

COMMENTS ON *OTIORHYNCHUS* VERSUS *BRACHYRHINUS* (INSECTA,  
COLEOPTERA, FAMILY CURCULIONIDAE). Z.N.(S.) 1819  
(see volume 25, pages 29-35)

By Rose Ella Warner and T. J. Spilman (Systematic Entomology Laboratory, Agr. Res. Serv., USDA, c/o U.S. National Museum, Washington, D.C., U.S.A.)

The simple facts of the case have been given by its author, Dr. Elwood C. Zimmerman: *Brachyrhinus* Latreille, 1802, and *Otiorhynchus* Germar, 1824, are synonymous because their type-species are in the same genus though in different subgenera. *Curculio ligustici* Linnaeus is type-species of *Brachyrhinus* and *Curculio clavipes* Bonndorff is type-species of *Otiorhynchus*. He states that *Brachyrhinus* has clear priority.

His facts are essentially correct except that in part 2 the species *niger* and *ligustici* are said to now reside in the genus *Otiorhynchus*. That is only half the truth; the two species now reside in a genus called either *Otiorhynchus* or *Brachyrhinus*, depending on which is the correct name. To be absolutely correct technically, one should say the two species now reside in *Brachyrhinus* and will continue to do so until and unless the generic name is discarded by the Commission.

Both sides of the argument for the use of *Brachyrhinus* or *Otiorhynchus* are given, but the argument was more than slightly weighted in favour of *Otiorhynchus*. Twenty-six books or sets of books are cited in favour of *Otiorhynchus*, and their authors are lauded. Schoenherr is called "the great master" and his work "basic"; Lacordaire's work is "monumental"; Le Conte and Horn's work is "great"; Reitter's two works are "important". Yet, Bradley's *A Manual of the Genera of Beetles of America North of Mexico* (1930), Arnett's *The Beetles of the United States* (1960), and Dillon and Dillon's *A Manual of the Common Beetles of Eastern North America* (1961) are omitted; they use the name *Brachyrhinus*. Cannot these be considered great, or important, or basic? Kissinger's large key to subfamilies and genera of Curculionidae, using *Brachyrhinus*, was cited, but not termed "great" or "monumental"; one wonders why not. The name *Brachyrhinus* was used in Comstock's *An Introduction to Entomology*, in Essig's *College Entomology* and in Metcalf and Flint's *Destructive and Useful Insects*, three books not mentioned, on which most of the thousands of entomologists in North America were weaned. The name is and has been used by countless economic entomologists and county agricultural agents and has appeared in many state and government pamphlets and faunal lists. The name is in the *Common Names of Insects*, a list approved by the Entomological Society of America, with a membership of 5,387, and is accepted as the correct generic name by Canadian governmental units. Finally, a European work, Evert's *Coleoptera Neerlandica*, 3 volumes (1898-1922), is omitted; it used *Brachyrhinus*.

Actually, only four works are cited for *Brachyrhinus*, and each of these is disparaged. Not only that, but arguments for *Otiorhynchus* are given in the *Brachyrhinus* section. For example, Pierce is said to have done "much to confuse the taxonomy and nomenclature of the Curculionidae". Whatever Pierce's record in the Curculionidae might be, one thing is certain; in 1913 he was right in establishing the correct name for the genus. He must not be attacked for finding that correct answer. Indeed, he was following the lead of Bedel (1883), an earlier European worker. It should be remembered, therefore, that all authors who have used the name *Otiorhynchus* since 1913 are guilty of ignoring facts or of arbitrarily making nomenclatural decisions on their own. In the proposal those authors were spoken of as if they had done the correct thing.

The *Zoological Record*, said in the proposal to have "used *Otiorhynchus* for 100 years", does not by any stretch of the imagination choose a correct name for genera or species; it merely lists them as given by the author. For example, see page 271 of the Insecta section of *Zoological Record* of 1951 for a citation to an article in which *Brachyrhinus* is used by European authors. In that article Mühler and Fröhlich (1951,



*Beitr. Ent.* 1 (1) : 1-41) say, in translation, "The genus *Brachyrhinus* was validly described by Latreille in 1802 (*Hist. Nat. Crust. et Ins.* III, p. 200), the name *Otiorhynchus* by Germar in 1824 (*Ins. Spec. Novae* I, p. 343). Latreille included 4 species in the genus *Brachyrhinus*: *pyri*, *ligustici*, *lineatus* and *niger* F. One of these 4 species, therefore, must serve as the type-species of *Brachyrhinus*, and the application of the name *Brachyrhinus* will depend on which of these species is identified as the type-species. Now it seems to me that a selection of the type-species was really made by Latreille himself. In his third mention of the name (1807 *Gen. Crust.* II, p. 254) Latreille included only 3 species under *Brachyrhinus*: *viridis*, *incanus* and *ligustici*. Only one of these (*ligustici*) was also included with the original description of *Brachyrhinus*. It seems to me then that under strict application of the International Rules of Zoological Nomenclature the name *Brachyrhinus* must be used for *ligustici* and its relatives, which would represent the present-day concept of the genus '*Otiorhynchus*'."

Another cataloguing serial, *The Review of Applied Entomology*, is cited in favour of *Otiorhynchus* in the proposal, but not the *Index of American Economic Entomology*; the latter has 528 citations for the use of *Brachyrhinus* from 1915 to 1957. The name *Brachyrhinus* had had very extensive usage in many fields of entomology, and any change would cause serious difficulty. The problem concerns not merely curculionid taxonomists; it concerns many kinds of entomologists, and we must be concerned with them and their usage.

We agree with the statement made by Balfour-Browne and Zimmerman in 1957 (*Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 16 (1) : 11) that, "Many names which have been used in literature for long periods of time are used in error, and the number of times a name appears in literature is no absolute index to its correctness".

The persistent and erroneous use of the generic name *Otiorhynchus* has given rise to all the confusion. Therefore, to avoid compounding this confusion and to establish stability and uniformity the wisest and only course to follow is to conserve the valid generic name *Brachyrhinus* and to suppress and place the invalid generic name *Otiorhynchus* on the Index of Rejected and Invalid Names in Zoology.

By Patricia Vaurie (*The American Museum of Natural History, New York, U.S.A.*)

I wish to express my wholehearted support of the recent proposal by Elwood C. Zimmerman. It is evident from the extensive list of publications given by Dr. Zimmerman (on p. 31-32) that the use of *Otiorhynchus* is nearly universal so that it is in the interest of stability to keep this name for this enormous genus of weevils. I myself (1963, A revision of the South American genus *Hyphantus* (Coleoptera, Curculionidae, Otiorhynchinae), *Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.*) in my discussions used *Otiorhynchus*.

One point that has not been stressed in regard to the names *Otiorhynchus* and *Brachyrhinus* is that the genus in Europe and Asia (under the name *Otiorhynchus*) includes 1,000 or more species, whereas there are only a few species (six to eight) in North America (all are north of Mexico). These few, I believe, all originated from the Old World. It is true that these few species are economically important and that therefore there is much literature on them in the United States, but the species of the genus are also economically important in Europe where the literature is voluminous. Even in the United States, the usage of the name *Brachyrhinus*, as noted by Zimmerman, is not universal; I understand that, although the Index of American Economic Entomology used *Brachyrhinus* from 1915 to 1957, the Review of Applied Entomology (also an American publication) has used *Otiorhynchus*. A number of strictly North American works, not cited by Zimmerman, have, it is true, used *Brachyrhinus*, but these are mostly generic keys, or textbooks and manuals for American students.

In summary, I would say that the most widespread and important reference books (i.e., the Zoological Record and the world catalogue of beetles—Junk) use *Otiorhynchus*, that almost all European authors (see Zimmerman's list) used *Otiorhynchus* from



1802 to the present (and it is a chiefly palearctic genus), and that American authors did not use *Brachyrhinus* until Pierce's discovery that it was an earlier name (probably, but I am not sure, the species were not introduced into the United States until the turn of the century). Therefore I feel, along with Zimmerman, that we should conserve *Otiorhynchus* and suppress *Brachyrhinus*.

By M. G. Morris (*Monks Wood Experimental Station, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, England*)

I have no comments on matters of fact to add to Dr. Zimmerman's paper but I am in complete agreement with his arguments that the name *Otiorhynchus* should be placed on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology since this name has always been used in this country instead of *Brachyrhinus* except in a negligible number of instances. I therefore support this move on the part of Dr. Zimmerman and agree with all his six points proposed on page 33 of his paper.

By Theo. L. Bissell (*University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, U.S.A.*)

I am distressed to learn that Dr. E. C. Zimmerman has proposed that the curculionid name *Brachyrhinus* be supplanted by *Otiorhynchus*. Miss Rose Ella Warner and Mr. T. J. Spilman, in recent comments, show clearly that *Brachyrhinus* is the proper name by rules of priority. Also this name is thoroughly established for three of our common insect pests, alfalfa snout beetle, strawberry root weevil, black vine weevil and at least one other of common occurrence *Brachyrhinus rugosostriatus* (Goeze).

I have worked with these insects and written about them at odd times over quite a period of years and know that a change would seriously disrupt our workers in the future.

Dr. Zimmerman's arguments are entirely untenable and I trust the Commission will not agree to his proposal.

By D. G. Kissinger (*Biology Department, Atlantic Union College, So. Lancaster, Mass. 01561, U.S.A.*)

This letter is in support of the use of the name *Otiorhynchus* instead of *Brachyrhinus* for a large genus of Palearctic Curculionidae. This decision is not based on my personal preference—I am as fondly attached to the name *Brachyrhinus* as is any other North American coleopterist.

It is obvious that an official decision as to which name to use for this genus, the currently valid name *Brachyrhinus* or *Otiorhynchus*, has been needed for a long time. The direction the decision takes should not be unduly influenced by: (1) the excellence, or lack of it, in papers using the names; (2) the abilities as taxonomists of individuals using the names; (3) the number of papers using the name; (4) nationalistic tendencies; and (5) neglect of a valid name. I do not think that the first four items require any explanation. Item five is possibly at the crux of this problem. Individual scientists can make mistakes. The practitioners of a large segment of science can adopt these mistakes, especially if the "error" occurs early in the development of a science and is of no real consequence. In this case the mistake would be the accidental or intentional avoidance of a generic name, *Brachyrhinus*.

The question now is "What will the impending decision accomplish?" A vote in favour of retaining *Brachyrhinus* as the valid name will produce the following situation: the family-group names for subfamily and tribe will be based on *Otiorhynchus* (unless this is suppressed) and approximately 900 species-names would require transference to *Brachyrhinus*—a genus which apparently has never had a species originally described in it. While this route would be according to the current rules, it seems to entail the possibility of a great deal of confusion. A vote in favour of *Otiorhynchus* would stabilize the situation essentially as it is now without a wholesale transference of species-names from one genus to another. The exception would be the eleven



species of the genus introduced into North America which have already been transferred by common usage to *Brachyrhinus* and would require re-transfer.

In conclusion, currently the valid name is *Brachyrhinus*. Because the continued usage of the valid name seems to lead to taxonomic confusion, it appears desirable to conserve and to use instead a widely used but invalid name to reduce the possibility of confusion. For this reason I now favour the replacement of *Brachyrhinus* by *Otiorhynchus*.

By Roy A. Crowson (*Dept. of Zoology, The University, Glasgow*)

Dr. E. C. Zimmerman has performed a valuable service to European Coleopterists in his request to the Commission for the suppression of *Brachyrhinus* Latreille and the official validation of its synonym *Otiorhynchus* Germar. His list of important works in which the name *Otiorhynchus* is used is, as he implies, by no means exhaustive—I would add to them the most important works on the larvae, particularly those of van Emden (1952) and Scherf (1964), and Marshall's "Fauna of British India" volume (1916).

The replacement of *Otiorhynchus* by *Brachyrhinus* would serve absolutely no scientific purpose, save to place a needless obstacle between future students and the literature of the past—which as far as this genus is concerned is overwhelmingly European. As Zimmerman points out, *Otiorrhynchini* will have priority in any case as a tribal (and subfamilial) name. As I understood it, the inclusion in the Code of provisions to obviate such name-changing as this was one of the major obligations which the International Congress of Zoology laid on those it appointed to draw up the latest code of Zoological Nomenclature. If the name *Otiorhynchus* is allowed to fall to *Brachyrhinus*, many will take this as an indication that the International Commission is failing to honour its obligations to the general body of zoologists.

#### REFERENCES

- EMDEN, F. I. VAN. 1952. On the Taxonomy of Rhynchophora Larvae: Adelognatha and Alophinae. *Proc. zool. Soc. Lond.*, 122 : 651-795  
 MARSHALL, G. A. K. 1916. Coleoptera Curculionidae Part I. Fauna of British India  
 SCHERF, H. 1964. Die Entwicklungsstadien der mitteleuropäischen Curculioniden. *Abhandl. Senckenb. naturforsch. Ges.* 506. Frankfurt am Main

By R. T. Thompson (*British Museum (Natural History), London*)

We wish to lend our whole-hearted support to Dr. Zimmerman's plea for the suppression of *Brachyrhinus* Latreille, 1802, in favour of *Otiorhynchus* Germar, 1824. We feel that Dr. Zimmerman's plea is a full, clear and impartial exposition of the problem. His proposed solution will avoid unparalleled confusion, not only in the literature of pure and applied entomology but also in that concerning the wider field of general natural history.

This comment is supported by the following:

British Museum (Natural History):

J. Balfour-Browne, C. M. F. von Hayek, P. M. Hammond, R. D. Pope

Commonwealth Institute of Entomology:

N. A. Aslam, R. B. Madge, E. A. J. Duffy.

By A. Lindsley Gressitt (*Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Honolulu, Hawaii*)

In the controversy regarding the weevil generic names *Otiorhynchus* and *Brachyrhinus*, I would like to voice support of the proposal by Dr. E. C. Zimmerman, and speak against the one by Mrs. Rose Ella Warner-Spilman.

As pointed out by Dr. Zimmerman, the name *Otiorhynchus* has been far more widely used over a long period of years. It has been almost consistently used in Europe where the great majority of the species occur. The use of the name *Brachy-*



*rhinus* has largely been confined to America where only a few introduced European species occur.

As pointed out by Dr. Zimmerman, most weevil monographs and most long-standing general works have used *Otiorhynchus*. Most of the works mentioned by Mrs. Spilman are not weevil monographs, and not by weevil specialists, but general compilations, some of them of mediocre quality. Thus, they should not all be termed authoritative works.

In a case like this, I think it is very important to consider in particular the attitudes of the important weevil workers around the world. I think it will be found that most of them are in favour of the use of the name *Otiorhynchus*.

By Eduard Voss (*Harderberg, Germany*)

Wie mir Dr. Elwood Zimmerman, mitteilt und in einer Veröffentlichung (*Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 25 (1) : 29-35, 1968) näher erläutert, tritt er für die Erhaltung des Gattungsnamens *Otiorhynchus* Ger. ein und bittet, diesen anstelle des prioritätsberechtigten Namens *Brachyrhinus* Latr. zu schützen und ihn auf die "Official List of Generic Names in Zoology" zu setzen.

Ich möchte diesen Antrag vom Kollegen E. Zimmerman unterstützen und zwecks Vermeidung unabsehbarer Verwirrung in der Literatur bei Änderung des gebräuchlichen und in dem internationalen Schrifttum gegenüber *Brachyrhinus* bevorzugt verwendeten Namens *Otiorhynchus* bitten, letzteren zu erhalten.

Ein vergleichender Überblick über die katalogisierte systematische Literatur im *Col. Cat. Junk/Schenkling* Pars 148, 1936, p. 4, zeigt deutlich, dass die angeführten Zitate der Hauptbestimmungswerke unter dem Gattungsnamen *Otiorhynchus* ein Mehrfaches der unter dem Begriff *Brachyrhinus* aufgeführten beträgt. Dem übergeordneten Unterfamiliennamen *Brachyrhinae* käme vielleicht in historischer Sicht eine gewisse Bedeutung zu, wenn der Systematiker ähnlich wie Schoenherr zu der Ansicht kommen sollte, dass die *Otiorhynchinae* und die *Brachyrhinae* auf Grund gemeinsamer Merkmale (z.B. Erhaltung einer Mandibelnarbe etc.) zusammenzufassen wären. Aber dieser Gesichtspunkt dürfte nicht ausschlaggebend sein.

By G. Kuschel (*Entomology Division, D.S.I.R., Nelson, New Zealand*)

The problem of *Otiorhynchus* versus *Brachyrhinus* has been objectively presented by Dr. Elwood C. Zimmerman. I am in full agreement with Dr. Zimmerman's proposal that the generic name *Brachyrhinus* Latreille should be suppressed in favour of its junior synonym *Otiorhynchus* Germar because (1) *Otiorhynchus* contains more than a thousand taxa, all native to the Palearctic region, for which this name has always been and still is the overwhelmingly prevalent name; (2) *Otiorhynchus* has been used (a) in all leading works on the classification of Curculionidae (Schönherr, Lacordaire, Leconte), (b) in all monographs of the genus (Stierlin, Seidlitz, Marseul, and Apfelbeck), (c) in all but one of the faunistic treatises of countries, or groups of countries of the Palearctic region, including the very recent ones of France and Denmark, and (d) in the two major catalogues (Gemminger-Harold and Junk); (3) the large and well known family-group name *Otiorhynchinae* has priority over *Brachyrhinae* and would have to stay, thus the retention of *Otiorhynchus* would be most convenient; and (4) the name *Brachyrhinus* was coined only for a very limited number of species and used almost exclusively for species introduced to the Nearctic while *Otiorhynchus* is the prevalent name for introduced species of all three continents of the southern hemisphere.

Although priority is in favour of *Brachyrhinus*, a suppression of this name would certainly serve an important cause of stability and avoid a major reshuffling of over a thousand species.



By Melville H. Hatch (*University of Washington, Seattle, Washington, U.S.A.*)

In the first place, I suggest that approval of Zimmerman's proposal would (I use the subjunctive because I am reluctant to believe that the International Commission will be so unwise as to approve this proposal) constitute a nefarious tampering with the long established rule of priority in zoological nomenclature. Only in most extreme cases should the principle of priority be set aside. As I see it, the real function of the International Commission is interpreting the International Rules of Zoological Nomenclature as they apply to individual cases and rendering decisions where true and genuine ambiguities exist. It should, in my opinion, be only with the very greatest care and reluctance that the rules should be set aside.

For over 50 years, since Pierce's 1913 publication, the situation has been clearly presented to entomologists, and the name *Brachyrhinus* has, virtually without exception, been employed by workers in the United States and Canada since the appearance of Leng's *Catalogue of the Coleoptera of America, North of Mexico* in 1920. Included in the genus in North America are several species of great and widespread economic importance, which must have been mentioned hundreds of times in the North American literature.

Next, no real confusion of usage is involved. Neither name has, in recent decades, been applied to more than the single genus under discussion. *Otiorhynchus* is a clear cut synonym of *Brachyrhinus*, or, if the Commission is so unwise as to approve Dr. Zimmerman's proposal, *Brachyrhinus* is a "nomen oblitum" synonym of *Otiorhynchus*.

Finally, I would point out that the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature is already in serious trouble because of its tampering with the principle of Priority in the matter of the "fifty year rule" in Art. 23b. The XIIth International Congress of Entomology in London in 1964 voted that entomologists are not bound by this rule and names of insects constitute a large majority of zoological names.

By Donald W. Davis (*Utah State University, Logan, Utah, U.S.A.*)

I wish to express an opinion in opposition to the proposal to establish the name *Otiorhynchus* in place of *Brachyrhinus*.

For many years we have used the name *Brachyrhinus* exclusively in our work. There have been several hundred publications, largely in applied entomology, during the past 30 years. The name *Brachyrhinus* is so firmly entrenched in the minds of American entomologists that a change would result in considerable confusion.

As I interpret the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, the name with priority should be abandoned only in cases where it has not received wide usage. I have no idea of the relative frequency of use of these two names, but I do know that *Brachyrhinus* is certainly used extensively on the North American continent.

By Ray F. Smith (*University of California, Berkeley, California, U.S.A.*)

In Zimmerman's application he either states or infers that *Brachyrhinus* is little used. Without attempting to comment on the nomenclatorial status of *Brachyrhinus* vs. *Otiorhynchus* (I understand for the Zimmerman application that *Brachyrhinus* is the valid name and that the rules must be set aside to use *Otiorhynchus*), I would like to comment on the use of *Brachyrhinus* in the United States. There are at least five species that are economically important in the western United States and others in other parts of North America. The name *Brachyrhinus* has been used exclusively in the United States. This name has been so well established here that economic entomologists, extension people, and even growers are familiar with this name. It would definitely be an inconvenience to change this name. Furthermore this name change would be another blow to the status and stability of nomenclature in the eyes of the crop protection specialists.



Warner, Rose Ella and Spilman, T. J. 1969. "Comments on *Otiorhynchus* versus *Brachyrhinus* (Insecta, Coleoptera, family Curculionidae). Z.N. (S.) 1819. (See volume 25, pages 29-35.)." *The Bulletin of zoological nomenclature* 25, 204–209.  
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