osten Sacken.*

The recent publications of Dr. Wandolleck on the genera *Colax* W. and *Trichopsidea* Westw. in the Entomol. Nachrichten, Berlin. 1897, p. 241—252. and in the Wien. Ent. Z. 1897, p. 213—215, induced me to look over my notes about Nemestrinidae, and to publish my results concerning two genera not mentioned by that author. One of these genera proved to be identical with *Symmictus* Loew, which Wandolleck considers, in his second paper, as intermediate between *Colax* and *Trichopsidea.*

During a visit to my friend G. H. Verrall Esq. in Newmarket, in August 1894, I took occasion to examine the type of the Nemestrinid genus *Dicrotrypana* (Bigot) in this author's collection, now in the former's possession. (*D. flavipilosa* ♀, Ann. S. E. Fr. 1879, Bullet. p. LXVII. Patria: Europa meridionalis, with a doubt.) I compared on the spot its type with Loew's figure of *Symmictus* in the Berl. Ent. Z. 1858, p. 111, Tab. I, f. 26—30, and found that there was a difference in the venation. Since then Verrall sent me a beautiful drawing of the wing of Bigot's species, and also an explanation of the condition of the other wing of the specimen. From these data we may safely conclude that both genera are identical, and that the discrepancy in the venation is merely an accidental aberration.

Loew's original description (1858) referred to *S. costatus* from S.-Africa. In his Dipt. Sudafr. 1860 p. 248 [320] Loew supplemented this description by the following important notice: „A *Symmictus* occurs in Andalusia, which I take for identical with *S. costatus.* The only specimen which I saw is in the Royal Museum of Berlin.

The venation shows a slight aberration: the last of the veins issuing from the diagonal vein appears double at its proximal half, so that a supplementary closed cellule is thus formed. Individual aberrations of this kind are not rare at all among Nemestrinidae, and cannot be considered as of much weight as characters. In the present case the importance of the aberration appears to me still more reduced by the fact, that the venation of both wings is not quite the same, as the adventitious cell of one wing is cut in two by a small crossvein, and its apex is connected with the wingmargin by another crossvein, while in the other wing these two crossveins are wanting."

It is the abnormal wing of the Andalusian specimen, „the margin of which is reached by two crossveins," that Dr. Wandolleck has figured in the Wien. E. Z. 1897, p. 215. But, instead of giving it for what it represents: „the aberrant wing of the Andalusian female specimen in the Berlin Museum," Dr. W. erroneously, wrote under the figure „Wing of *Symmictus costatus* Lw. ♀ (enlarged)"! The future student will naturally compare this figure with the original figure of *S. costatus* ♂ (Berl. E. Z. 1858, p. 27) and will be puzzled by the very great difference in their venation! About the other wing of the same Andalusian specimen, Loew says: „In the other wing these two crossveins are wanting"; that wing, for this reason, must have looked like Loew's fig. 27, because in that figure, there is no crossvein at all all along the hind margin from the anal cell to the apex.

The figure which Verrall sent me of the aberrant, or monstrous, wing of Bigot's specimen, looks very much like Wandolleck's figure of the aberrant wing of the Andalusian specimen. The principal difference is unimportant, and consists in the absence of one of the crossveins, reaching the margin (the one that is nearer the apex of the wing), so that it looks as if what Loew calls the diagonal vein had been prolonged to the margin (which is not the case in Loew's fig. 27). That the wings of Bigot's specimen disagree in their venation, just like those of the Andalusian specimen, I gather from what Verrall (in litt.) says about the other wing: „It is broken near the end, but enough is left to show that the double isolated cell did not exist, and was, in that (figured) wing, a monstrosity." Thus we have a very remarkable agreement in the venation between Bigot's specimen (Southern Europe?) and the Andalusian specimen of the Berlin Museum. This agreement is found, not only in the part of the wing where the monstrosity occurs (the vicinity of the end of the diagonal vein), but it also appears in what would seem a mere casualty, the disparity of the two wings in both specimens!

As both specimens (Andalusian and Bigot's S.-European) are females, the question may be raised whether such irregularities are more frequent in this sex than in the other?

In other respects, all that Bigot says about his genus is: „generis *Symmicti* Loew proximum", but he does not state in what the difference consists. The scanty statements in his generic and specific descriptions agree with Loew's, excepting of course the sexual differences; Bigot's specimen is a female, and has a „frons superne lata" and an oviduct. The synonymy of both genera may therefore be considered as certain; the question of the species remains to be solved. As Loew himself took the Andalusian specimen „for identical specifically with his African *costatus*", it is probable that Bigot's specimen from Southern Europe, which agrees with the Andalusian in so many respects, likewise belongs to the same species. Certainty, in that matter, may of course require a closer comparison.

Dr. Wandolleck commits a mistake in changing the generic name *Colax* Wied. into *Atriadops* Wandolleck. Generic names, especially those of old standing, should not be changed. The preservation of the continuity of such names is a concern of much graver moment, than the mere avoiding of a possible conflict between *Colax* Wied. (Dipt. 1824) and *Colax* Hübner (Lepid. 1816), a conflict which will hardly ever occur in practice. Unfortunately, such entomologists, as care very little for literature, do not understand the importance of the question of continuity, and the difficulties which discontinuity puts in the way of others who make of literature a special study.

A still greater mistake Dr. Wandolleck committed in not adopting the commonplace method of studying the series of yearly entomological Records, before attempting the publication of his „Monograph". He thus would have avoided the lamentable sins of omission, which are now being urged against him. He published a justification, which I reproduce here verbatim, as much in justice to himself, as for the benefit of those to whom the periodical, in which it was published, is not accessible. But any unprejudiced entomologist will confess, I think, that this attempt at a justification will do Dr. Wandolleck more harm than good. I let its text follow, in the German original (as it appeared in the Wien. Ent. Zeit., Oct. 1897, p. 213), and in English translation. The italics are mine.

„In meiner oben genannten Arbeit ist mir leider ein grosser Irrthum passirt; ich habe die Arbeiten H. Loew's über jenen Gegenstand unberücksichtigt gelassen. Da die Mehrzahl der Thiere dem asiatisch-australischen Gebiete angehören, sich auch in keinem Verzeichniss oder Bericht etwas über afrikanische Arten

fand, so liess ich Loew's Fauna von Südafrica unbesehen. Herr v. Röder hat mich sofort etc. . . . . auf meine Unterlassung aufmerksam gemacht etc."

Translation. In my above-mentioned paper („Monograph" etc. 1897) I have, unfortunately, committed a great mistake; I have paid no attention to H. Loew's publications on the same subject. As the majority of these animals belong to the Asiatic and Australian Regions, and as nothing could be found about African species in the Catalogues or Records, I have not consulted Loew's Fauna of South-Africa. Herr v. Röder has immediately called my attention to this omission etc."

Dr. W. would have found all the necessary references in the German yearly Entom. Berichte between the years 1858—1880, under the heading Nemestrinidae, if he had taken the trouble to look for them.

The other new genus of Nemestrinidae, *Parasymmictus*, is described by Bigot in the same place as *Dicrotrypana* (Ann. S. E. Fr. 1879). It was founded for *Hirmoneura clausa* O.S. West. Dipt. 1877, p. 225, but is does not appear from Bigot's letterpress that he ever saw a specimen of it. In my Catal. N.-Am. Dipt. 1878, p. 237, Note 142, I have a statement about another species of *Hirmoneura* of which I had seen specimens brought from Colorado by Morrison, and which have the second posterior cell open. As my *H. clausa* has this cell closed, I strongly suspect that Bigot took advantage of my statement of this difference for erecting a new genus, without ever having seen a specimen of it. There is a passage in Ann. S. E. Fr. 1881, p. 14 at bottom, where he mentions *Dicrotrypana* as represented in his collection, and there is no similar mention about *Parasymmictus*. And indeed, the type of the latter is not in the collection. Williston passed judgment upon *Parasymmictus* (Can. Ent. 1883, p. 71) in simply placing it as a synonym under *H. clausa* O.S.

Bigot's monographic essay on Nemestrinidae (among his Diptères Nouveaux ou peu connus, Ann. etc. 1881, p. 13—21) contains some statements about the two genera discussed in this paper, but nothing of any importance.

After fourteen years of forbearance, I have a right, I think, in the matter of *Parasymmictus*, to publish my opinion of the treatment given to this genus by Dr. Brauer. In his pamphlet: Offenes Schreiben als Antwort auf Herrn Baron Osten-

Sacken's „Critical Review" meiner Arbeit über die Notacanthen (Wien 1883) he says, on p. 8: „I have determined as *Parasymmictus* Bigot a Nemestrinid from Greece, because it has the second submarginal and the second posterior cells closed, while of my six specimens of *Hirmoneura clausa* O.S. I have referred five to the genus *Rhynchocephalus* Fisch., and one to *Parasymmictus*, but conditionally, and in considering its right wing only; the left wing led me to *Rhynchocephalus*, because it has the second submarginal cell open. For this reason I take *H. clausa* O.S. for a *Rhynchocephalus*, and thus the statement of O.S. (Western Diptera p. 224) is justified, as this genus occurs in Central-Asia, and as *Rh. clausus* O.S. is very like *Rh. Tauscheri*. My *Parasymmictus* from Greece, is a very badly preserved specimen, and seems to be nothing but a variety of *Rh. Tauscheri*, the venation of which is in perfect agreement with that of *H. clausa* O.S. This blunder notwithstanding we consider the works of Herr Baron Osten Sacken as indispensable."

This gentle treatment of my writings by Prof. Brauer appears most refreshing, when we consider that the whole paragraph, quoted above, about *Hirmoneura clausa* O.S., *Rhynchocephalus* and *Parasymmictus* Bigot is simply nonsensical, because it is based not upon any error of mine, but upon a most egregious blunder of Prof. Brauer himself, who had wrongly determined the six specimens which he had from Colorado, as *H. clausa* O.S. In that same pamphlet (p. 8) Brauer says: „According to my examination (meine Untersuchung) of six specimens from Colorado of *Hirmoneura clausa* O.S. it has a long proboscis which reaches as far back as the hind coxae. O.S. makes no mention at all of the proboscis." Far from „making no mention at all of the proboscis" my description contains the following passage: „Face densely covered with pale yellowish hair, through which a short, reddish proboscis is hardly visible." Of a long proboscis, reaching the hind coxae, there is no question. In consequence of this blunder, the whole paragraph of Brauer about *Parasymmictus*, reproduced above, must be struck out, from beginning to end, as any competent dipterologist will acknowledge.

Heidelberg, Oct. 25. 1897.