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Incorporation of nomina of higher-ranked taxa into the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature*: some basic questions

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Abstract

Several proposals have recently been published regarding the possible incorporation of nomenclature of higher taxa (class-series nomina) into the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature*. Some basic questions related to this problem are discussed here. Introducing standard endings for the nomina of these taxa would probably be a kind of hara-kiri for Linnaean-Stricklandian nomenclature of higher taxa: it would upset nomenclatural stability by introducing many new nomina and abandoning most of the nomina that have been in constant use in zoology for a long time to other nomenclatural systems alternative to the *Code*. Nomina of higher taxa should rather all belong in a single nominal-series, the class-series. They should not be submitted to a Rule of Coordination (except for identical taxa of different ranks), and their allocation to taxa should not be made through extensional or intensional definitions, but through ostension with a special system combining onomatophores (the conucleogenera) and onomatostases (the alienogenera). This system provides clear, unambiguous, stringent and universal Rules for the nomination of higher taxa in the future, compatible with all taxonomic systems including "phylogenetic" ones, while respecting the freedom of taxonomic thought and actions, as well as the tradition long attached to nomina of higher taxa in zoology.

Key words: Nomenclature – Higher taxa – Rule of Coordination – Extension – Intension – Ostension – Onomatophores – Onomatostases

Terminological note

The Rules of the current *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* (Anonymous 1999; "the *Code*" hereafter) have often be qualified as "Linnaean". This is largely misleading (Moore 2003; Dubois 2005c) as they are widely different from the original nomenclatural Rules of Linnaeus (1758). It would be more justified to call these Rules "Linnaean and Stricklandian" or "Linnaean-Stricklandian", to do justice to the major contribution of the so-called "Strickland's code" (Strickland *et al.* 1843) to the building of the current Rules (Dubois 2006b). In the text below, for reasons explained elsewhere (Dubois 2000, 2005c), the following terms are used: (1) *nomen* (plural *nomina*) for "scientific name" in the *Code*; (2) *nominal-series* (e.g., *species-series* for "species group" in the *Code*) for a set of nomina that interact concerning coordination, priority, synonymy, homonymy, etc.; (3) *onomatophore* (Simpson 1940, 1961) for "name-bearing type" in the *Code*, to avoid the misinterpretation often repeated (e.g., recently: Pennisi 2001; Joyce *et al*. 2004; Sluys *et al.* 2004) that the *Code* is "typological", i.e., non-evolutionary. Finally, a distinction is made here between *taxa* and *clades*. Although the aim of taxonomy is to provide a classificatory scheme based on the patterns of phylogeny of organisms, a distinction is made here between these patterns or clades, and taxa. Taxa are concepts or models used in biological classification, that account for some particularities of the organisms. Under a cladistic approach of taxonomy, a taxon can be recognized only for a group of organisms that is considered holophyletic, a concept for which the synonymous terms *phylon* (Dubois 1991), *cladon* (Mayr 1995) and *phylo-taxon* (Joyce *et al*. 2004) have

