The names of European mosquitoes: Part 3
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This article is the third in a series to be published in the Bulletin to add meaning to the names of European mosquitoes. For each entry the name of the taxon is given together with the author and date and the reference to the original description. There is also either a quotation from the original description, translated where necessary, or a résumé indicating the author's reason for using the name in question. Where appropriate, a brief explanation of the etymology is provided. In cases where the explanation is not clear, correspondence to the editors is invited.

Anopheles sergentii Theobald, 1907

Theobald describes this mosquito on pages 68 and 69. The only reference to the naming of this mosquito is "Habitat - Algeria (Dr E. Sergent)". This is believed to refer to Edmond Sergent (1876-1969) and not his brother, Etienne, although both worked in Algeria at the Pasteur Institute. Edmond is referred to by Theobald on page vii of this Monograph and is known to have collected mosquitoes and sent them to Theobald.

Anopheles superpictus Grassi, 1889

Latin, super = remaining, besides, moreover; pictus = ornate, decorated

This species was described from Italy in a footnote on page 560 by Grassi to differentiate it from pictus and pseudopictus, both presently regarded as synonyms of hyrcanus. He was convinced that this was an additional form and named it superpictus to distinguish it from the other two.

Aedes Meigen, 1818

Greek, aedes = distasteful, disagreeable, unpleasant, troublesome

Meigen names his genus on page 13, "Schnakenmücke. AEDES. Hoffmgg". Schnakenmücke is old German for gnat or mosquito and the ascription of the name to Hr. Graf v. Hoffmannsegg refers to a label by that collector on the material described by Meigen. Meigen describes the characteristics of his genus in both German and Latin and ends with an explanation of his generic name, saying that it is derived from the Greek meaning troublesome and that it was found in the collection of Hoffmannsegg, "Den Gattungsnamen hat der Hr Graf v. Hoffmannsegg, in dessen Sammlung sie sich befindet, aus dem Griechischen beschwerlich gebildet".

Aedes cinereus Meigen, 1818

Latin, cinereus = ash-coloured, grey

Like the genus Aedes, Meigen ascribes this species to Hr. Graf v. Hoffmannsegg, the collector of the material examined. Despite naming the species cinereus he was not convinced about its colour, noting that it is more brown than grey, "Diese einzige Art ist mehr braun als grau" (p 13). In a later description he also notes the grey wings, "die Flügel graulich" but gives its general coloration as "schwarzbraun" (Meigen, 1830) (reference given below for Aedes vexans).
Aedes geminus Peus, 1970

Latin, geminus = twin

On pages 21-24 Peus describes Aedes geminus and compares it with Ae. cinereus using both text, illustrations and a key. He places both species in the cinereus group of the subgenus Aedes, and indicates their close affinity by naming the new species geminus, the twin of cinereus.

Aedes esoensis rossicus Dolbeškin, Gorickaja & Mitrofanova, 1930
Yamada, S. (1921) Description of ten new species of Aedes found in Japan, with notes on the relation between some of these mosquitoes and the larva of Filaria bancrofti Cobbold. Annotationes Zoologicae Japonenses 10, 45-81.


Yamada named Aedes esoensis from specimens collected from the islands of Hokkaido (Japan) and Sakhalin (now a part of Russia). Hokkaido was formerly known as Ezo or Yezo. It is from this ancient name, together with the suffix -ensis (meaning the place where found or named after) that Yamada named his species.

Tradition records that in the year 862 AD feuds among the Eastern Slavs around Novgorod became so violent that they invited one of the Scandinavian chiefs, Rurik, to unite them. From the Scandinavians, called Varangians or Rus, came the name Rossiya, or Russia, meaning the land of the Rus. Aedes rossicus was described from Orenburg and Perm in Russia and from Dnepropetrovsk in Ukraine, and was reduced to subspecies status by Peus (1972)*. The use of the name rossicus by Dolbeškin et al. derives from the country name Rossiya and the suffix -icus, meaning belonging to or pertaining to a locality.

*s.g. Aedimorphus Theobald, 1903

From genus Aedes (Meigen, 1818) and Greek morphos = form

Theobald erected the genus Aedimorphus for Aedimorphus domesticus, previously Uranotaenia domestica Theobald, 1901. He remarks on the distinctions from Aedes yet obviously considers his new taxon to be close to Aedes, "...The genus differs from others near Aedes, in (1) the presence of mixed head scales and flat scutellar ones, and (2) in the Uranotaenia - like appearance of the thorax, but differs from the latter in having long fork-cells and no flat thoracic scales" (p 290).

Aedes vexans (Meigen, 1830)

Latin, vexare = to annoy, injure

Meigen describes his species in both Latin and German on pages 241 and 242 under the name of Culex vexans. He noted its brown coloration, abdomen with white patches and, like Culex (=Aedes) annulipes, tarsi with white rings. Having just named a species (annulipes) on the basis of its ringed tarsi, Meigen was presumably forced to find another name and chose to use vexans to indicate the annoying and injurious qualities of this species. However, Meigen makes no reference to his reasons for using this trivial name.
Aedes vittatus (Bigot, 1861)


Latin, vittatus = bound with a fillet or chaplet, from vitta (-ae) ribbon, band, fillet

Bigot describes this species on the first page of his article: "1. CULEX VITTATUS ♀ (nov. spec.)". He describes the new species as being generally deep black with white markings. He especially notes the white rings on the legs and, although not referring to vittatus specifically, it would appear that the presence of the distinctive white ring on the tibiae (... tibias, vers leur milieu, [et tarses à la base des articles,] ornés d'anneaux blancs) led Bigot to adopt this specific name.

s.g. Finlaya Theobald, 1903


Theobald describes "Finlaya nov. gen." on page 283 and remarks "I have named this genus after Dr Finlay, the originator of the yellow-fever mosquito theory." Carlos Juan Finlay proposed the yellow-fever mosquito theory in 1881 and in 1903, when the generic name was dedicated to him, was Chief Sanitary Officer of Cuba. Finlay was born in Puerto Príncipe, Cuba on December 3rd 1833. In 1855 he received the degree of M.D. from Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia. He died in Havana, Cuba on August 20th 1915.

Aedes echinus (Edwards, 1920)


Latin, echinus = sea urchin /spiny

Edwards describes this species on pages 133-134 under the heading "Ochlerotatus (Finlaya) echinus sp. nov." He describes the female that was raised from a larva collected in Macedonia and differentiates it from Ochlerotatus (now Aedes) geniculatus. He notes that the larva is very different from O. geniculatus but does not describe it. However, it is the form of the larva that clearly led to the use of the name echinus. The fourth instar larva has unusually strongly developed thoracic and abdominal setae, which are stellately branched giving the appearance of a hedgehog.

Aedes geniculatus (Olivier, 1791)


Latin, geniculatus = having a knee, jointed

Olivier described Culex geniculatus as "Cousin genicule" on page 134 and continues in Latin and French, "Culex ... geniculis albis" and "Les pattes sont noiratres, avec la base des cuisses et le genou blancs..." Indeed Ae. geniculatus is readily recognised by its dark legs and the conspicuous whiteness of the knee-joints (tibio-femur joint) and the proximal areas of the thighs (femora).

Aedes gilcolladoi Villa, Rodriguez & Llera, 1985


This species was differentiated from Aedes echinus and Ae. geniculatus in Spain on characters of larval chaetotaxy. It was named after the Spanish mosquito researcher J. Gil Collado, who was one of the earliest workers to describe the Culicidae of Spain and to record the presence of Aedes geniculatus and Ae. echinus in the Spanish fauna. He published a number of major papers from the mid 1920s until the very late 1950s.