

ON SOME ASPECTS OF THE GREATER EUROPEAN TYPOLOGY

By Urbanus, with an introduction by W.R. Dolling

Walter Horn (1929, Int. Congr. Zool. 10: 1022-1042) published a compendium of the different kinds of types known to him, and this has been updated in a work largely concerned with curatorial outrages by N.T. Baker, R.M. Timm and others (1976, J. N. Y. Ent. Soc. 84: 201-205), which vies with the original in both scientific and entertainment value. My colleague Urbanus (no relation to Rusticus, first editor of the now, alas! defunct "Entomologist") feels that apart from a single reference, and that slighting, to Francis Walker the authors of the latter paper did not do justice to the efforts of european workers in the field of Typology. Partly in order to rectify this state of affairs and partly also with the more serious purpose of providing a guide to the pitfalls that await the unwary user of the collections of european museums, Urbanus has requested me to communicate to the Newsletter the results of his typological researches, based on over 30 years of work in these institutions. Because of the slightly libellous nature of some of his comments he wishes to remain anonymous, or at least pseudonymous. I can vouch for the accuracy of most of his observations, having direct experience of all but two of the categories he lists. (Evidence for nos. 1 and 5 is anecdotal but seems convincing.) For the benefit of those who, having perused the list below, are wondering if the type concept has become so debased as to be almost worthless, I can only refer them to Urbanus's maxim: NEVER TRUST A TYPE LABEL. Always check specimens purporting to be types against the original descriptions to see how many specimens were mentioned, whether any of them was selected as a type and, if so, how it was singled out; check the locality, date, altitude and so forth on the label against the description and date of publication and, lastly, check the description against the specimen itself. If everything fits, you may well have at least a syntype before you.

W. R. D.

1. **AEOLOTYPE:**

The type of a new species described from memory after the specimen had blown out of an open window.

2. **ANONYMOTYPE:**

The specimen that would have been the holotype had the author who designated it in mentioning "holotype and 300 paratypes with identical data" bothered to distinguish it with a label. Cf pseudoholotype, infra.

3. **ATYPE:**

A specimen labelled as the type of a nominal species by a museum curator despite it not being a member of the original author's type series. Frequent in British Museum.

4. **CONFISCATOTYPE:**

A type that has been deliberately destroyed in order to facilitate the work of later researchers. E.g. the entire type series of Capsus intaminatus Walker mentioned by W.L. Distant, 1904, Ann. Mag. nat. Hist. (7) 13: 20.

5. **DIPSOTYPE:**

Type specimen that fell into a glass of water subsequent to its description and was imbibed by its author.

6. **DISLECTOTYPE:**
A specimen wrongly identified by a reviser as the type of an earlier author's nominal species. E.g. the supposed type of Cletus alienus Walker "redescribed" by Distant, 1909, Ann. Mag. nat. Hist. (7) 7: 426.
7. **DYSLEXOTYPE:**
A type with its name misspelt on the label.
8. **DUPLICITYTYPE:**
A specimen that is the type of two different species. E.g. the two specimens that form the basis of both Dindymus venustulus Walker and Ectatops venustus Walker.
9. **ENIGMATYPE:**
A specimen bearing the label 'Type' but no name.
10. **INACCESSOTYPE:**
Type deposited in an institution that does not loan type material or reply to correspondence. Frequent in Latin countries.
11. **MUSEOTYPES:**
Specimens labelled 'Holotype', 'Allotype' or 'Paratype' by museum curators for the sake of neatness and regardless of the indications or lack of indications in the original description. In extreme cases (Atypes, above) such specimens are not even syntypic material. Frequent in a Belgian institution but by no means uncommon in almost all major european museums.
12. **PSEUDOHOLOTYPE:**
A syntype that is labelled 'Type' or 'Holotype' in the handwriting of the author of the name, who omitted to mention in his paper that he had so singled it out from its fellows. Of frequent occurrence among Distant's syntypes. Cf. anonymotype, supra.
13. **PSEUDONYMOTYPE:**
A genuine type specimen which bears only a speronym (vide Sperotype, infra) but was eventually described under another name, the author having changed his mind about what to call it but having omitted to change the label. E.g. the holotype of Cydnius pygmaeus Rambur, which bears the label 'Cydnius sulcicollis' in Rambur's own handwriting.
14. **SPEROLECTOTYPE:**
A specimen labelled 'Lectotype' by a worker who intended so to designate it but never got around to publishing.
15. **SPEROTYPE:**
A specimen labelled as type of a name (the Speronym) that the author intended to publish but never did. The type of a "manuscript species". The catalogue of types in the "D. E. I." by H. Gaedike, 1971, Beitr. Ent. 21: 79-159 lists a large number of Breddin's sperotypes.
16. **SUBSTITUTOTYPE:**
A specimen substituted for the original specimen or specimens upon which a description was based because it was in better condition than the original material, which subsequently acquired the status of confiscatotype (q. v.). Frequent in older collections, e.g. those of Linnaeus and Fabricius.
17. **SUPERNUMERAROTYPE:**
A specimen labelled 'Type' that represents part of a syntypic series acquired by exchange, the remainder of the series being deposited at another institution where another specimen, also labelled 'Type' is to be found. E.g. some of Uhler's material divided between the USNM and the British Museum.

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