

The family-group name *Claraviinae* and its usage

by Edward C. Dickinson & Laurent Raty

Received 26 January 2015

In Dickinson & Remsen (2013: 64) a subfamily in the Columbidae was assigned the name *Peristerinae*. The accompanying footnote read 'This is the oldest group name available for this subfamily (Bock 1994) and was used by Gifford (1941).' This comment was poorly researched; Bock (1994) did not recommend using this name and wrote 'Several authors ... attributed *Peristerinae* to Selby (1835). Several thorough searches of that volume reveal no suggestion or use of a family-group name by Selby based on the genus *Peristera*. Hence, the only possible conclusion is that Gray was in error in his attribution of this name to Selby, as was Brodtkorb ... Thus the correct authority for *Peristerinae* is Reichenbach (1850a) as given herein.' Bock (1994) went on '*Peristera* Swainson, 1827, was synonymised with *Claravis* Oberholser, 1899 prior to 1961 and *Peristerinae* Reichenbach, 1850 has been replaced by *Claravinae* Richmond, 1917 (1850) which takes precedence from 1850.'

Selby's (1835) work *The natural history of pigeons* was one of the volumes in *The naturalist's library* edited by Sir William Jardine. The series was discussed by Iredale (1951) who wrote 'It started in a small way, but was so successful that reprints, alterations, improvements abound and the data of the original series are still confused'. This confusion appears to have defeated Bock as the subfamily name *Peristerinae* does appear on p. 191 in the example of this work displayed by the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) <http://biodiversitylibrary.org/item/57922#page/237/mode/1up> (accessed 25 January 2015). Thus it seems that Selby, not Reichenbach, authored this name, but there were several impressions of volumes in *The naturalist's library* and it is unclear whether that displayed by BHL is the 1835 impression, meaning that further study is required to establish the correct date of publication, although it will have been well before 1850 or 1851.

A comment by John Boyd ('Taxonomy in flux' <http://jboyd.net/Taxo/List3.html> version 2.95 of 31 July 2014) was brought to our attention by T. Kuenzel. Boyd wrote: 'The name *Peristerinae* is sometimes used for *Claravinae*. However, this is incorrect as *Peristerinae* is based on the genus *Peristera* (Swainson 1827), which is a junior homonym of the mollusc genus *Peristera* (Rafinesque 1815). Thus *Peristerinae* is not available. The genus *Peristera* (Swainson 1827) was replaced by *Claravis* (Oberholser 1899). Richmond then used it to establish the subfamily *Claravinae* in 1917.'

We broadly agree with this account, but find that Richmond (1917) did not establish the name and when listing it, at family not subfamily level, followed the original spelling by using the spelling *Claraviidae*. We trace the name's origins to the following statement by Todd (1913: 512): 'The present genus [*Chamaepelia*] would seem to find its proper position in the small group of neotropical genera called by Count Salvadori *Peristerinae*, which name, however, requires to be changed to *Claraviinae* to correspond to its principal genus.'

In 1913 there was no requirement for such a name to be introduced together with a diagnosis or description, and Todd's acknowledgement of advice from both Oberholser and Richmond explains his use of Oberholser's 1899 name *Claravis* as the 'principal genus'. Todd's wording makes clear that he viewed *Claravis* as the type genus. Thus we have an original spelling *Claraviinae* and re-use of that in Richmond's influential (1917) list of generic names.

Todd's paper was reviewed and commented upon by Swarth (1913) and by Hellmayr (1914: 162–163). Over the next few decades the spelling was in use, especially in multiple

papers by Oberholser, either at subfamily or family level, using the double ‘i’ that Todd had proposed. However, use of the names Claraviidae at family or Claraviinae at subfamily rank ceased following the works of Peters (1937) and Hellmayr & Conover (1942), who placed all pigeons in the Columbidae without subfamilies, a position also favoured by Goodwin (1967), who was rather ambivalent as to the wisdom of using subfamilies. However, he included a dendrogram (on p. 8) of pigeon genera and the branch to which he attached *Claravis* included the same genera as Dickinson & Remsen (2013) with the sole difference that Goodwin (1967) recognised *Scardafella*, which Dickinson & Remsen (2013) treated as a synonym of *Columbina* (following Pereira *et al.* 2007). This grouping is entirely Neotropical and notably supports the views of Todd (1913).

The stem used in forming Claraviinae appears to be incorrect because *avis* is Latin not Greek, and removing the case ending from the genitive produces ‘av’ not ‘avi’ (see ICZN (1985: 211)). Therefore, preserving the spelling ‘Claraviinae’ would require the support of Art. 29.5 of the Code (ICZN 1999), otherwise the emended spelling Claravinae must be used. Recent use supports Claravinae, but if account is also taken of use during the period 1913–36 and the requirements for prevailing usage are demonstrated to be met, then the original spelling would be sustained. We suggest the spelling Claravinae be used.

Acknowledgements

We thank Thomas Kuenzel for drawing the internet comment to our attention, John Boyd for confirming the date his comment might first have been cited, and James Jobling for his confirmation of our interpretation of the correct stem and of the alternative conclusions the Code recognises. We also thank Alan Peterson and Wayne Longmore for their comments on the submitted manuscript.

References:

- Bock, W. J. 1994. History and nomenclature of avian family-group names. *Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.* 222: 1–281.
- Dickinson, E. C. & Remsen, J. V. (eds.) 2013. *The Howard and Moore complete checklist of the birds of the world*, vol. 1. Fourth edn. Aves Press, Eastbourne.
- Gifford, E. W. 1941. Taxonomy and habits of pigeons. *Auk* 58: 239–245.
- Goodwin, D. 1967. *Pigeons and doves of the world*. Trustees of the Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.), London.
- Hellmayr, C. E. 1914. Aves für 1913. *Archiv f. Naturgeschichte* Abt. B 80(2): 1–224.
- Hellmayr, C. E. & Conover, B. 1942. Catalogue of birds of the Americas and adjacent islands, pt. 1(1). *Publ. Field Mus. Nat. Hist., Zool. Ser.* 13(1).
- International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN). 1985. *International code of zoological nomenclature*. Third edn. International Trust for Zoological Nomenclature, London.
- International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN). 1999. *International code of zoological nomenclature*. Fourth edn. International Trust for Zoological Nomenclature, London.
- Iredale, T. 1951. “The Naturalist’s Library. An essay in bibliography.” *Austr. Zool.* 11: 322–332.
- Oberholser, H. C. 1899. Some untenable names in ornithology. *Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Phil.* 51: 201–216.
- Pereira, S. L., Johnson, K. P., Clayton, D. H. & Baker, A. J. 2007. Mitochondrial and nuclear sequences support a Cretaceous origin of Columbiformes and a dispersal-driven radiation in the Paleogene. *Syst. Biol.* 56: 656–672.
- Peters, J. L. 1937. *Check-list of birds of the world*, vol. 3. Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Reichenbach, H. G. L. 1850 [=1851]. *Novitiae ad synopsis avium VI. Columbariae: tauben und taubenartigen Vögel*. pp. [i–ii]. Zool. Mus. of Dresden, Dresden & Leipzig.
- Richmond, C. W. 1917. Generic names applied to birds during the years 1906 to 1915, inclusive, with additions and corrections to Waterhouse’s “Index Generum Avium”. *Proc. US Natl. Mus.* 53: 565–636.
- Selby, P. J. 1835. *Natural history of pigeons*. Pp. 1–228 in Jardine, W. (ed.) *The naturalist’s library*. Lizars, Edinburgh.
- Swarth, H. S. 1913. Publications reviewed: A revision of the genus *Chaemepelia*. By W. E. Clyde Todd. *Condor* 15: 231.
- Todd, W. E. C. 1913. A revision of the genus *Chaemepelia*. *Ann. Carnegie Mus.* 8: 507–603.
- Addresses: Edward C. Dickinson, Flat 3, 19 Bolsover Road, Eastbourne, BN20 7JG, UK, e-mail: edward@asiaorn.org. Laurent Raty, 38 av. de la Chapelle, 1200 Brussels, Belgium, e-mail: l.raty@skynet.be