

# The Nomenclature and Type Status of *Telicota paceka mesoptis* Lower, 1911 (Lepidoptera: Hesperiiidae)

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**ABSTRACT.** O. B. Lower described, in 1911, the hesperiine skipper *Telicota augias mesoptis* Lower, 1911, but he neither stated the number of specimens before him nor designated a holotype. Our investigations indicate that Lower had at least 11 syntypes (7 males, 4 females), which are now registered in the Australian Museum, Sydney and South Australian Museum, Adelaide (SAMA). At least two authors (G. A. Waterhouse in 1933, and M. J. Parsons in 1998) attempted to resolve the taxonomy of *mesoptis* but neither of them made a valid lectotype designation in that the syntype they specified cannot be located and unambiguously identified to act as the unique type of the taxon. Thus, we designate a male specimen in SAMA (registration number: SAMA Database No. 31-001600) as the lectotype to become the unique bearer of the name *mesoptis*. This action does not affect the name or rank of the taxon, rather it constitutes a formal subsequent fixation since Lower's name was introduced 110 years ago. With regard to nomenclature, the taxonomic status of *mesoptis* has changed several times, both in terms of rank and with the species or genus in which it has been combined. Currently, the correct nomenclature is *Telicota paceka mesoptis* Lower, 1911 and we recommend that this name be used to designate the Australian population rather than *Telicota mesoptis mesoptis* Lower, 1911 in which it has been known for the past 87 years (since 1934).

## Introduction

Lower (1911) described the butterfly *Telicota augias mesoptis* Lower, 1911, but he neither stated the number of specimens before him nor designated a holotype. Lower (1911, p. 157) stated “My specimens are all from the Kuranda district, taken in March, April and May.” Lower's type material was subsequently deposited in the South Australian Museum, Adelaide (SAMA), but there are also three syntypes in the Australian Museum, Sydney (AMS) (Waterhouse, 1932; Peters, 1971). Because Lower (1911) did not designate a

type specimen or make reference to a type specimen of any sort, a taxonomist must therefore determine which specimen of Lower's type material (i.e., his syntypic series) represents the name-bearing “type” in order to fix the name *mesoptis* to the species in question. According to **Article 74** of the ICZN (1999), the fixation of a name from syntypes is dependent on the designation of a lectotype; that specimen then becomes the unique bearer of the name of the nominal species group taxon and the standard for its application.

At least two authors (Waterhouse, 1932, 1933, 1937; Parsons, 1998) have attempted to resolve the taxonomy of

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