

**Comments on the proposed conservation of the specific name of *Xerophila geyeri* Soós, 1926 (Mollusca, Gastropoda)**  
(Case 2870; see BZN 51: 105–107)

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I object to the proposal by Dr Gittenberger to suppress five specific names introduced between 1881 and 1884 in order to conserve the name *Xerophila geyeri* Soós, 1926.

1. The senior names have not been used as valid in the last 50 years but they have not remained forgotten after their publication. *Helix arceuthophila* and *H. ycaunica*, both of Mabille (1881), were cited as valid species by Locard (1882, pp. 103, 106; 1894, p. 157) and Westerlund (1889, pp. 254, 255). They were also listed in the synonymy of *Helicella ramburi* (Mabille, 1867) by Germain (1928, p. 303; 1930, p. 276) and Richardson (1980, p. 94, who erroneously dated the names from 1867). *Helix vicianica* Bourguignat in Locard, 1882, was recorded by *Zoological Record* for 1882 (Martens, 1883, p. 69) and listed as a valid species by Westerlund (1889, p. 254) and Locard (1894, p. 161). This nominal species was placed in the synonymy of *Helicella rugosiuscula* (Michaud, 1831) by Germain (1928, p. 308; 1930, p. 277) and Richardson (1980, p. 96). The nominal species *Helix deana* and *H. pleurestha*, both of Berthier (1884), recorded by *Zoological Record* for 1884 (Martens, 1885, p. 68), were listed as a single, valid species by Westerlund (1889, pp. 237, 238) and Locard (1894, p. 156). The names were placed in the synonymy of *Helicella striata* (Müller, 1774) by Germain (1928, p. 314; 1930, p. 280) and Richardson (1980, pp. 181, 182). All five names were listed by Pilsbry (1894, p. 256) as 'insufficiently known forms' [of *Helicella*].

2. The problem posed by these names is thus not that they have been forgotten but that they have been misinterpreted and erroneously treated as synonyms of other taxa. Admittedly this misinterpretation is understandable; the original descriptions were not accompanied by illustrations and important characters of the genitalia were not described. However, authors working on Pleistocene faunas have used *Trochoidea geyeri* in palaeoclimatic reconstructions, naturally basing their identifications on shell characters alone. The identity of the names *H. ycaunica*, *arceuthophila*, *vicianica*, *deana* and *pleurestha* could therefore very well have been interpreted from shell characters only. The Bourguignat collection has been in the Geneva museum for more than a century, and the types of the nominal species now under discussion were available for examination. It would seem simply that, prior to Gittenberger, no one has cared to do so.

3. It is true that many nominal taxa were introduced by Mabille, Locard, Servain and other members of Bourguignat's 'Nouvelle École', but the same can be said of Westerlund, Pallary, Monterosato and others. That many of them are indeed synonyms is no justification to reject in bulk all the names introduced by these authors. Gittenberger's attitude (para. 3 of the application) is explained, but not excused, by several decades of bias against, and deliberate ignorance of, the works and taxa of these authors. However, a basic principle of nomenclature is that each work and each name has to be evaluated on an individual basis on its own merit.



After a long period during which all 'Nouvelle École' names were systematically lumped into the synonymy of classical European species, the pendulum is now swinging back. Some names are being rehabilitated as a result of recent critical work. In this respect, it is worth citing de Winter (1990, p. 230) from his paper rehabilitating the name *Helix phorochaetica* Bourguignat, 1864: 'Notwithstanding the good description and figures provided by Bourguignat (1864), the species was placed by both Hesse (1921) and Germain (1930) in the synonymy of *Trichia villosa*, no doubt because of Bourguignat's reputation'. And also, about hygromiid species described from Portugal by 'Nouvelle École' authors: 'It turned out that Nobre (1930, 1941) has synonymized several nominal taxa somewhat too easily, thus burying some valid species' (Gittenberger, 1993, p. 283).

4. Gittenberger gives 25 references of publications where the name *Trochoidea geyeri* has been used during the last 50 years. Strictly speaking, this fulfils the requirements of Article 79c(2) but this limited usage demonstrates that the species remains little known outside a small circle of specialist workers.

5. Finally, I wish to place Dr Gittenberger's application in the wider perspective of the taxonomy of Palaearctic pulmonates. Although 'Digging in the graveyard of synonymy' (Gittenberger, 1993) may not be the most innovative part of taxonomical research, many more names of Palaearctic Pulmonata, especially HELICOIDEA, introduced by late 19th century authors need to be evaluated and their true identity established. Especially in the Alpine and Mediterranean regions, every year new species are discovered, new synonymies are established, and 'old' species are re-evaluated. Due to convergence in shell characters this is particularly true in the very speciose family HYGROMIIDAE. This family is currently undergoing major taxonomic reappraisals, with the consequence of inevitable name changes at the species-, genus- and family-group levels. Thus, nomenclature is not likely to be destabilized when the Principle of Priority is applied to the yet unstabilized nomenclature of the species of *Trochoidea* s.l.

6. Therefore, rather than making a counter proposal, e.g. placing one of Mabille's (1881) names on the Official List, I suggest that the proposals on BZN 51: 106 should simply be rejected, and the Principle of the First Reviser should be applied to deal with Mabille's two (1881) names *H. arceuthophila* and *H. ycaunica*.

### Additional references

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(2) Edmund Gittenberger

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Dr Bouchet writes (above) of his reaction to my application to conserve *Trochoidea geyeri* Soós, 1926 by the suppression of five earlier unused synonyms. I disagree with him on several points, of which I would like to mention the following in particular (following his para. numbers):

1. The most recent 'use' of the earlier names, in Bouchet's view, is that by Richardson (1980) in a very long list of names, composed uncritically and not accompanied by descriptions. We have to go far back in time, as shown by Bouchet, to find similar (incorrect) citations in synonymy lists. There is no use of the names in a real sense.

3. I did not merely confine myself to names in the literature. I studied the 'Nouvelle École' type specimens. This time-consuming activity was not undertaken 'to reject in bulk all the names', as Bouchet suggests. As a result of this project some senior synonyms which refer to a well-known species were discovered. I proposed that these should be suppressed to further the stability of nomenclature, in line with the Code's explicit provisions (e.g. the Preamble, Articles 23b and 79). Unscientific feelings of loyalty to ancient colleagues should be discounted. The fact that among the hundreds of names a few have been found that can be currently applied does not demonstrate that 'the pendulum is now swinging back'.

4. Bouchet concludes that there is 'limited usage' of *geyeri* because I gave only 25 references to the name. Apparently he thinks, and suggests in his text, that I could find only those 25 citations in the literature. This is simply wrong, however. I stopped after 25, selecting them from various languages and subdisciplines in biology, to indicate frequent usage. I did so advised by the Commission Secretariat.

**Comments on the proposed conservation of *Clavella* Oken, 1815 and *Pennella* Oken, 1815 (Crustacea, Copepoda)**

(Case 836; see BZN 50: 273–276)

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I am strongly in favor of the proposal to conserve the generic name *Pennella* Oken, 1815. Species of *Pennella* are common parasites of cetaceans so the name appears



Bouchet, Philippe. 1994. "Comments On The Proposed Conservation Of The Specific Name Of *Xerophila Geyeri* Soos, 1926 (Mollusca, Gastropoda)." *The Bulletin of zoological nomenclature* 51, 336–338.

<https://doi.org/10.5962/bhl.part.7239>.

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