

III. THE PROPER SCIENTIFIC NAME OF THE HAMADRYAD OR KING COBRA

A perusal of the literature concerning the hamadryad immediately reveals that this snake is distinct from all other known serpents. In size, shape, dentition, coloration, hemipenal characters, and lepidosis it is to be confused with no other known species of snake. Further, the characteristics of this serpent are sufficient to render it generically distinct, and an examination of the available material shows that it is a mistake to place this snake and any other known serpent in the same genus.

That the hamadryad is generically distinct is a fairly well established fact, but there is still disagreement among herpetologists as to the proper generic name that should be used to designate it. Many herpetologists consider its proper generic name to be either *Ophiophagus* or *Hamadryas*, but for reasons that follow neither of these names should be used.

Hamadryas, used by CANTOR in 1836, is preoccupied by *Hamadryas* HÜBNER (1806) which was applied to a genus of butterflies. The name *Ophiophagus*, though not preoccupied, is antedated by the next name of priority after *Hamadryas*, viz., *Dendraspis* FITZINGER (1843), which incidently also antedates *Dendraspis* SCHLEGEL (1848) which is or has been used to designate certain African Elapids. Thus, the generic name *Dendraspis* FITZINGER, 1843, is the proper and scientifically correct name of the hamadryad, *hannah* being the specific name.

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