

**MICROGASTER LATREILLE, 1804 (INSECTA, HYMENOPTERA):
PROPOSED DESIGNATION OF *MICROGASTER AUSTRALIS*
THOMSON, 1895 AS TYPE SPECIES. Z.N.(S.)2397**

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The Braconid genus *Microgaster* was described by Latreille (1804) with *Ichneumon deprimator* Fabricius, 1798 as an included species, and in 1810 he designated (p. 436) *I. deprimator* Fab. as type of the genus. In 1862 Foerster subdivided *Microgaster* into 3 genera, *Microgaster*, *Microplitis* Foerster, and *Apanteles* Foerster. He quoted Latreille's type designation for *Microgaster*, and designated (p. 245) *Microgaster sordipes* Nees, 1834 (vol. 1, p. 167) as type of *Microplitis*.

2. *Microgaster* was used for the entire group nowadays called Microgastrini or Microgastrinae until Foerster (1862) restricted it. There followed a century of stability until Nixon (1965) made another subdivision. He kept the name *Microgaster* for those species that in the North Temperate Zone form the largest part of the genus *Microgaster* Latr. In Europe, for instance, about two-thirds of the species of *Microgaster* (*sensu* Foerster) are still in *Microgaster* (*sensu* Nixon). Nixon further revised *Microgaster* in 1968. The genus is large, the Shenefelt (1973) catalogue containing 45 pages of entries.

3. The usage and limits of *Microplitis* Foerster have remained stable since 1862. The N.W. European species were reviewed by Nixon (1975). Shenefelt's catalogue has 33 pages of listings for *Microplitis*, including over 140 species and at least 2,000 entries.

4. Dr C. van Achterberg (1982) has shown that the lectotype specimen of *I. deprimator* Fab. is a species of *Microplitis* congeneric with *M. sordipes* Nees, the type species of *Microplitis*. Through the courtesy of Dr Paul Marsh, Washington, I have seen the notes made by Mr C. F. W. Muesebeck when he studied the Fabricius types in 1928. They agree with Dr van Achterberg's observations, but the findings were never published.

5. It seems probable that Foerster (1862) misidentified *I. deprimator* Fab. and that this interpretation has established the use of *Microgaster* since then. Both *Microgaster sensu* Nixon and *Microplitis* Foerster are large and widespread genera containing many important parasites of economically significant Lepidoptera. *Microgaster* species attack microlepidoptera and are abundant in the Holarctic region. *Microplitis* species attack macrolepidoptera and are found world-wide, being many times more numerous than species of *Microgaster*. If the already familiar and well established name *Microgaster* Latr., 1804 were transferred to the genus now known as *Microplitis* Foerster, 1862 it would replace the latter name and cause endless confusion in fields of ecology and biological control. I see no good reason to perform this game of nomenclatural musical chairs.

6. A solution would be for the Commission to set aside the designation of *I. deprimator* Fab. as type species of *Microgaster* Latreille and to designate a new type species that will preserve the usage of *Microgaster*, *sensu* Nixon (1965, 1968). I suggest that *Microgaster australis* Thomson, 1895, which Nixon (1968, p. 51) and van Achterberg (1982) synonymized with *M. deprimator* Auct., would be the suitable type species.

7. The International Commission for Zoological Nomenclature is therefore asked:

- (1) to use its plenary powers to set aside all designations of type species for the nominal genus *Microgaster* Latreille, 1804, and having done so, to designate *Microgaster australis* Thomson, 1895, as the type species;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name *Microgaster* Latreille, 1804 (gender: masculine), type species, by designation under the plenary powers in (1) above, *Microgaster australis* Thomson, 1895;
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *australis* Thomson, 1895, as published in the binomen *Microgaster australis* (specific name of the type species of *Microgaster* Latreille, 1804).

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