

Case 3202

Podalgus* Burmeister, 1847 and *Philoscaptus* Brèthes, 1919 (Insecta, Coleoptera): proposed conservation by the designation of *Podalgus cuniculus* Burmeister, 1847 as the type species of *Podalgus

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Abstract. The type species of *Podalgus* Burmeister, 1847 (SCARABAEIDAE, DYNASTINAE) is formally *P. bonariensis* Burmeister, 1847 but this fixation has been rejected or ignored by virtually all authors. The purpose of this application is to accept the designation by Arrow (1908) of *P. cuniculus* Burmeister, 1847, thereby maintaining the current usage of *Podalgus* for an abundant small rhinoceros beetle from the northern Afrotropics, North Africa, Arabia and west Asia to northern India, and *Philoscaptus* Brèthes, 1919 (type species *Podalgus bonariensis*, by monotypy) for South American species.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Coleoptera; SCARABAEIDAE; DYNASTINAE; *Podalgus*; *Philoscaptus*; *Podalgus cuniculus*; *Philoscaptus bonariensis*; rhinoceros beetles; Africa; Asia; South America.

1. Dejean (1833, p. 152) published the nomen nudum *Podalgus cuniculus* for an undescribed species from Senegal. Burmeister (1847) published the first description for both the genus (p. 117) and species (p. 119), rendering the names available. *Podalgus cuniculus* refers to a common and widespread small rhinoceros beetle (SCARABAEIDAE, DYNASTINAE) from Africa, Arabia and western Asia to northern India. Burmeister initially included some American species in *Podalgus*, the first listed being *P. bonariensis* Burmeister, 1847 (p. 118) from Argentina. He did not designate a type species for the genus.

2. Later in the same book, Burmeister (1847, p. 542) transferred some of the American species from *Podalgus* into his new genus *Ligyris*. Lacordaire (1856, p. 408) removed the remaining American species from *Podalgus* and placed them in *Scaptophilus* Burmeister, 1847, *Bothynus* Hope, 1837, and in a 'genre nouveau' to which he did not give a name. The last comprised *P. bonariensis*, *P. obesus* Burmeister, 1847 and three other species. As a result, only the Afroasian species *P. cuniculus* remained in *Podalgus*.

3. Despite this, Reiche (1859, p. 10) designated *Podalgus bonariensis* from Argentina as the type species of *Podalgus*, and for *P. cuniculus* he introduced the new monotypic genus *Vertumnus* (however, this generic name is twice preoccupied). This taxonomic arrangement was followed only by Gemminger & Harold (1869), Fairmaire (1895; see para. 4 below) and, as far as *P. bonariensis* is concerned, by Bruch (1911; but not 1915 – see para. 5 below).

4. Unaware of the nominal species *Podalgus cuniculus*, Semenow (1889) described the same taxon under the name *Crator infantulus* (p. 207), while introducing the new genus *Crator* (p. 206). Fairmaire (1895) synonymized *Crator* with *Vertumnus* Reiche, 1859 and used the latter name, unaware that it is a junior homonym. After Reitter (1899, p. 38) had noted the homonymy of *Vertumnus* Reiche and adopted *Crator* instead, this name was used occasionally until the end of the 1950s, mostly by authors working on the northern African fauna. To my knowledge the name *Crator* has been used only in the works by Winkler (1929), Peyerimhoff (1931), Zavattari (1934), Normand (1936), Mateu Sanpere (1950), Kocher & Reymond (1954), Kocher (1958) and Petrovitz (1958).

5. Arrow (1908, p. 341) transferred *Podalgus bonariensis* to the genus *Ligyris* Burmeister, 1847 (which was followed by Bruch, 1915), and designated *P. cuniculus* as the type species of *Podalgus*, in accord with the early taxonomic history (see paras. 1 and 2 above) of the two genera. Arrow's type species designation was accepted by Paulian (1954), Medvedev (1960), Ferreira (1966), Endrödi (1969b, 1985) and Nikolaev (1987), and was independently proposed by Prell (1936). *Podalgus* is currently the only generic name in use for *P. cuniculus* (see above; also Arrow, 1937, Baraud, 1985, and a number of regional publications on the fauna of Israel, Arabia and North Africa, a list of which is held by the Commission Secretariat).

6. Brèthes (1919, p. 602) introduced the name *Philoscaptus* for Lacordaire's (1856) unnamed new genus (see para. 2 above). *Podalgus bonariensis* is the type by monotypy because only this species was definitely included in the genus; two other nominal species, *Podalgus obesus* Burmeister (= *Aphonus castaneus* (Melsheimer)) and *Heteronychus globosus* Burmeister (currently *Eutheola bidentata* (Burmeister)), were only tentatively included. *Philoscaptus* is currently treated as a distinct genus which includes two species (Endrödi, 1969a; Dechambre, 1979), and has been included in standard catalogues (Arrow, 1937 and Blackwelder, 1944).

7. The names *Podalgus* Burmeister, 1847 and *Philoscaptus* Brèthes, 1919 have been in use in their current senses since 1908 (Arrow's type species designation) and 1919 (original publication) respectively. Acceptance of Reiche's (1859) designation of *Podalgus bonariensis* as the type species of *Podalgus* would mean the transfer of the name *Podalgus* to the New World genus currently known as *Philoscaptus*, loss of the latter name as a junior objective synonym of *Podalgus*, and resurrection of the disused name *Crator* Semenow, 1889 for the Afroasian taxon currently known as *Podalgus*. As with any transfer of a name between taxa this would inevitably cause considerable and unnecessary confusion.

8. I propose that the type designation for *Podalgus* made by Reiche (1859) be set aside and that *P. cuniculus* Burmeister, 1847 be confirmed as the type species following the designation by Arrow (1908). This will allow the accustomed usages of the names *Podalgus* and *Philoscaptus* for Afroasian and American genera respectively to be maintained.

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

- (1) to use its plenary power to set aside all fixations of type species for the nominal genus *Podalgus* Burmeister, 1847 prior to the designation by Arrow (1908) of *Podalgus cuniculus* Burmeister, 1847;

- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
 - (a) *Podalgus* Burmeister, 1847 (gender: masculine), type species by subsequent designation by Arrow (1908) *Podalgus cuniculus* Burmeister, 1847, as ruled in (1) above;
 - (b) *Philoscaptus* Brèthes, 1919 (gender: masculine), type species by monotypy *Podalgus bonariensis* Burmeister, 1847;
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names:
 - (a) *cuniculus* Burmeister, 1847, as published in the binomen *Podalgus cuniculus* (specific name of the type species of *Podalgus* Burmeister, 1847);
 - (b) *bonariensis* Burmeister, 1847, as published in the binomen *Podalgus bonariensis* (specific name of the type species of *Philoscaptus* Brèthes, 1919).

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