

**OPINION 2107 (Case 3220)*****Cypraea coombii* Sowerby in Dixon, 1850 (Mollusca, Gastropoda):  
priority maintained over *Ovula gisortiana* Passy, 1859 (currently  
*Gisortia gisortiana*)**

**Abstract.** The Commission has ruled that priority is maintained for *Cypraea coombii* Sowerby in Dixon, 1850, the senior subjective synonym of *Ovula gisortiana* Passy, 1859, for an Eocene fossil species of cowrie (family CYPRAEIDAE) from Western Europe.

**Keywords.** Nomenclature; taxonomy; Mollusca; Gastropoda; CYPRAEIDAE; *Cypraea coombii*; *Gisortia gisortiana*; cowrie; Eocene; western Europe.

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**Ruling**

- (1) It is hereby ruled that the name *coombii* Sowerby in Dixon, 1850, as published in the binomen *Cypraea coombii*, retains priority over the name *gisortiana* Passy, 1859, as published in the binomen *Ovula gisortiana*, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms.
- (2) The name *coombii* Sowerby in Dixon, 1850, as published in the binomen *Cypraea coombii*, is hereby placed on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology.

**History of Case 3220**

An application to conserve the specific name of *Cypraea gisortiana* Passy, 1859 by giving it precedence over *Cypraea coombii* Sowerby in Dixon, 1850 was received from Jean-Michel Pacaud (*Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Laboratoire de Paléontologie, rue Buffon, F-75005 Paris, France*) and Luc Dolin (*1 rue des Sablons, Mesvres, 37150 Civray-de-Touraine, France*) on 22 October 2001. After correspondence the case was published in BZN **59**: 173–175 (September 2002). The title, abstract and keywords of the case were published on the Commission's website. A comment opposing the application was published in BZN **60**: 218–220 to which the authors replied (BZN **61**: 40–42). A further comment in opposition to the application was published in **61**: 104–106.

**Decision of the Commission**

On 1 December 2004 the members of the Commission were invited to vote on the proposals published in BZN **59**: 174. At the close of the voting period on 1 March 2005 the votes were as follows: 3 Commissioners voted FOR the proposals, 17 Commissioners voted AGAINST, 1 Commissioner ABSTAINED, Evenhuis, Kerzhner and Ng were on leave of absence; no vote was received from Böhme.

Voting against, Alsono-Zarazaga commented that both names seemed to belong to rarely found and poorly understood fossils. He considered the application to be premature and that priority must be maintained. Likewise, Halliday commented that the proposed action was unnecessary. Action to give *gisortiana* Passy, 1859

precedence over *coombii* Sowerby, 1850 would only be necessary if these two names were synonyms. As pointed out by Todd (BZN 61: 104), there was no clear evidence that this was the case. If the action proposed was taken, the Commission might have to reverse that decision in the future when more research had been done. He agreed with Todd that the proposal was premature and unnecessary. Štys, also voting against and citing the comments opposing the application, further argued that the *Bulletin* should not become a forum for solving taxonomic problems.

### Original reference

The following is the original reference to the name placed on an Official List by the ruling given in the present Opinion:

*coombii*, *Cypraea*, Sowerby in Dixon, 1850, *The geology and fossils of the Tertiary and Cretaceous formations of Sussex*, p. 188, pl. 8, fig. 6.

Editorial note:

The title of the paper by Passy (1859) in the list of references should read:

**Passy, A.** 1859. Note sur une grande ovule du calcaire grossier. *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Sciences, Paris*, **48**(1): 948.