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The Evolution of *Megadrilogica* and *Nomenclatura Oligochaetologica*

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Abstract

These two publications are useful, if not essential, for those conducting earthworm research. This paper discusses the evolution and development of the journal *Megadrilogica*

and the nomenclator *Nomenclatura Oligochaetologica* from the original book and three supplements to the second edition which is an updated electronic version.

Keywords: Megadrilogica, Nomenclatura Oligochaetologica, Oligochaeta, Research Tools

Introduction

Both of these publications were the vision of Dr. Gordon Enoch Gates (1897-1987) my friend and mentor. Most of his publications listed his authorship and "G.E. Gates" and when asked what "G.E." stood for he would usually say "Great Earthworm". These publications were designed to assist those interested in the study of earthworms.

Discussion

Megadrilogica

In 1968, Gates was looking for journal where he could describe a new earthworm genus and species without success even though he had a long record publishing on earthworms. Therefore, he self-published a paper titled, *On a Glossoscolecoid earthworm from Panama and its genus for Thamnodriloides yunkerii* Gates, 1968 a new genus and new species. Two years later he was asked to produce a manuscript for a meeting in Europe, unfortunately the staff at Tall Timbers Research Station typed it as the second paper in *Megadrilogica*. The committee in charge of the European meeting considered it published and rejected it. Thus, the second issue in the new journal was born.

In 1968, I was working in Europe for the USDA on a biological control project. I used the opportunity to collect earthworms in France for an ecological course paper in my Master's program at Purdue University. This course requirement became the fourth issue of *Megadrilogica* and from that point Gates turned over *Megadrilogica* operations to me (Reynolds, 1972) [3].

Our approach, or vision, for the journal was as long as earthworms were involved it would be a suitable paper. The first four volumes (12 issues per volume) were paginated separately, therefore the issue number in the citation is important. Beginning in volume 5, pagination is continuous through the volume. Once the publication was shifted from the United States to Canada, all manuscripts were to carry abstracts and key words in French and English the official languages in Canada. Other languages for abstracts were allowed for various reasons and none have ever been ejected. We encouraged publication of negative data and novel ideas which might not be accepted by main stream journals.

Since Gates and I were employed by Tall Timbers Research Station at a time when Gates was nearing the end of his career, the Director asked me to help Gates get his final 20+ manuscripts published while he still could. Beginning in volume 2, I began rewriting his manuscripts in a formal journals and printer could read. By this time the arthritis in his hands made it difficult to type. He would add text sideways in the margins, insert sections at the bottom of the page with arrows pointing up where they should go. Also, frequently, in the Literature Cited sections there would be the following entries, "Černovítov, 1930 - John you know the paper". Over the next decade, all his manuscripts but one, were published most in *Megadrilogica* because no journal would publish the amount of data he included and these could be published quickly while he could still assist me with Tall Timbers paying the publication costs.

Over the years, many colleagues from various countries have submitted manuscripts which are peer reviewed. At its peak, over 240 institutions and colleagues were subscribing to the journal. In recent years with the abstracting services and

ResearchGate the number of subscribers has reduced. Until recently, one of the editorial board, Mark Wetzel, was a great support to me in editing the manuscripts. The manuscripts also went out to various referees to whom we are grateful for their support.

Now as we approach the midway through volume 29, the journal has survived longer than we would have imagined at the beginning. The journal is abstracted by several agencies and many authors add their papers to their accounts on ResearchGate making their work available to a world-wide audience.

With the death of Mark Wetzel in June 2025, the University of Illinois has given me permission to continue updating *Megadrilologica* for which I am grateful to see the work of Mark Wetzel's continue.

Nomenclatura Oligochaetologica

For years Gates had kept several file drawers of 3x5 cards, each card was the citation for new taxa, mainly species and genera. Some had the location of the type species and rarely the catalogue number. Shortly after I completed my Ph.D. and was visiting Gates at his home in Bangor, Maine, he said he could no longer do much with the card files and turned the project over to me.

Since my area of research was terrestrial oligochaetes (Megadriles), the cards also contained information on aquatic oligochaetes (Microdriles). I decided that I needed help from an aquatic specialist. I contacted an old friend Dr. David Cook who had studied under Dr. Ralph Brinkhurst and specialized in the aquatic branch of the Oligochaeta. Together we decided to put these cards into a book format. We received a grant from the National Research Council of Canada (Office of Grants and Scholarships) for awarding us a grant to support the publication of *Nomenclatura Oligochaetologica* – A Catalogue of Names, Descriptions and Type Specimens of the Oligochaeta (generally known as NO, NOSP, NOSS, NOST, and eventually NO₂) through the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton.

The book was setup on a Latin base. The *Dedicatio* contained the names and dates of 13 late contributors in our field. This was followed by the *Auctores* a short bio of Reynolds and Cook. New was the *Gratiarum Actiones* (Acknowledgements) thanking those who helped us with various aspects of the book. The *Praefatio* (Prefaces) were French by Marcel Bouché and English by Ralph Brinkhurst. The *Prolegomenon* (Introduction) on how the book was constructed and how to use it was translated in six languages (French by Bouché, German by Helmut Kruse, Portuguese by Righi, Russian by Perel, Chinese by Hen-biao King). Next was the *Nomenclatur Generum* followed by the *Nomenclator Specierum*. There were three Appendices 1. *Index Auctorum* where the abbreviation(s) of the authors and one of the few places where the full names of the authors can be found. Appendix 2. *Index Auctoritatum* where the journal abbreviation was written out in full. Appendix 3. *Index Museorum* where the abbreviation for the institutions housing the types could be with address and curator. The final section was the *Colophon* which described the type face and point sizes for the book. We were grateful to Prof. Robert Smith of UNB for helping us with our Latin.

It was the hope of the authors to publish updates every 5-10 years. Reynolds and Cook did produce updates and corrections, three times, *N.O. Supplementum Primum* (1981)

[5] by a grant from University of New Brunswick,

Fredericton; *N.O. Supplementum Secundum* (1989) [6] with publication grant from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada; *N.O. Supplementum Tertium* (1993) [7] with a grant from the New Brunswick Museum, Saint John. These supplements followed the same format as the original, except for the *Glossarium* where the Latin abbreviations or phrases used through the supplements with the translation in the six languages and *Addenda* and *Corrigenda Editoni Primae* (Additions and Corrections to the original book). *N.O. Supplementum Secundum* was the first time that *Nomenclator Subgenerum* appeared.

After the publication of the third supplement and before the next one, Dave Cook retired and suggested a replacement. At this time, I was cooperating regularly with Mark Wetzel and he was pleased to replace Dave. We were working on data for a *N.O. Supplementum Quartum* and it was getting close to twenty years since the last supplement that we decided to change from a hard bound book to an electronic version. This was the birth of *N.O. Editio Secunda* which would be on a platform of the University of Illinois with Mark Wetzel as the contact. From 2013 to 2025, Mark Wetzel was responsible for entering the updates and recording the corrections as given to us by colleagues.

Several additions were added in the electronic version: 1. The *Prolegomenon* was expanded to five additional languages – Spanish (Catalina Mischis), Greek (Ευαγγελία Βαβουλίδου), Japanese, Italian (Emilia Rota) and Malayalam (Aja and Jaya Manazhy), 2. Current Perspectives, 3. Links to other Annelid Resources, and 4. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). For additional information see Wetzel and Reynolds (2023) [9].

With the death of Mark Wetzel in June 2025, the University of Illinois has given me permission to continue updating NO₂ for which I am grateful to see the work of Mark Wetzel's continue.

Conclusion

The final words come in a letter from Dr. Gordon Gates to Ruth Reynolds dated June 27, 1976:

"John Warren and David have produced a first, that I believe will not even be followed to say nothing of being equaled in the field of zoological literature for a very long time. So, as far as I can now see, the *Nomenclatura Oligochaetologica* will likely long remain unique and unapproachable. No matter [how] long I could possibly have lived, I never would have done as good a job as they have done with that book. One of the smartest things I've done in recent years was getting John started on that project."

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