Case 2975

_Metaphycus_ Mercet, 1917 (Insecta, Hymenoptera): proposed precedence over _Aenasioidea_ Girault, 1911

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to conserve the well-known name _Metaphycus_ Mercet, 1917 for a genus of parasitic wasps (family _Encyrtidae_) by giving it precedence over the senior subjective synonym _Aenasioidea_ Girault, 1911. The latter name is considerably less well known. A number of _Metaphycus_ species are of economic importance.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Hymenoptera; parasitic wasps; _Metaphycus_.

1. In 1911 Girault (p. 171) established the genus _Aenasioidea_, with type species _Aenasioidea latiscapus_ Girault, 1911 (p. 173) by original designation and monotypy, from Illinois, U.S.A. The species was described from six female specimens housed in the Illinois Natural History Survey, Urbana. Frison (1927, p. 217) designated a dry mounted specimen as the lectotype.

2. Mercet (1917, p. 138) established _Metaphycus_ as a subgenus of _Aphycus_, with type species _Aphycus zebratus_ Mercet, 1917 (p. 138, fig. 6) by monotypy, from Spain. A slide specimen in the Instituto Español de Entomología in Madrid might be a syntype of _Aph. zebratus_ (see Noyes, 1981, p. 169). _Metaphycus_ was elevated to generic rank by Mercet (1925, p. 28) and since that time has been regarded universally as a valid genus in the family _Encyrtidae_ (Hymenoptera, _Chalcidoidea_).

3. A recent examination by us of the lectotype of the type species of _Aenasioidea_ Girault, 1911 has shown that it is so closely related to the type species of _Metaphycus_ Mercet, 1917 that the two genera can no longer be considered as distinct. The name _Metaphycus_ must therefore be considered a junior subjective synonym of _Aenasioidea_ (see Noyes & Woolley, 1994, p. 1329).

4. The name _Aenasioidea_ Girault, 1911 has been used as valid in fewer than 30 separate publications and is currently used in combination with no more than 10 species names that are considered valid. Only two of these names are used correctly in combination with _Aenasioidea_ in its narrowest sense. No species are considered to be of economic importance.

5. In contrast, _Metaphycus_ Mercet, 1917 has been used as a valid name in at least 350 separate publications and is currently used in combination with more than 220
species names that are considered valid. It is one of the best known generic names in the superfamily CHALCIDIOIDEA and includes many species of economic importance. Noyes & Hayat (1994) listed 25 species of Metaphycus that have been used in classical biological control programmes in various parts of the world. Many other species are of potential economic importance because they are parasitoids of scale insects (Hemiptera, COCCOIDEA). The name Metaphycus has been adopted in the following recent representative works: Tachikawa (1963), Trjapitzin (1975), Annecke & Mynhardt (1981), Gordh (1979), Hayat (1986) and Viggiani & Guerrieri (1989). A list of 345 further publications in which Metaphycus has been used as a valid name, dating from 1926 to 1994 and involving well over 200 additional authors, has been deposited with the Commission Secretariat.

6. We (Noyes & Woolley, 1994, p. 1329) treated the name Aenasioidea Girault, 1911 as if it were an invalid junior synonym of Metaphycus Mercet, 1917 with the comment that the case would be sent to the Commission for a ruling. We will continue to use Metaphycus as the valid name pending a decision by the Commission in accordance with the recommendation of Article 80 of the Code.

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

(1) to use its plenary powers to give precedence to the name Metaphycus Mercet, 1917 over the name Aenasioidea Girault, 1911, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms;

(2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
   (a) Metaphycus Mercet, 1917 (gender: masculine), type species by monotypy Aphycus zehratus Mercet, 1917, with the endorsement that it is to be given precedence over Aenasioidea Girault, 1911 whenever the two names are considered to be synonyms;
   (b) Aenasioidea Girault, 1911 (gender: feminine), type species by monotypy Aenasioidea latiscapus Girault, 1911, with the endorsement that it is not to be given priority over Metaphycus Mercet, 1917 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) zehratus Mercet, 1917, as published in the binomen Aphycus zehratus (specific name of the type species of Metaphycus Mercet, 1917);
   (b) latiscapus Girault, 1911, as published in the binomen Aenasioidea latiscapus (specific name of the type species of Aenasioidea Girault, 1911) and as defined by the lectotype designated by Frison (1927).

References


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