SYNONYMIC NOTES ON SOME SPECIES OF THE
GENUS MORTONAGRION
(ZYGOPTERA : COENAGRIONIDAE)

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Argiocnemis aborense Laidlaw, 1914 is transferred to the genus Mortonagrion Fraser, 1920. Agriocnemis binocellata Fraser, 1922, Indagrion gautama Fraser, 1922 and Mortonagrion simile Ris, 1930 are all conspecific with Mortonagrion aborense, the latter name having priority.

INTRODUCTION

Placing species in their proper genus within the Argiocnemis-Mortonagrion-Agricnemis complex has proved difficult ever since FRASER (1920) established the genus Mortonagrion.

Recently ASAHINA (1982) removed Agriocnemis binocellata Fraser, 1922 correctly to Mortonagrion and redescribed the species on the basis of new material from Thailand. In the same connection he pointed out the existence of two problematical taxa: Mortonagrion gautama (Fraser, 1922) and Argiocnemis aborense Laidlaw, 1914. In the present paper a clarification of the status of these species is attempted.

MORTONAGRION ABORENSE (LAIDLAW, 1914), NEW COMB.

Argiocnemis aborense LAIDLAW, 1914 : 347, pl. 16, fig. 7.
Agriocnemis binocellata FRASER, 1922a : 233-235; pl. 10, fig. 1.
Indagrion gautama FRASER, 1922b : 50.
Mortonagrion simile RIS, 1930 : 7-12, fig. 3.
Agriocnemis arborense (sic !) FRASER, 1933a : 467-468.
Agriocnemis aborensis FRASER, 1933b : 394-395, fig. 169.
Mortonagrion gautama FRASER, 1933b : 411.

LAIDLAW (1914, p. 347) described Argiocnemis aborense on the basis of a single male from Dibrugarh, N E. Assam. In his monograph on Indian Odonata FRASER (1933b, pp 394-5, as Agriocnemis aborensis) states that besides the type,
which appears to be lost, "the only other specimens known are in the author’s collection, two males from Hasimara, Duars, Bengal, ..., and a male from Bangkok, Siam, collected in August and September." Further, FRASER (1933a, pp. 467-8) lists a pair of Agriocnemis arborense (sic!) from Huldibari Tea Estate, Duars, Bengal and gives a description of the female. He also claimed to have specimens from Nowgang, Assam.

I studied Fraser’s material during a visit to the British Museum (N. H.) in April 1985 and discovered that the above mentioned male specimen from Bangkok is in fact the holotype of Fraser’s Agriocnemis binocellata (FRASER 1922a, pp. 233-5), which was considered to be lost (KIMMINS, 1966, p. 183). The original name on the envelope of the Bangkok specimen is typed with blue ink. However, the specific name has been rubbed away, evidently by Fraser himself, and replaced with black ink as "arborense (sic!) Laid, Male". Although there is an specification of the type on the envelope, the locality label “Bangkok, Siam, Coll, E. W. Trotter 21.IX.21” and the damaged end of the abdomen fit well with Fraser’s original description. Evidently Fraser had reidentified the specimen and replaced the name, forgetting the fact that the specimen was the type of his own species.

The holotype of binocellata was compared with Fraser’s arborense material: 2 males from Hasimara, Duars and 1 male from Huldibari, Duars. They are undoubtedly conspecific. All four males also coincide well with ASAHINA’s (1982, pp. 456-8) figures on M. binocellata from Thailand and with my own "binocellata" material from Thailand.

The above mentioned first female of arborense from Huldibari Tea Estate, Duars, Bengal was compared with the holotype of Mortonagrion gautama, originally described as Indagrion gautama (FRASER 1922b, p. 50) from Sadiya, Assam. I could not find any differences to separate them. Both females also agree well with ASAHINA’s (1982) description of a binocellata female from Thailand.

RIS (1930, pp. 7-12) described Mortonagrion simile with the holotype male and allotype female from Sumatra. In his discussion of the new species, Ris points out that the coloration of simile coincides well with that of arborense, but since the appendages of arborense in Laidlaw’s figure do not fit with the Sumatran male, he chose to describe it as a new species. I have studied the holotype and allotype of simile, and compared them with arborense material from Bengal, Assam and Thailand. There are some minor differences in details of coloration. However, since they are structurally similar, simile undoubtedly belongs to the same species as the other material.

The proportional length of the superior appendages and 10th abdominal segment in LAIDLAW’s (1914) description (p. 347) and figure (pl. 16, fig. 7) of arborense
are different from those in FRASER's (1930b, p. 395) figure. The latter figure coincides well with the Bengalese material. Unfortunately, the type of *aborense* originally deposited in the Indian museum (and now apparently lost), could not be studied to confirm whether Laidlaw's figure is incorrectly drawn, as I suppose. However, since in all other respects the Bengalese specimens fit well with the description of *aborense*, I am inclined to follow Fraser in considering them to belong to *aborense*. Consequently, the name *aborense* has priority over *binocellata*, *gautama* and *simile*.

*M. aborense* seems to be a wide ranging, but local, species extending from Bengal to Sumatra and Borneo. More material should still be studied to find the geographical variability of the species and judge whether the name *simile* could perhaps be retained as having subspecific status.

Recently the status of Mortonagrion as a distinct genus was doubted by PINHEY (1974), and MITRA & LAHIRI (1980) appealed for reconsideration of the three genera *Argiocnemis*, *Mortonagrion* and *Agriocnemis*. I hope to be able to discuss this problem on another occasion.

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REFERENCES


