

**Comments on the proposed conservation of usage of generic names in the
BUPRESTIDAE (Insecta, Coleoptera)**

(Cases 2837/1 and 2837/2; see BZN 50: 27–30, 31–34, 56).

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In relation to the application to conserve the names *Poecilonota* Eschscholtz, 1829, *Palmar* Schaefer, 1949 and *Scintillatrix* Obenberger, 1956 (Case 2837/1) I agree wholeheartedly with Hans Mühle's proposals. There is nothing to be gained but further confusion by accepting the adoptions of Leraut (1983), even if these are in accord with the Code. The last two names apply only to Old World species and I would certainly defer to Herr Mühle's judgement on what nomenclatural arrangement will promote stability. I had the fortunate opportunity in the summer of 1992 to travel with him and two other European colleagues, both leading researchers on this group, and the proposals were discussed. These entomologists were in accord.

Poecilonota is the only genus of this group represented in the New World and it occurs throughout the United States and Canada and a small portion of northern Mexico. It has not been known here by any other name since LeConte (1859); prior to that the known species were in the catch-all genus *Buprestis*. In his application Mühle omitted all but one reference pertaining to this genus in the New World. However, the name appears widely in the North American literature, the most important recent work being Evans (1957). To change the name would only bring confusion. The case for the Old World species is much more convoluted, but Mühle certainly speaks for the majority there and we are thus all in agreement.

In relation to the names *Melanophila* Eschscholtz, 1829 and *Phaenops* Dejean, 1833 (Case 2837/2), matters are not so clear and I doubt that there is such general agreement. Workers have been incorrect in citing *Buprestis acuminata* (= *appendiculata*) as the type species of *Melanophila*, whereas the valid designation (Westwood, 1838) is *B. tarda* (= *cyanea*) as pointed out by Leraut (1983). I do not see any pressing reason why Leraut's treatment of *Melanophila*/*Phaenops* should not stand. I do not believe that the stable usage of these two names exists, as stated by Mühle, at least in the New World. Part of the problem may lie in that *Phaenops* has largely been used as a subgenus of *Melanophila*, although there is now no question that the *B. cyanea* group is generically distinct from the group of species typified by *B. acuminata*.

Mühle has again omitted the New World references to this group. There are two or three major, and a few minor, forest pests which all appear widely in the New World literature under *Melanophila*, with the exception of Nelson's (1985) adoption of *Phaenops*. Later, Nelson (1989) followed Leraut (1983).

Perhaps this comes down to whether confusion will be caused by adopting the nomenclaturally correct concept for *Melanophila*. I cannot speak for the Old World species because I do not know to what extent any of them are regarded as economically important forest pests, the names of which will therefore have appeared widely in the literature. However, I do know that in some European catalogs both taxa (*Melanophila* and *Phaenops*) have appeared under the banner of the former.

I cast my vote to remain with Leraut's (1983) correct interpretation of the Code for *Melanophila* (i.e. that it should apply to the *cyanea* group); *Phaenops* can properly be placed in its synonymy. Nelson (1989) has clearly stated that the *B. acuminata* group of species (to which Mühle wishes *Melanophila* applied) should now be placed in the genus *Oxypteris* and I do not feel that this causes undue confusion or hardship to anyone. At least in the United States and Canada it will not cause confusion. I therefore propose that priority should dictate the type species and nomenclature of these genera.

Additional references

- Evans, D. 1957. A revision of the genus *Poecilonota* in America north of Mexico (Coleoptera: Buprestidae). *Annals of the Entomological Society of America*, **50**(1): 21–37.
 Nelson, G.H. 1985. Clarification of the taxonomic status in various genera of the family Buprestidae (Coleoptera). *Coleopterists' Bulletin*, **39**(2): 133–146.
 Nelson, G.H. 1989. Remarks on genera of Buprestidae affected by the Leraut (1983) and Cobos (1986) papers (Coleoptera). *Coleopterists' Bulletin*, **43**(4): 393–396.

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In answer to Dr Westcott (comment above) I can confirm Mühle's statements (paras. 5 and 6 of the application) that there has been consensus in the European literature on the usage of *Melanophila* Eschscholtz, 1829 and *Phaenops* Dejean, 1833. Apart from Obenberger (1930), who lumped *Phaenops* species under *Melanophila*, all the major European key works and catalogues have consistently treated *Phaenops* (the *cyanea* group of species) as a separate genus from *Melanophila* (with *acuminata* De Geer or its synonym *appendiculata* Fabricius being accepted, albeit incorrectly, as the type species). These works include Lacordaire (1857), Gemminger & Harold (1869), Kerremans (1903), Reitter (1911), Schaefer (1949), Freude, Harde & Lohse (1979), Cobos (1986) and Bílý (1989), which were all mentioned in the application, and also Portevin (1931). Leraut's (1983) proposals transfer the name *Melanophila* to the genus called *Phaenops* and, for example, change the familiar *Melanophila acuminata* (De Geer), of current, longstanding use, to the unknown *Oxypteris acuminata*. I therefore support Mühle's application to conserve the longstanding usage of *Melanophila* and *Phaenops*.

In the application (para. 8) the gender of the name *Phaenops* was stated to be feminine. However, Article 30a(ii) of the Code makes a blanket requirement for all names ending in *-ops* to be of masculine gender. To my knowledge all workers, including its author (Dejean, 1833), have consistently treated *Phaenops* as feminine, and I therefore propose that the Commission be asked to sanction the continuing use of the feminine gender for the name.

The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary powers to rule that the gender of the generic name *Phaenops* Dejean, 1833 is feminine;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name *Phaenops* Dejean, 1833 (gender: feminine, as ruled in (1) above), type species by designation by Théry (1942) *Buprestis cyanea* Fabricius, 1775.



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