

OPINION 2242 (Case 3398)**AULACOSCELINAE Chapuis, 1874 (Insecta, Coleoptera, ORSODACNIDAE or CHRYSOMELIDAE): name not conserved**

Abstract. The Commission did not support a proposal to conserve the names AULACOSCELINI Chapuis, 1874 and AULACOSCELINAE Chapuis, 1874 for a group of Coleoptera currently placed in the ORSODACNIDAE Thomson, 1859 (traditionally placed in the CHRYSOMELIDAE Latreille, 1802) by ruling that the stem of the generic name *Aulacoscelis* is *Aulacoscel-*.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Coleoptera; AULACOSCELINAE; AULACOSCELIDINAE; *Aulacoscelis*; Neotropical; southern U.S.A.

Ruling

- (1) A proposal for conservation of the names AULACOSCELINI Chapuis, 1874 and AULACOSCELINAE Chapuis, 1874 by ruling that the stem of the generic name *Aulacoscelis* is *Aulacoscel-* was not approved.
- (2) No names are placed on Official Lists or Indexes.

History of Case 3398

An application to conserve the names AULACOSCELINI Chapuis, 1874 and AULACOSCELINAE for *Aulacoscelites* Chapuis, 1874 for a group of Coleoptera currently placed in the ORSODACNIDAE Thomson, 1859 (traditionally placed in the CHRYSOMELIDAE Latreille, 1802) was received from Jorge A. Santiago-Blay (*National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D. C., U.S.A.*) on 25 September 2006. There are two spellings currently used for this group of beetles, AULACOSCELINAE and AULACOSCELIDINAE. Although AULACOSCELIDINAE appears to be grammatically correct, AULACOSCELINAE has been in prevailing usage for the last 55 years and was in sole use for 37 years, from 1953 to 1990. After correspondence the case was published in BZN 65: 97–105 (June 2008). The title, abstract and keywords of the case were published on the Commission's website. A comment supportive of this case was published in BZN 66: 72. One adverse comment was published in BZN 66: 168.

Decision of the Commission

On 1 June 2009 the members of the Commission were invited to vote on the proposals published in BZN 65: 100. At the close of the voting period on 1 September 2009 the votes were as follows:

Affirmative votes – 12: Brothers, Fautin, Halliday, Harvey, Lamas, Lim, Ng, Papp, Rosenberg, Winston, Yanega and Zhou.

Negative votes – 15: Alonso-Zarazaga, Ballerio, Bogutskaya, Bouchet, Grygier, Kojima, Kottelat, Krell, Kullander, Minelli, Pape, Patterson, Stys, van Tol and Zhang,

Pyle was on leave of absence.

Alonso-Zarazaga, voting AGAINST the proposals, provided an extended explanation of how the application suffers inconsistencies in the understanding of stem- and ending-formation and of Greek word formation and use. The long discussion of the first part of the genus name *Aulacoscelis* is superfluous, since this is not important for the zoological stem formation. The second part, *skelis*, is treated as a single word, trying to match it with the meaning of *sxelis* (using the Beta Code Romanisation as apparently the author does). The word *sxelis* means, as correctly said, 'ribs of beef' and has nothing to do with *Aulacoscelis*. The origin of *skelis* here is the following: *skelos* (leg) and suffix *-is* (genitive *-idos*), a common one in Ancient Greek to obtain feminine derivatives from masculine nouns, amongst them, many animal names, and to indicate small size, both things applying to *Aulacoscelis* (Buck & Petersen, 1944, p. 416), being the sense small animal with furrowed legs 'or just 'furrowed little legs'. Alonso-Zarazaga's interpretation was supported by some other Greek words, like *onoskelis*, *pygoskelis*, *periskelis* or *triskelis*, composed in the same way. Thus the only correct genitive is *Aulacoscelidos*, and the separation of the ending *-os*, gives the zoological stem, *Aulacoscelid-*. Moreover, the data presented to delimit usage are incomplete. Monrós (1959, p. 18) already used the corrected spelling AULACOSCELIDINAE, a seminal work overlooked by the author of the application. This spelling was later shown again by Seeno & Wilcox (1982, p. 8) when reviewing Monrós' nomenclature. Under the spelling AULACOSCELIDIDAE, it was used by Bechyné (1980, p. 52). Thus it turns out that the author who latinised Chapuis' name incorrectly was the same who published the corrected version the first time, which was 30 years before the date shown by the author of the application. Since the author cannot demonstrate a real 'prevailing usage' and the correction was done as early as 1960, he felt he had to vote against the proposals.

Bouchet, voting AGAINST, said that AULACOSCELIDINAE is the grammatically correct form of the name, which, by the applicant's own admission, has become 'more widely used' in the last decade or so. Bouchet thus did not think the application was well founded, and voted in favor of the spelling AULACOSCELIDINAE. Grygier, voting AGAINST, explained that in order to demonstrate 'prevailing usage', the present Application starts its author-count in 1953. It might provide a fairer test to start in 1990, when the 'correct' spelling AULACOSCELIDINAE first appeared, if, as is true here, a substantial number of relevant works by various authors have been published since then. AULACOSCELINAE has been used by 16 different individual authors since 1990, according to the citations given, and AULACOSCELIDINAE by 18. There is clearly no 'prevailing usage' among these 'most recent' authors, and thus the grammatically correct name should prevail. Kojima, voting AGAINST, also pointed out that the name AULACOSCELIDINAE is grammatically correct and has been becoming the most prevalently used name from the early 2000's. The name AULACOSCELINAE is grammatically incorrect and although it was in prevailing usage before the early 2000's, it is now falling behind. Under such situations, there seems to be no reason to use the plenary power to conserve the name AULACOSCELINAE. Kottelat, voting AGAINST the proposals, said that if the correct spelling is now becoming increasingly used, he does not see any justification for adhering to the incorrect spelling. Continued use of the correct spelling leads to stability. Also voting AGAINST, Kullander said that under the present Code, where one grammatically correct and one grammatically incorrect spelling are used, it is definitely better to select the correct spelling, in this

case, AULACOSCELIDINAE. He felt that this kind of application should not become a case for Commission consideration. He further commented that the present rules on family-group names seem to have run havoc. Stys, voting AGAINST, also said that AULACOSCELIDINAE is grammatically correct and recently generally used. He also felt that this is just a trivial situation for which unequivocal guidance should be given by the Code.

No names are placed on Official Lists or Indexes in this ruling.

Additional references

- Bechyné, J.** 1980. El jeannelismo y la evolución, concepto de las leyes orgánicas sin excepción. xiv, 182 pp. Grafindustrial Aragua S.R.L. Maracay.
- Buck, C.D. & Petersen, W.** 1944. *A reverse index of Greek nouns and adjectives arranged by terminations with brief historical introductions.* xvii, 765 pp. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Monrós, F.** 1959. Los géneros de Chrysomelidae. *Opera Lilloana*, **3**: 1–337.
- Seeno, T.N. & Wilcox, J.A.** 1982. Leaf beetle genera (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae). *Entomography*, **1**: 1–221.