

ON THE PROPER NAME OF THE GENUS LABRAX OF CUVIER.

BY THEODORE GILL.

In 1888 Professor D. S. Jordan, in the fifth and last edition of that excellent epitome, "A Manual of the Vertebrate Animals of the Northern United States" (p. 136), has resuscitated the genera *Roccus* and *Morone* for the American Labracinæ, and it was evidently his intention to retain them as genera distinct from their European relations. He has thus reverted to the views promulgated by Gill in 1861. A few words may be in place now as to the proper name of the European genus. *Labrax* can not be used, inasmuch as it had been previously employed by Pallas as well as Cuvier himself* for a genus of north Pacific fishes familiar to all American ichthyologists under the name *Hexagrammus*, and by the European chiefly designated as *Chirus*. In this dilemma, then, another name becomes necessary, and this may be found in *Dicentrarchus*, a designation proposed originally for the *Labrax punctatus* of Geoffroy St. Hilaire under the belief that that species had, as represented, only two anal spines. It has been since shown, however, by Steindachner and others that the character in question was illusive and void, and that the species in reality is a typical *Labrax*, and very closely related to the common *Labrax lupus* of the Mediterranean. The name *Dicentrarchus* thus becomes available for all the European species of the genus, and inasmuch as the term is inappropriate with the etymology which might naturally be attributed to it, it can be interpreted as referring to another feature and be imagined as composed of $\delta\iota\varsigma$, double (in sense of 2), $\pi\epsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\nu$, spine, and $\alpha\rho\chi\omicron\varsigma$ chief, in allusion to the renown and excellence of the fish and to the two kinds of armature or spines which surround the pre-opercular margin and distinguish them from their American relations, as well as the two spines which arm the operculum and on which the genus was especially distinguished from *Perca* by Cuvier. The specific name of the typical species will then be *Dicentrarchus punctatus*.

The external differences between the genera *Roccus* and *Morone* are supplemented by cranial ones, and such are diagnosed by the author in the report on ichthyology in Simpson's Explorations Across the Great Basin of Utah in 1859 (1876, pp. 339, 396).

* Cuvier, Regne animal, v. 2 (1817), p. 268.