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ON THE ALLOTYPE CONCEPT

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Many nematologists, and probably other zoologists too, when describing a new species, designate beside the holotype, one specimen of the other sex as allotype (Greek *allos* = other). I did it myself until 1965, then I abandoned this practice, realizing that it is illogical and even absurd.

It has been pointed out by many authors (e.g. Simpson, 1961) that the word "type" is misleading. It suggests "typical example" but it is really something quite different, viz. a specimen (we are dealing here with species only) to which a name is, or by designation can be, tied (Int. Code Zool. Nomencl., 1985, Art. 61). It is a nomenclatural concept, not a morphological or systematical one. The attempt of Simpson to have it replaced by the more correct term "onomatophore" (in the Code) has not been successful: "the dead hand of the past weighs too heavily upon us all" (Simpson, 1961, p. 48). There can be only one type specimen of a nominal species, not two, for the simple reason that males and females of any species are indicated by the same name. From this point of view it is incorrect to give a special nomenclatural status to a specimen of the sex to which the holotype (lectotype, neotype) does not belong. Stys (1973) has also pointed out that an allotype does not have any nomenclatural function; designation of allotypes is "a typological relict".

Since, thus, an allotype cannot be used to give an objective basis for a specific name, and it can neither (as all types) be regarded a "typical example" of morphological characters, the allotype concept should be discarded. Allotypes are not recognized formally in the Code, only Recommendation 72A states: "The term 'allotype' may be used to designate among paratypes a specimen of opposite sex to the holotype", but not a single argument is given *why* this "may" be done, and in my opinion it conflicts with the philosophy underlying Art. 61, that a type provides an objective standard of reference by which the application of a name is determined.

The Secretary of the International Commission of Zoological Nomenclature has informed me that the Commission is considering publication of a new edition of the Code. Recommendation 72A will be discussed.

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