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SYNONYMY OF TWO AFRICAN EUTELIINÆ (NOCTUIDÆ)

by HARRY K. CLENCH

1. *"Pacidara venustissima."*

P. venustissima has been the unequivocal designation for the largest known euteliine in the world, ever since WALKER first proposed it in 1865. It was, therefore, something of a shock to discover that both the genus and species names are antedated by sixteen years, the earlier names prominently proposed, and accompanied by excellent colored figures, in no less a journal than the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London*. The type, further, is stated to have been placed in the British Museum collection. Since neither WALKER nor HAMPSON make any mention of it, it is likely that the specimen met with misadventure sometime before they arrived on the scene.

For discovery of this synonymy I owe a posthumous debt to the late W. J. HOLLAND, who had penned both name and reference on the label affixed to one of his specimens. The name, without reference, in someone else's hand, appears on another specimen, received from ROLAND TRIMEN, and I suspect that this was the source of HOLLAND's information.

The rectified synonymy of the genus and species is as follows:

Genus *Caligatus* Wing

Caligatus Wing 1850, *Proc. Zool. Soc. London* 1849: 104 (type: *Caligatus angasii* Wing 1850).

Pacidara Walker 1865, *List Specim. Lepid. Ins. Br. Mus.* 33: 830 (type: *Pacidara venustissima* Walker 1865, = *Caligatus angasii Wing* 1850, *new synonymy*)*; and subsequent authors: see below.

Caligatus angasii Wing

Caligatus angasii Wing 1850, *loc. cit.* and pl. 14, figs. 2, 3 (Cape of Good Hope).

Pacidara venustissima Walker 1865, *op. cit.*: 831 (Natal) (*new synonymy*); Hampson 1912, *Cat. Lep. Phal.* 11: 3, fig. 2; Janse 1917, *Check-List S. Afr. Lep. Het.*: 33; Gaede 1935, *in* Seitz, *Grossschmett. Erde* 15: 167, pl. 16a.

HAMPSON records the species from localities in Sierra Leone, S. Nigeria and Natal. Gaede simply gives "West, South and East Africa." Specimens in the Carnegie Museum are from: Liberia (Harbel, *leg.* R. M. Fox; Cameroun (Efulen, *leg.* H. L. WEBER); Natal (Pinetown, *leg.* BOWKER, *ex* R. TRIMEN); East Africa (Mombasa, *leg.* WM. DOHERTY). Despite the wide range and complex wing pattern, I can see no geographic variation.

2. *"Noctasota curiosa."* (Nyctemeridæ, in error)

When I described this genus and species a few years ago I came to the somewhat hesitant conclusion that it was an aberrant nyctemerid, though superficially little resembling any known member of that family. I was quite surprised later to find its likeness staring at me out of the "Eutelianæ" pages of HAMPSON, while browsing through that work one day. It bears nearly as little resemblance to an euteliine as it does to a nyctemerid, but I am convinced that HAMPSON was correct in his placement. Its structure, however, departs so strikingly from others members of the genus *Eutelia* that my genus surely merits retention. The corrected synonymy, then, is as follows:

Genus *Noctasota* Clench

Eutelia, Sect. I A: Hampson 1912, *op. cit.*: 16.

Noctasota Clench 1954, *Rev. Zool. Bot. Afr.* 50: 297 (type: *Noctasota curiosa* Clench 1954 = *Eutelia distorta* Hampson 1912). Erroneously placed in Nyctemeridæ.

Noctasota distorta (Hampson)

Eutelia distorta Hampson 1912, *op. cit.*: 16, fig. 9 (Kumasi, Gold Coast); Gaede 1935, *op. cit.*: 168.

Noctasota curiosa Clench 1954, *loc. cit.,* fig'd. (Efulen, Cameroun) (*new synonymy*).

A few slight differences exist between the two specimens we have (types of *curiosa*) and the description of HAMPSON, suggesting that subspecies might conceivably be involved. A comparison of actual specimens will be needed.

N. distorta must be a rather rare insect, true of many Euteliinæ. HAMPSON knew only his unique type; GAEDE knew the species only from HAMPSON's description; and our two specimens stand alone in the collection.

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*Note: After this had been type-set I chanced, by accident, on two more references, showing that this synonymy had been noted in print as long ago as 1894, by HOLLAND himself. My chagrin is tempered by the fact that only STRAND, among subsequent authors, seems to have noted it. The references are: *Caligatus Angasii*: Holland 1894, *Psyche* 7: 143, expl. pl. I (fig. 8) (illustrates ♀); *Eutelia angasii*: Strand 1913, *Arch. f. Naturg.* 78 ("1912") A. 12: 93 (localities in the Belgian Congo).