



Rediscovery of the holotype of *Trochilus maria* Gosse, 1849 (Aves: Apodiformes: Trochilidae)

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Trochilus maria Gosse, 1849, was described from a specimen obtained by Richard Hill from the “mountains of Manchester,” most likely the Don Figueroa Mountains in Manchester Parish, Jamaica (Rapkin, 1851). Gosse (1849a: 258) quoted field notes from Hill stating that the specimen “was startled from a nest in which were two young ones, and was obtained by charging some of the blossoms of the mountain-pride (*Spathelia simplex*) on which it was feeding, with minute doses of strychnine. As soon as it sucked from one of the poisoned chalices, it fluttered, and fell dead.” Gosse (1849a: 258) provided a detailed plumage description (see below) and summarized, “It is near to *Polytmus*, but differs from it in the inferior length of its beak, and in the colours of the plumage; but being apparently young, it is impossible to say what the adult condition may prove. I am happy however to fortify my own judgment by that of Mr. Gould, who on my showing it to him decidedly pronounced it new.”

The written description of *T. maria* (Gosse 1849a) was published on 1 October 1849 (Evenhuis, 2003). A color lithograph of the specimen bearing the annotation, “*Trochilus maria* Hill Ann. N.H. 1849” (Fig. 1), appeared in the *Illustrations of the birds of Jamaica* (Gosse 1849b), published in August 1849 (Thwaite, 2002). Although Gosse clearly intended to name the new species in the *Annals and Magazine of Natural History*, the name was effectively published a month earlier in the *Illustrations of the birds of Jamaica*. Gosse (1849a,b) and other early authors ascribed the authorship of this new name to Hill (Elliot, 1879; Gould, 1861a; b; Gray, 1869). By contrast, Gosse (1849b) claimed authorship of the other new species, i.e. *Elania cotta*, described in Gosse (1849a). The first person to ascribe the name *Trochilus maria* to Gosse appears to have been Salvin (1892), who did not give a reason but who has been followed by seemingly all subsequent authors.

The first relevant reference to the putative new hummingbird species after Gosse (1849a, b) was by Bonaparte (1850), who introduced confusion as a result of being unaware of Gosse (1849a) and of not having seen Gosse (1849b) first-hand. Bonaparte (1850: 72) refers to “*Polytmus* — Gosse, nov. sp. sub nomine, ni fallor, *Trochili stellati*. - Ill. B. Jam. cum fig. ex Ins. Jamaica.” The critical Latin text here may be translated as “new species under the name, if I am not mistaken.” However, Bonaparte was clearly mistaken regarding the name, and in his synonymies. Gould (1861a) compounded this error by referring to both “*Trochilus stellatus*, “Gosse,” young male?” and “*Trochilus Maria*, Hill, Ann. and Mag. 1849; Gosse, Ill. Birds of Jamaica, pl. 22.” Recognition of this is important, because Gould (1861a: 76) goes on to state that “It will be seen that I have placed the *stellatus* of Gosse as a synonym of *Polytmus*; at the same time it is only justice to state that I have never seen a second specimen in a similar state of plumage, and it may be another species. I make this remark with Mr. Gosse’s type specimen before me, it having been kindly presented to me by that gentleman.” *Trochilus stellatus* clearly has no status as a validly proposed binomial. However, Gould’s use of the name was valid (even as a synonym), which precludes its future application to some other taxon.

This account in fact refers to the type specimen of *T. maria*, and reveals both that Gosse gave Hill’s specimen to Gould and that the latter had no other immature male in his possession in 1861. In the lengthy account accompanying his colored plate (no. 98) for *Trochilus polytmus*, Gould (1861b) writes that “The plate represents two adult males, a young male, a female, and a nest, all of the natural size.” For unexplained reasons, the young male is missing from the plate, but had it been included it would clearly have been based on the type of *T. maria*. The fascicle containing the plate for *T. polytmus* was issued on 1 June 1849 (Coues, 1879). Thus, it is possible that Gould received the specimen too late to be included in the painting.

Starting with John Gould (1861a,b,c), whose prior opinion seemed to have encouraged Gosse to propose a new name for the specimen in the first place, *Trochilus maria* was soon recognized as a junior synonym of the widespread