Case 3236

Zeriassa Pocock, 1897 (September) (Arachnida, Solifugae): proposed precedence over Canentis Pavesi, 1897 (August)

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Abstract. The purpose of this application, under Articles 23.9.3 and 81.2.3 of the Code, is to conserve the generic name Zeriassa Pocock, 1897 for a group of sun spiders (family Solpugidae) by giving it precedence over the unused older name Canentis Pavesi, 1897 whenever the two names are considered to be synonyms.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Arachnida; Solpugidae; Zeriassa; Canentis; Zeriassa bicolor; Zeriassa ruspolii; sun spiders; Africa.

1. In September 1897, Pocock (1897b, p. 252) proposed the generic name Zeriassa for a species of sun spider Zeria bicolor Pocock, 1897a (p. 392) (family Solpugidae) that had been collected from an unspecified locality in Somalia. The type species of Zeriassa is Zeria bicolor Pocock, 1897a by original designation (Pocock, 1897b, p. 255).

2. At virtually the same time, Pavesi (12 August 1897, p. 158) named the genus Canentis for the new nominal species C. ruspolii Pavesi, 1897 (p. 159) from Somalia. The holotype (a female specimen) is lodged in the Museo Civico di Storia Naturale di Genova and was examined by Simonetta & Delia Cave, who (1968) redescribed the species based upon the holotype and several other specimens from Somalia and Ethiopia. C. ruspolii Pavesi, 1897 is the type species of Canentis by original designation and monotypy.

3. Both Pocock (1897b) and Pavesi (1897) noted the distinctive setal morphology of the eye tubercle that is diagnostic of these species of sun spiders. This feature enabled Kraepelin (1901, p. 81) to recognize the two generic names as synonyms, and he used the name Zeriassa as the valid name.

4. Despite Kraepelin's (1901) use of Zeriassa, it is clear that Canentis has strict priority over Zeriassa, as it was published a month prior to Zeriassa. However, Canentis has not been used as a valid name since Pavesi first established it over a hundred years ago, whereas Zeriassa is currently in use for 17 species (including Z. ruspolii) found in southern and eastern Africa (e.g. Roewer, 1933; Simonetta & Della Cave, 1968; Wharton, 1981). The use of the name Canentis in place of Zeriassa would entail considerable confusion and would be contrary to the spirit of the Code (see Article 23.9.3). Although the name Canentis has not been used for over a hundred years (see Article 23.9.1.1), the name Zeriassa does not meet the criteria of Article 23.9.1.2 for 'automatic' conservation because so few authors have studied this group of animals. I propose that Zeriassa is given precedence (see Article 81.2.3) over
Canentis whenever these names are considered to be synonyms. However if, in the light of future research, Zeriassa is found not to be congeneric with Canentis both names are still available to denote the two taxa.

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

(1) to use its plenary power to give the name Zeriassa Pocock, 1897 precedence over the name Canentis Pavesi, 1897, whenever the two names are considered to be synonyms;

(2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
   (a) Zeriassa Pocock, 1897 (gender: feminine), type species by original designation Zeria bicolor Pocock, 1897, with the endorsement that it is to be given precedence over the name Canentis Pavesi, 1897 whenever the two names are considered to be synonyms;
   (b) Canentis Pavesi, 1897 (gender: masculine), type species by original designation and monotypy C. ruspolii Pavesi, 1897, with the endorsement that it is not to be given priority over the name Zeriassa Pocock, 1897 whenever the two names are considered to be synonyms;

(3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names:
   (a) bicolor Pocock, 1897, as published in the binomen Zeria bicolor (specific name of the type species of Zeriassa Pocock, 1897);
   (b) ruspolii Pavesi, 1897, as published in the binomen Canentis ruspoli (specific name of the type species of Canentis Pavesi, 1897).

References


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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., c/o The Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, U.K. (e-mail: iczn@nhm.ac.uk).

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