

DOCUMENTO

On the correct date of publication of volume 44 of Revista Chilena de Historia Natural

Sobre la fecha correcta de publicación del volumen 44 de la
Revista Chilena de Historia Natural

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Accuracy concerning dates of publication of scientific literature is of utmost importance. This is particularly true in systematics, where an incorrectly reported date can cause the invalidation of a species name and subsequent taxonomic confusion. The dates of publication of early volumes of the 'Revista Chilena de Historia Natural' have been disputed by various workers. It was hoped that with the publication, by Vicente Pérez d'Angelo (1967), of a list of the years of appearance for all previous volumes of the journal, these problems would be ended. However, that list, originally published in Spanish in volume 29 N° 6 of 'Boletín del Museo Nacional de Historia Natural' and reprinted in English in volume 55 N° 1 and again in volume 56 N° 1 of 'Revista Chilena de Historia Natural', is incorrect at least concerning the appearance of volume 44. Volume 44, the last volume under the direction of Carlos Porter, was reported to have appeared in 1940. We know that this date is incorrect because of the correspondence between Waldo L. Schmitt, author of a paper in that volume, and Carlos Porter, then editor of 'Revista'. A synopsis of the evidence follows.

Waldo L. Schmitt began his investigations into the systematics of the South American anomuran crab genus *Aegla* by describing two new species, *A. abtao* and *A. conceptionensis*, both from Chile. The manuscript, "Two new species of *Aegla* from Chile," was first sent to Dr. Carlos E. Porter, editor of 'Revista Chilena de Historia Natural', on February 29, 1940. Porter replied on April 3 and again on April 11, returning Schmitt's figures of the two

species. Schmitt wrote again on April 17, noting incidentally that volumes 1936, 1937, and 1938 of 'Revista' had just been received by the U. S. National Museum library and asking Porter when the proofs of the *Aeglea* paper would be ready. Schmitt's next letter, dated February 5, 1941, stated that his "larger manuscript on *Aegla* is complete" ('Proceedings of the U. S. National Museum', 91 (3132): 431-520, plates 25-28), and because he wished to cite his earlier description of two new species, he asked Dr. Porter "Do you know when that volume of the revista will be available?". Porter replied on February 25, 1941, saying that several factors—"difficulty in obtaining money from the government, the strike of the workmen, etc."—had delayed the publication of Schmitt's paper, but that it would be "among the first articles of vol. (= year) 44 (1940)". Schmitt answered on March 11, 1941, stating that indeed the "war preparations" in his country had also caused delays; he asked Porter to inform him of the page numbers for the first paper as soon as possible. Having received no reply, Schmitt wrote again on December 3, 1941, asking "Will the number of the 'revista' containing these descriptions appear before that time?" (two months, in which Schmitt's larger monograph was to be in page proofs). Schmitt wrote again on March 24, 1942. It was not until June of 1942 that Dr. Porter sent Schmitt the page and plate numbers and reprints of the paper, which had just been published.

All of the letters mentioned above are stored in the Archives of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., U.S.A., under the following catalog number: RU 7231, Waldo L. Schmitt Papers, 1907-1977, Box 28, F 2. There can be no doubt that the volume in question (volume 44) did not appear until the year 1942; of this we are absolutely certain. We are equally certain that in existing copies of that volume, the date on the frontispiece is 1940 and not 1942. For this reason, most workers use the year 1940 when citing any paper in this volume, and it was this year (1940) that was given as the year of appearance in the checklist of the 'Revista' by Pérez d'Angelo. Schmitt himself (1942b) cited this volume correctly as appearing in 1942 and indicated the discrepancy to J. Haig for her preparation of a paper on the Anomura of Chile (Haig, 1955: 27).

There are two problems with which scientists need be concerned. First is the question of accuracy. On the exact date of publication, we are in agreement that 1942 should be used. This is of particular importance in a systematic paper, as any species described in 1940, 1941, or even early 1942 would have taxonomic seniority over a species described in June of 1942. Thus, to continue to use the date 1940 for the description of the two species of *Aegla* (*A. abtao* and *A. concepcionensis*) is misleading and taxonomically incorrect. On this point, the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature is clear:

"If the date of publication specified in a work is found to be incorrect, the earliest day on which the work is demonstrated to be in existence as a published work is to be adopted".

(Article 21(d), page 43, International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, third edition, published in February, 1985.)

The other consideration, which we feel is of equal importance, is the accessibility of the paper in question. Librarians or archivists searching for volume 44, 1942, will not find it. Volume 44, from the point of view of a librarian, was published in 1940 because this date appears on the frontispiece. This situation leaves us in a confusing position. To be scientifically accurate, while at the same time allowing researchers to locate the volume in question, we suggest that all papers in volume 44 of 'Revista' be cited in the following manner:

Schmitt, W. L. 1942. Two new species of *Aeglea* from Chile. *Revista Chilena de Historia Natural*, vol. 44 (1940): 25-31, pl. 5.

In this way the accuracy of any species description is preserved, whereas at the same time librarians and archivists will be able to locate the volume in question by noting that the date 1940 is given as part of the volume number.

It is possible that other volumes of 'Revista' are likewise incorrectly reported in the published list of Pérez d'Angelo; we suggest all workers examine first-hand all available evidence before following this list.

LITERATURE CITED

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