TRICHOMONAS DONNE, 1836 (PROTOZOA, MASTIGOPHORA): PROPOSED CONFIRMATION OF SPELLING. Z.N.(S.)245

By The Executive Secretary, International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature

The flagellate Protistans known as trichomonads are universally distributed in the intestinal and genito-urinary tracts of man and other animals. A number of species can be pathogenic, and in particular hundreds of papers each year refer to *Trichomonas vaginalis*.

2. A nomenclatural problem arises because the first description of a trichomonad (Donne, 1836) introduced the name as *Trico-monas*. An adoption of *Tricomonas* as the correct spelling would have particularly serious effects for the automatic information retrieval procedures now used to scan the medical literature, and conservation of the universally used *Trichomonas* is particularly urgent since the Council for International Organisations of Medical Sciences is preparing an authoritative International Nomenclature of Diseases.

3. The question of *Trichomonas*, together with four other important protistan genera, was in fact referred to the Commission in 1926. Although *Endamoeba* and *Trypanosoma* were placed on the Official List by Opinion 95 (Smithson. misc. Coll. vol. 73, pp. 14–15), consideration of *Trichomonas*, *Balantidium* and *Giardia* was deferred (despite apparent lack of controversy in acceptance of the spelling *Trichomonas*) and no action followed.

4. The spelling of *Trichomonas* was next discussed in a letter from Professor Harold Kirby of the University of California, received in January 1947. This was followed later in the year by a draft application. Due to lack of resources the Secretary of the Commission (A. F. Hemming) did not proceed further until 1954, when, following correspondence with Dr Ellsworth C. Dougherty of the University of California (Kirby having died in 1952), Dr J. O. Corliss and others, the application was prepared for publication. Unfortunately this was never completed and the matter lapsed. The present application relies heavily on the work of Kirby, Hemming, Dougherty and Corliss.

5. The nomenclatural history is as follows. In a letter to the Académie des Sciences, Donné (1836, p. 386), after a description of motile cells found in infected vaginal fluid, wrote: ... J'ai soumis ces animalcules à l'examen de M. Dujardin: suivant cet observateur, aucun infusoire semblable n'a été observé ni décrit; il se rapproche des Monas par sa trompe et des Tricodes par ces cils, mais il diffère des uns et des autres par la réunion de ces deux organes; il forme donc un genre nouveau qui pourrait porter le nom de *Trico-monas vaginale*. The following year Donné (1837, p. 464) gave the name as *trico monas vaginale*.

6. In 1838 Ehrenberg (p. 331) printed the name of Donné’s organism in emended form as *Trichomonas vaginalis*, and it has so remained ever
since. This spelling of the specific name is correct under Article 31(c) of the Code.

7. Dujardin (1841, pp. 299–300) gave an account of *Trichomonas*, including in it the two species *T. vaginalis* and *T. limacis*.

8. Agassiz (1846, p. 376) listed the names *Tricomonas* Donné, 1837 and *Trichomonas* Ehr., 1838; he omitted reference to Donné's fuller 1836 paper. Apstein (1915, p. 122) included 'Trichomonas Donné, 1837 vaginalis Donné, 1837' in a list of suggested Nomina Conservanda; similarly, Stiles and Hassall (1925, p. 27) placed in the *Key Catalogue of Protozoa reported for Man* the genus *Trichomonas* Donné, 1837 with type *vaginalis* Donné, 1837.

9. Although in 1926 the Secretary of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature recommended that the Commission adopt 'Trichomonas (Donné, 1837) Ehrenb., 1838a, 331 (emendation of *Tricomonas*), mt. *vaginalis* Donné, 1837', and there was no dissent, this was never completed, as mentioned above.


12. In his 1836 description of the organism Donné made particular reference to the cilia, and it is clear that his name is derived from the Greek words conventionally, then as now, transliterated as *trichos* (= of hair) and *monas* (= a unit, or cell).

13. Family-group names based on *Trichomonas* are *Trichomonadidae* Grassi, 1882 (p. 141); *Trichomonadinae* Chalmers and Pekkola, 1918 (p. 251); and *Trichomonadidae* Wenyon, 1926 (p. 286). Under Article 11(f)(ii) of the Code the author is Grassi, 1882.

14. As noted earlier, it is of high medical and veterinary importance that the universal spelling *Trichomonas* be conserved. This could be done by suppression of the senior synonym *Tricomonas* Donné, 1836 in favour of *Trichomonas* Ehrenberg, 1838. However, as suggested many years ago by Kirby in his draft application to the Commission, and as was informally agreed at that time, 'the authorship of the genus [and discovery of the taxon] has been credited to Donné, and it does not seem proper to alter the authorship completely because of a correction in transliteration'.

15. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is therefore asked:

   (1) to use its plenary powers to rule that the correct spelling of the generic name *Tricomonas* Donné, 1836 is *Trichomonas*;
(2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name *Trichomonas* Donné, 1836 (gender: feminine), type species by monotypy *Trichomonas vaginalis* Donné, 1836; spelling confirmed as in (1) above;

(3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *vaginalis* Donné, 1836, as published in the binomen *Trichomonas vaginale* (specific name of the type species of *Trichomonas* Donné, 1836);

(4) to place on the Official List of Family-Group Names in Zoology the name TRiCHOMONADIDAe Grassi, 1882 (type genus *Trichomonas* Donné, 1836).

REFERENCES


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