



About the authorship of *Heterophasia desgodinsi* (Aves, Passeriformes)

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The black-headed sibia (AVES, PASSERIFORMES, LEIOTHRICHIDAE) was first described in the year 1877 as *Sibia desgodinsi*. The author of the article (Oustalet 1877) was Jean Frédéric Émile Oustalet (1844–1905). Most subsequent works mentioned only Oustalet as author: for example Deigan *et al.* (1964: 418), Dickinson & Christidis (2014: 546), Clements *et al.* (2024), Gill *et al.* (2024) and Lepage (2024). Exception are Saunders (1879: 38), who used the authorship E. Oustalet & A. David, Rothschild (1926: 271), Riley (1926: 31), who placed the bird into *Leioptila* Blyth, 1847 (Blyth 1847: 449) as *Leioptila desgodinsi*, and Robinson & Kloss (1919: 586), who placed it into *Malacias* Cabanis, 1851 (Cabanis 1851:113) as *Malacias desgodinsi*.

The holotype of the specimen (MNHN-ZO-MO 1877.177) is available at the Paris Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle. Pictures of this holotype can be found at <<https://science.mnhn.fr/institution/mnhn/collection/zo/item/mo-1877-177?listIndex=1&listCount=94>>.

Article 50.1 of the *Code* (Anonymous 1999) deals with the identity of authors. It states that the author of a name or of a nomenclatural act is the first person to publish it. Article 50.1.1 then precises: “However, if it is clear from the contents that some person other than an author of the work is alone responsible both for the name or act and for satisfying the criteria of availability other than actual publication, then that other person is the author of the name or act. If the identity of that other person is not explicit in the work itself, then the author is deemed to be the person who publishes the work”.

Oustalet (1877: 140) wrote: “En présence de ces différences si tranchées, il nous a paru nécessaire, à M. David et à moi, de créer en faveur de ce passereau une espèce Nouvelle, que nous appellerons *Sibia Desgodinsi*, et dont nous donnerons la diagnose suivante [...]” (‘Due to the presence of these very clear differences, it seemed necessary to Mr. David and me to create a new species for this passerine, which we will call *Sibia Desgodinsi*, and for which we will give the following diagnosis [...]').

As the naming and the writing of the Latin diagnosis of the publication of *Sibia desgodinsi* are both explicitly attributed to “M. David et [...] moi”, it is clear that this was a cooperation between Oustalet and the priest Jean Pierre Armand David (1826–1900), commonly known at that time as Father David. As a consequence of Art 50.1.1, the authorship needs to be attributed to both. The correct mention of the original name with its authorship therefore appears to be *Sibia desgodinsi* David & Oustalet *in* Oustalet (1877).

However, at the end of his article, Oustalet referred to a more detailed description in the book of David & Oustalet (1877) which was announced as due to be published later in 1877. This book indeed included again in pages 556–557 a description of *S. desgodinsi*.

We tried to establish the respective publication dates of the two works mentioned above. The paper by Oustalet was published in the third issue of the volume 1 of the 7th series of the *Bulletin de la Société philomathique de Paris*. This volume 1 covered sessions of the Society held in 1876 and 1877

in the following periods: issue 1, 21 October 1876 to 24 February 1877; issue 2, 24 February to 12 May 1877; issue 3, 12 May to 23 June 1877; issue 4, 23 June to 11 August 1877. Each issue bears the statement: “Le Bulletin paraît par livraisons trimestrielles” (‘The Bulletin is published by quarterly issues’), but these four issues bear only the publication date 1877, but not their exact publication dates, not even in terms of months. Oustalet’s work was presented in the session of 23 June 1877, the last date covered by issue 3, and was therefore published after that date, without more precision. According to Article 21.3.2 of the *Code*, the date that should be adopted for its publication would therefore be 31 December 1877.

As for David & Oustalet’s book, it only bears the date 1877, but in the *Bibliographie de la France* (Anonymous 1877: 659) it was reported as having been published before 1st December 1877. On page 556 of this book, the species *Sibia desgodinsi* was presented as follows:

274 bis. — SIBIA DESGODINSI

SIBIA DESGODINSI, A. Dav. et Oust. (1877), *Bull. de la Soc. philomat.*, 7^e série,
t. I, n^o 3 (séance du 23 juin 1877).

We consider this as an acceptable evidence that the paper in the *Bulletin* was published before the book, and that the species at stake was established as *Sibia desgodinsi* David & Oustalet in Oustalet (1877). This species was later transferred by Cheng (1947: 65) and Deignan (1948: 15) from the genus *Sibia* Hodgson 1839 (Hodgson 1839: 37) to the genus *Heterophasia* Blyth, 1842 (Blyth 1842: 186), where it still stands (Gill *et al.* 2024; Clements *et al.* 2024). Occasionally, the black-headed sibia can be found in literature as a subspecies of the dark-backed sibia, *Heterophasia melanoleuca desgodinsi* (Cheng 1947: 65; Traylor 1967: 54).

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