

Comment on the proposed conservation of usage of *Cetiosaurus* Owen, 1841 by designation of *Cetiosaurus oxoniensis* Phillips, 1871 as the type species

(Case 3472; see BZN 66: 51–55)

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I write in support of Upchurch et al.'s proposal to establish *Cetiosaurus oxoniensis* Phillips, 1871 as the type species of *Cetiosaurus* Owen, 1841 and to set aside all previous fixations of type species for this genus.

Cetiosaurus was the first sauropod dinosaur to be scientifically described (Owen, 1841) and one of the earliest dinosaurs to be recognised: the taxon is clearly of historical importance and stabilising its taxonomy would represent an important contribution to dinosaur studies. The name has been dogged by nomenclatural instability since its inception due to the proliferation of species names associated with this genus and the large amount of undiagnostic material allocated to it throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Upchurch & Martin, 2003). As noted elsewhere, many of the early species names are nomina nuda, nomina dubia, junior objective synonyms of other species or referable to taxa (such as *Pelorosaurus brevis* and '*Cetiosaurus*' *glymptonensis*) that are only distantly related to the specimens that are widely acknowledged as belonging to *Cetiosaurus* (Upchurch & Martin, 2003).

Upchurch et al. note that *Cetiosaurus medius* Owen, 1842b is the type species of *Cetiosaurus* under Article 69.1.1 of the Code and that this species had been recognised as the type species by various authors, including Owen (1842b) and Steel (1970). They go on to demonstrate, however, that most published discussions on *Cetiosaurus* tend to ignore the *C. medius* type series, which is fragmentary and of limited utility (the species is currently regarded as a nomen dubium: Upchurch & Martin, 2003), and concentrate instead on the more complete and diagnostic specimens referred to *C. oxoniensis* Phillips, 1871. Consequently, Upchurch et al. argue that fixation of the name *C. medius* as the type species creates confusion and instability, even though it is the correct type species under the Code. As the name *Cetiosaurus* is i) well-established and deeply embedded in the literature, ii) intimately associated with the material comprising the type and referred specimens of the species *oxoniensis* and iii) not generally associated with the material assigned to the species *medius*, it would be desirable to set aside the previous, infrequently cited, type species fixation for this genus and to replace it with one based on a familiar and taxonomically determinate set of material. Conversely, if *Cetiosaurus medius* were retained as the type species of *Cetiosaurus*, the genus would be rendered invalid and a new generic name would be required for *C. oxoniensis*. This would lead to increased confusion and taxonomic instability. Such a situation should be avoided as *Cetiosaurus* is not only a historically important taxon, but also one that has been used to specify other groups within Dinosauria, including Cetiosauridae. In addition, Ornithischia, one of the major dinosaur sub-groups, has been defined as all dinosaurs that are more closely related to *Iguanodon* than they are to *Cetiosaurus* (Norman et al., 2004).

Additional references

Norman, D.B., Witmer, L.M. & Weishampel, D.B. 2004. Basal Ornithischia. Pp. 325–334 in Weishampel, D.B., Dodson, P. & Osmólska, H. (Eds.), *The Dinosauria*, Second edition. University of California Press, Berkeley.

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I strongly support the proposal by Upchurch et al. (BZN 66(1): 51–55) for the conservation of usage by designating *Cetiosaurus oxoniensis* Phillips, 1871 as the type species of *Cetiosaurus* Owen, 1841. As extensively referenced in the proposal, the name *Cetiosaurus* has invariably been associated with the species *C. oxoniensis*, and specifically the Bletchington Station material, for almost 125 years. In particular, it should be noted that the ‘Monograph of the genus *Cetiosaurus*’ by Owen (1875) is based almost entirely on the Bletchington Station material of *C. oxoniensis* (Owen even used Phillips’ figures!). Also, as noted by Galton & Knoll (2006), the family CETIOSAURIDAE Lydekker, 1888 is based on *C. oxoniensis* Phillips, 1871 because Lydekker (1888, p. 137) indicated it as being the type species of *Cetiosaurus* Owen, with *C. medius* Owen and *C. longus* Owen (in part) as (?) synonyms. This proposal would make Lydekker’s indication official, an action that is long overdue. Although much less complicated, this proposal is similar to that involving the designation of a new type species for another classic genus of Dinosauria, viz., *Iguanodon* (Case 3037; see BZN 55: 99–104, Opinion 1947, BZN 57: 61–62).

Comment on the proposed precedence of *Procynosuchus* Broom, 1937 (Therapsida, Cynodontia) over *Cyrbasiodon* Broom, 1931 and *Parathrinaxodon* Parrington, 1936 (Case 3431; see BZN 66: 64–69)

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I am writing to strongly endorse the application to give precedence to *Procynosuchus* over *Cyrbasiodon* and *Parathrinaxodon*. As Kammerer and Abdala note, the name *Procynosuchus* is widely used and a very important name to conserve because of its significance in evolutionary studies and museum exhibits. The authors have amply documented the preponderance of its usage and strong support within the specialist community.