

The names of European mosquitoes: Part 8

Keith R. Snow

Department of Environmental Sciences, University of East London, Romford Road, London E15 4LZ,
UK Email: k.r.snow@uel.ac.uk

This article is the eighth 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 some cases the reason for naming the species may not be clear and correspondence to the author is invited. Additional information will be published in future issues of the *Bulletin* as letters to the editors.

Culex mimeticus Noè, 1899

Noè, G. (1899) Contribuzione allo studio dei Culicidi. *Bullettino della Società entomologica italiana* 31, 235-262.

Greek, mimetic = imitation, mimic; -us = Latinised suffix

This species is first mentioned on page 238 and is described in Italian on pages 240 to 243. Noè describes similarities between this species and *Anopheles superpictus*, especially the wings, so much so that they could easily be confused: "Intanto è bene notare come le ali del *C. mimeticus* siano quelle che giustificano il nome dato a questa specie, inquantochè, a prima vista, si possono scambiare per le ali dell' *Anopheles superpictus*, Grassi; altre poi sono le somiglianze tra le due specie, talchè l'inganno è tutt'altro che difficile."

This explains his use of the name *mimeticus* to indicate his perception of the close similarity of this new species to another.

Culex perexiguus Theobald, 1903

Theobald, F.V. (1903) *A monograph of the Culicidae or mosquitoes*. Vol. 3. xvii + 359 pp. London. British Museum (Natural History).

Latin, perexiguus = very small

This species is described on pages 199-201. On page 200 Theobald gives the length of both the male and female as 3mm and remarks on the small size of the species: "It is a small, delicate mosquito, resembling to some extent *Culex nigrutilus* Zetterstedt ..."

Culex pipiens Linnaeus, 1758

Linnaeus, C. (1758) *Systema naturae per regna tria naturae*. Edition 10. Vol. 1. 824 pp. Holmiae.

Latin, pipiens = piping

Linnaeus named *pipiens* as the first of his six species of *Culex* on page 602. On the following page he uses the phrase "Insectum pipiens, pungens" conveying that this insect made a shrill or piping sound in flight and also that it "bit". This is a description that could be applied to a wide range of mosquito species.

Culex pipiens has a behavioural form (*molestus*) which was originally described as a species by Forskål (1775). Although no longer recognised as a distinct species, a brief description is included as the name is still used by many authors to indicate the autogenous, human-biting form of *Cx. pipiens*.

Forskål, P. (1775) *Descriptiones animalium avium, amphibiorum, piscium, insectorum, vermium; quae in itinere orientali observavit*. Havniae, Mölleri. 164 pp.

Latin, *molestus* = troublesome, annoying

At the end of his morphological description of *Culex molestus*, Forskål relates that this species is "extremely abundant at Rosetta, Kahira and Alexandria and is troublesome at night for sleepers and can scarcely be kept away except for a well closed curtain". The original Latin is (page 85): "Rosettae, Kahirae et Alexandriae immensa copia, nocte incommodus dormientibus et vix arcendus nisi cortina bene clausa."

Culex theileri Theobald, 1903

Theobald, F.V. (1903) *A monograph of the Culicidae or mosquitoes*. Vol. 3. xvii + 359 pp. London. British Museum (Natural History).

Theobald gives his description of this species on pages 187-189. On the last page of his account he makes the following reference "Habitat. – Pretoria (Dr. Theiler) ...". The "Dr. Theiler" was Sir Arnold Theiler who is known to have made a large collection of mosquitoes in the Transvaal in 1901-02 and sent them to Theobald.

Sir Arnold Theiler was an acknowledged expert and an important contributor to a wide range of topics within the fields of medical and veterinary science. He published over two hundred and fifty scientific papers on a variety of subjects relating to parasitology, hygiene and health. Theiler was born in Switzerland in 1867, the son of a biology teacher from whom he received his early training and, no doubt, acquired his fascination and love for the biological and medical sciences. He studied firstly at Berne and then at Zurich, gaining a veterinary degree in 1889. Arnold Theiler left Switzerland for South Africa to put his newly acquired training into practice. Here he worked towards controlling the great parasitic epidemics that were present at the time and establishing a research laboratory at Onderstepoort. His classic work, for which he will always be remembered, was the identification of piroplasmiasis, or red water fever as it was more commonly known. He also discovered the tick vectors and formulated proposals for the control of the disease. He retired in 1927, returning to Switzerland before living in England, where he died in 1936.

Culex torrentium Martini, 1925

Martini, E. (1925) Zwei bemerkenswerte Culiciden von einem eigenartigen Biotop. *Internationale Revue der Gasamten Hydrobiologie und Hydrographie* 12, 333-337.

Latin, *torrentium* = rapid (from *torrens* = a torrent)

Martini's paper entitled "Two noteworthy culicids from a peculiar biotope" reports his discovery of *Culex* larvae in pools among rocks in the bed of the River Schwartzza, Germany left after flooding of the river "... in den Felsen Schwarzabettes ... In einigen der Wasserlöcher fanden sich, gelegentlich vorwiegend, die Culexlarven".

On page 336 he states that the species may be named on the basis of the breeding place: "Wegen ihres Brutplatzes mag sie *Culex torrentium* heißen." Thus he named the species on the basis of the rapid water flow which created the breeding sites.