Case 3349

Gnorimus Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau & Serville, 1828 and Osmoderma Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau & Serville, 1828 (Insecta, Coleoptera): proposed conservation of the generic names

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Abstract. The purpose of this application, under Article 23.9.3 of the Code, is to conserve the names Gnorimus Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau & Serville, 1828, and Osmoderma Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau & Serville, 1828, for dead-wood and pollen-feeding scarab beetles (Scarabaeidae) from the Palaearctic and North America. The names are threatened by two senior synonyms, the long forgotten but recently used names Aleurostictus Kirby, 1827 and Gymnodus Kirby, 1827, respectively. The suppression of the two senior synonyms is proposed.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Coleoptera; Scarabaeidae; Gnorimus; Osmoderma; Aleurostictus; Gymnodus; Acari; Ascidae; scarab beetles; mites; Palaearctic; North America.

I. Kirby (1827) introduced seven genus-group names as subgenera of Trichius Fabricius, 1775 (Scarabaeidae, Trichinae): Aleurostictus, Archimedes, Euclides, Gymnodus, Legitimus, Tetrophthalmus, and Trichius. He introduced these names as masculine nouns in the plural form (Aleurosticti, Gymnodi, etc.) but the most influential authors of the time either overlooked Kirby’s names (Gory & Percheron, 1833) or treated them as synonyms (Burmeister & Schaum, 1840; Lacordaire, 1856, p. 557). Thus, these names either gained only limited acceptance during a short period after their introduction, or instantly fell into disuse (Smith, 2004). Case 3314 (BZN 62: 75–78) applied for the suppression of two of them, Tetrophthalmus Kirby
and Trichinus Kirby, in favour of long established names. Recently another two of Kirby’s names, Aleurostictus Kirby, 1827 (p. 157) and Gymnodus Kirby, 1827 (p. 157), reappeared in the literature as valid names for the well-known Holarctic genera Gnorimus and Osmoderma respectively (see paras. 3 and 4 below).

2. These two names, Gnorimus and Osmoderma, were published the year after Kirby’s paper by Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau & Serville (1828, p. 702) as subgenera (‘subdivisions’) of Trichinus Fabricius. The authors did not refer to Kirby’s paper and did not designate type species.

3. MacLeay (1838, p. 16) designated Scarabaeus eremita Scopoli, 1763 (p. 7) (which he referred to as Trichius eremita Fabricius, 1792) as the type species of Osmoderma Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau & Serville, 1828, making it a junior objective synonym of Gymnodus Kirby, 1827, because the latter has the same type species by monotypy. However, MacLeay treated Osmoderma as a valid name and Gymnodus as an invalid synonym. This was followed by all subsequent authors for over 150 years – 35 references of articles and books published between 1958 and 2003 are listed by Smith (2004, p. 287) and more than 150 references from the last 130 years by Ranius et al. (2005, pp. 22–30). Recently, however, Gymnodus has been treated as a valid name by Adam (1994; 2003, p. 129) and Gusakov (2002). Smith (2004) intended to reverse the precedence of Gymnodus and placed it as a junior synonym of Osmoderma. However, the conditions for prevailing usage (Article 23.9.2 of the Code) were arguably not met because Ádám (1994, p. 10) used it as a valid name. Smith (2004) considered Ádám’s paper a ‘list of names’ that ‘must not be taken into account in determining usage under Article 23.9.1.1’ (Article 23.9.6.). However, the other three authors of this Case believe that Ádám’s list is not covered by Article 23.9.6 because it is not a ‘list of names’ but a list of taxa (i.e. containing information about the species beyond their names, namely their occurrence in Hungary), thus being valid for determining usage. Actually, it has already been followed by several authors (see above and para. 4 below).

4. MacLeay (1838, p. 15) synonymized Gnorimus Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau & Serville with Aleurostictus Kirby while keeping the latter (‘Aleurosticti’) as a valid name. However, at that time Gnorimus had already been in common use (Stephens, 1830, p. 231; Gory & Percheron, 1833, p. 100; Curtis, 1837, p. 21). Blanchard (1845, p. 233) designated Scarabaeus nobilis Linnaeus, 1758 (p. 353) (currently Gnormius nobilis) as the type species of Gnorimus. By designating Scarabaeus nobilis Linnaeus, 1758 the type species of Aleurostictus, Smith (2004, p. 286) made Aleurostictus an objective synonym of Gnorimus. After Stephens (1839, p. 170), who was the last to use Aleurostictus as valid before 1994, Gnorimus has been considered a valid name by all authors. However, in 1994, Ádám used Aleurostictus in his Hungarian checklist of Scarabaeoidea, which was then followed by Tauzin (2000, 2004a, b), Fujioka (2001, p. 126), Gusakov (2002), Uguarte San Vicente & Uguarte Arrue (2002), Ádám (2003, p. 129) and Whitehead (2003). However, Tauzin (2004a, b) obviously was not fully sure about his intentional use of the virtually unused name Aleurostictus, because he mentioned having sent an application to ‘Entomological Records’ to decide whether his usage is permissible and acceptable (Tauzin, 2004a, p. 33; 2004b, p. 78). Gnorimus is still the predominant name (Tremblay, 2000, p. 87; Cooter, 2001; Gebicki, 2001; Lo Cascio, 2001, p. 185f; Brechtel & Kostenbader, 2002, p. 565; Frank & Konzelmann, 2002, p. 131; Mico & Galante, 2002, p. 59f; Nilsson et al., 2002, p. 84; Ranius &

Dechambre (2001) listed 34 additional references covering the years 1952–2000 to meet Article 23.9.1.2 and declared *Alewostictus* a nomen nudum. However, Adam’s (1994, p. 10) use of *Alewostictus* as a valid name prevents the application of Article 23.9.2.

5. Both *Gnorimus* and *Osmoderma* are in wide use for well-known species of importance in conservation. *Osmoderma eremita* (Scopoli, 1763) is a priority species of the habitat directive of the European Union (92/43/EEC), is listed in the Bern Convention (Luce 1996) and classified as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species (www.redlist.org). Two widespread European *Gnorimus* species, *G. nobilis* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *G. variabilis* (Linnaeus, 1758), are on the Priority Species List of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (www.english-nature.org.uk/baps/pdf/Priority.pdf) and on the Red Lists of most European countries; the third known European species, *G. decempunctatus* Helfer, 1834 (endemic to Sicily), will be established as a focal species in the Italian Red List, with Sicilian endemic *Osmoderma cristinae* Sparacio, 1994 (Audisio et al., 2003; Brustel, 2004). We agree with Tauzin’s (2002, p. 147) conclusion that there is no need or advantage in replacing those names by long-forgotten senior synonyms. A change of the generic names *Gnorimus* and *Osmoderma* would not only cause confusion amongst the large community of conservationists and ecologists dealing with these species, but also threatens the legal protection of the species since *Gymnodus* and *Aleurostictus* are not included in legal documents.

6. Chaudhri (1975, p. 100), described the mite genus *Gnorimus* (Acari: Mesostigmata: ASCIDAE) (type species by monotypy: *Gnorimus tabella* Chaudhri, 1975). This genus has been rarely mentioned in literature (Gupta & Ray, 1981, p. 267; Wu & Wang, 1982; Zhang & Lin, 1986, p. 84; Moraes et al., 1986, p. 153; Zhang & Lin, 1989, 1991). In 1994, Chant & McMurtry (p. 225) synonymised *Gnorimus* Chaudri with *Lasioseius* Berlese which was agreed by Walter & Lindquist (1997, p. 526) who pointed out that Chaudhri’s name was preoccupied by *Gnorimus* Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau & Serville. In recent years, *Gnorimus* Chaudri has occasionally been used as a valid name (Parvez et al., 2000; Moraes et al., 2004, p. 5), but is not threatening *Gnorimus* Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau & Serville, and we are confident that its status as synonym and junior homonym will be accepted soon. Because of its synonymy with *Lasioseius*, a replacement name for *Gnorimus* Chaudhri is currently unnecessary.

7. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

(1) to use its plenary power to suppress the following generic names for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy:
   (a) *Aleurostictus* Kirby, 1827;
   (b) *Gymnodus* Kirby, 1827;
(2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
(a) *Gnorimus* Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau & Serville, 1828 (gender: masculine), type species by subsequent designation by Blanchard (1845) *Scarabaeus nobilis* Linnaeus, 1758;

(b) *Osmoderma* Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau & Serville, 1828 (gender: neuter), type species by subsequent designation by MacLeay (1838) *Scarabaeus eremita* Scopoli, 1763;

(3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names:
(a) *eremita* Scopoli, 1763, as published in the binomen *Scarabaeus eremita* (the type species of *Osmoderma* Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau & Serville, 1828);
(b) *nobilis* Linnaeus, 1758, as published in the binomen *Scarabaeus nobilis* (the type species of *Gnorimus* Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau & Serville, 1828);

(4) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
(a) *Aleurostictus* Kirby, 1827, as suppressed in (1)(a) above;
(b) *Gymnodus* Kirby, 1827, as suppressed in (1)(b) above;
(c) *Gnorimus* Chaudhri, 1975 (a junior homonym of *Gnorimus* Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau & Serville, 1828).

References


Scopoli, I.A. 1763. Entomologia carniolica exhibens Insecta Cornioliae indigena [...]. Trattner, Vindobonae.


Acknowledgement of receipt of this publication was published in BZN 62: 126.

Comments on this case are invited for publication (subject to editing) in the Bulletin; they should be sent to the Executive Secretary, I.C.Z.N., Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, U.K. (e-mail: iczn@nhm.ac.uk).

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