Comments on the proposed conservation of Cryptus Fabricius, 1804 (Insecta, Hymenoptera) 
(Case 2324; see BZN 44: 9–10)

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It is depressing to see a proposal to deviate from the normal method of deciding zoological names by the Principle of Priority. I protest against this deviation.

As to usage, the preoccupied name Cryptus Fabricius, 1804 was much used in older literature, but as a vaguely understood taxon for species now distributed in about 60 genera and several subtribes. In the last 40 years there have been some 14 nomenclaturally influential publications which either accepted usage of the preoccupied name Cryptus in the Ichneumonidae or rejected it; two of these accepted it and 12 did not (see the references listed below).

I know from personal experience that in most major collections in the Nearctic, Neotropical, Ethiopian and Oriental regions the name Cryptus is not used in labeling specimens. European museums are divided (or confused), which might lend support to van Rossem’s application, but the rest of the world has adopted the correct nomenclature and this should not be ignored.

I try to be consistent and logical in scientific nomenclature and I therefore treat Cryptus Fabricius as a preoccupied name. A voted decision by the Commission does not change compelling bibliographic facts.

Additional references

Publications which adopted the name Cryptus Fabricius, 1804


Publications which rejected the name Cryptus Fabricius, 1804


I agree with Dr Townes (above) that it is disappointing that no consensus has been reached on the usage of the name Cryptus Fabricius, 1804, which is the basis of the family-group name Cryptinae Kirby, 1837. The Commission should endorse Opinion 157 (1945; see para. 5 of my application) and suppress the senior homonym Cryptus Panzer, 1804. Nevertheless, there could still be instability of usage in the subfamily name since Townes (1962) adopted Gelinae while Fitton & Gauld (1978) proposed Phygaedeuontinae; both sets of authors rejected Cryptinae although this is the senior name.

Mr van Rossem was correct in the facts that he presented but failed to place them in the context of the recent taxonomic history of the family Ichneumonidae. The question of whether or not Cryptus Fabricius should be conserved is not as simple as it might appear.

Cryptus Fabricius, 1804 is a junior homonym of Cryptus Panzer, 1804 and is thus objectively invalid despite having been placed on the Official List by Opinion 157 (February 1945). Townes (in Townes & Townes, 1951) was therefore correct to adopt the next available name, Trachysphyrus Haliday, 1836 (p. 317), for the ichneumonid genus. The latter name was used by many subsequent authors until Townes (1970) restricted it to a South American species group and adopted the next available name, Itamoplex Foerster, [1869] (p. 188), for the more widely distributed species group previously known as Cryptus Fabricius.

Townes’s actions have been accepted by many authors. We consider that Cryptus is not currently ‘widely used’. Also, there was ample opportunity for dissenters to apply to the Commission but no one did so in the 28 years between 1951 and 1979, when van Rossem first approached the Commission.

Changes in the names of the associated family-groups, referred to by van Rossem (para. 4 of his application), result from Townes not following the Code and the subsequent need to apply the Code to the subfamilies and tribes recognized by him. We (Fitton & Gauld, 1976, 1978) discussed the problems pertaining to ichneumonid
family-group names and attempted to resolve them by a strict adherence to the Code. We concluded (1978) that the correct name for the subfamily which included *Itamoplex* was *Phygaedeuontinae*, and our interpretation has been accepted by a number of authors (for example, Sawoniewicz, 1982; Jussila, 1984; Austin, 1985; Askew & Shaw, 1986; Gupta, 1987).

When Bradley (1919) first drew attention to the homonymy of *Cryptus* the family *Ichneumonidae* was divided into only five subfamilies. *Cryptus* Fabricius was well known as the base of the name of one of these subfamilies and as a genus in which a large number of species had originally been placed. The classification of the *Ichneumonidae* is now more complex and 31 subfamilies are currently recognized (Gauld & Bolton, 1988). Only a small number of the species described in *Cryptus* now remain in the genus that would bear that name if it were not a homonym. No species of the genus is referred to widely in non-taxonomic literature. Although we concede that *Cryptus* has been widely used (see Fitton & Gauld, 1978), we can see no need to conserve the name on the grounds of current usage or stability and universality of nomenclature.

Additional references


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I strongly support Mr van Rossem’s application and urge an affirmative response by the Commission. The decision is of primary importance to workers in the field of parasitic Hymenoptera.

Since the publication of the application in 1987 ichneumonid workers have been restrained from making nomenclatural changes since ‘existing usage is to be maintained’ (Article 80 of the Code). However, the divided and multiple usages prevailing at the generic and family-group level during the last 20 years (there are simultaneously at least three generic and four family-group names) make it most difficult to establish ‘existing usage’ in recent works. This uncertainty severely hampers workers who conscientiously wish to abide by the Code in their publications and makes a decision by the Commission urgently needed.
The names used for the genus, tribe and subfamily in recent years are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Tribe</th>
<th>Subfamily</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Townes (1962)</td>
<td>Trachysphyrus</td>
<td>MESOSTENINI</td>
<td>GELINAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townes (1969)</td>
<td>Trachysphyrus</td>
<td>MESOSTENINI</td>
<td>GELINAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porter (1967)</td>
<td>Trachysphyrus</td>
<td>MESOSTENINI</td>
<td>HEMITELINAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitton &amp; Gauld (1976)</td>
<td>Trachysphyrus</td>
<td>MESOSTENINI</td>
<td>GELINAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitton &amp; Gauld (1978)</td>
<td>Trachysphyrus</td>
<td>MESOSTENINI</td>
<td>PHYGADEUONTINAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short (1978)</td>
<td>Itamoplex</td>
<td>MESOSTENINI</td>
<td>GELINAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasparyan (1981)</td>
<td>Itamoplex</td>
<td>MESOSTENINI</td>
<td>GELINAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gupta (1987)</td>
<td>Itamoplex</td>
<td>MESOSTENINAE</td>
<td>(upgraded to subfamily)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The following authors, and others, have followed at least the intention of Opinion 157 and have preserved the traditional usage of Cryptus Fabricius, 1804, Cryptini and Cryptinae: Walkley (1958), Perkins (1959), Mason (1968), van Rossem (1969) and Carlson (1979).

Before 1951, when Townes introduced his idiosyncratic nomenclature, the use of the name Cryptus was universal for more than a century, even Townes himself using Cryptus and Cryptinae in his (1944) Nearctic catalogue of ichneumonids. It seems to be self-evident that Townes, by attempting to follow strict priority and several personal rules, was disregarding stability and his actions should not have been followed.

Fundamentally underlying the difficulties in the usage of Cryptus Fabricius was the omission from Opinion 157 of the suppression of Cryptus Panzer, 1804 but, incredibly, the Panzer name was ignored by ichneumonid workers for a number of years. Finally, Fitton & Gauld (1976, 1978), in a most commendable attempt to correct Townes’s nomenclature, did not entirely succeed in aligning it with the Code but actually multiplied the number of family-group names replacing Cryptinae.

I observe that Cryptus Fabricius, 1804 is still a stable and universally comprehended generic name, and that Cryptinae Kirby, 1837 is the only stable and universally comprehended relevant family-group name. I urge the Commission to remedy the omission in Opinion 157 and return to the traditional name by approving Mr van Rossem’s application. In case there may be a claim to continue use of some family-group name based on a genus other than Cryptus Fabricius it may be prudent to add a directive endorsing the priority of names based on Cryptus Fabricius.

Additional references


I support Mr van Rossem’s application. Although Townes and his co-workers and followers have used other names (Trachysphyrus Haliday, 1836 and Itamoplex Foerster, [1869]) for the genus, the name Cryptus Fabricius, 1804 has remained in use by authors as important as Perkins (1962), Aubert (various papers), van Rossem (1969 and later papers) and Carlson (1979).

Additional reference


I strongly support the application by the late Mr van Rossem and I hope for an affirmative response from the Commission. The intention of the decisions made by the Commission in the past was to stabilize nomenclature in the Ichneumonidae, not least that of the largest subfamily, Cryptinae Kirby, 1837, which includes species which are common in nearly every habitat. A mistake was made in not including Cryptus Panzer, 1804 in the names placed on the Official Index in Opinion 157 but the intention to conserve Cryptus Fabricius, 1804 was obvious and a correction should now be made. The genus includes only a few species but this is of lesser importance; the name of the subfamily should be stabilized to avoid perpetuation of the present use of three names (Cryptinae Kirby, 1837, Gelinae Viereck, 1918 and Phygaedeuontinae Foerster, [1869]). At the moment the choice of name depends largely on the scientific contacts of the author, a highly undesirable situation which should be put right by the Commission.

It was noted in Opinion 157 (February 1945) that the sawfly Cryptus segmentarius Panzer, 1804, the type species of Cryptus Panzer, 1804, is congeneric with Tenthredo enodis Linnaeus, 1767, the type species of Arge Schrank, 1802. The latter generic name, which was placed on the Official List in the same Opinion, is thus the valid name for the sawfly genus and Cryptus Panzer has rarely been used (see Carlson, 1979, p. 316). Carlson (1979, p. 316) recorded C. segmentarius as a synonym of Arge rustica (Linnaeus, 1758).

Unfortunately, Cryptus Panzer was not suppressed in Opinion 157 because when the Commission had in 1935 discussed the case Panzer’s name was thought probably to date from 1805 and its ‘suppression would not be essential’. Sherborn (1923, p. 567) recorded the date for Heft 88 of Panzer’s work, in which Cryptus segmentarius was published, as 1804. Fitton & Gauld (1976, p. 249) noted that Fabricius (1804) included references to parts of Panzer’s work issued after Heft 88 containing C. segmentarius,
and in 1973 Carlson found (see Carlson, 1979, p. 316) that Fabricius (1804, p. 35) referred to Heft 88 of Panzer. Cryptus Panzer, 1804 is thus senior to Cryptus Fabricius of the same year.

Townes (1951, 1969, 1970) replaced Cryptus Fabricius, 1804 as a junior homonym of Cryptus [Jurine], [1801], because he held that for procedural reasons the suppression of the ‘Erlangen List’ (Opinion 135, August 1939) was invalid. The names adopted by Townes (1951 and 1970), Trachysphyrus Haliday, 1836 and Itamoplex Foerster, [1869], are subjective synonyms of Cryptus Fabricius. The type species of Trachysphyrus is T. imperialis Haliday, 1836 by monotypy. Foerster ([1869], p. 188) introduced the name Itamoplex for a genus without included species. Ashmead (1899, p. 570) included three species in the genus and Viereck (1914, p. 79) designated one of these as the type: Cryptus americanus Cresson, 1864 (a junior synonym of Ischnus albitarsis Cresson, 1864, p. 194; see Townes, 1970, p. 193 and Carlson, 1979, p. 462). Viereck recorded Itamoplex as a junior synonym of Cryptus Fabricius. The subfamily name GELINAE Viereck, 1918 (p. 73), adopted by Townes (1962), was based on Gelis Thunberg, 1827. The tribal name MESOSTENINI, also adopted by Townes (1962) and some subsequent authors (see Dr Mason’s comment above) and containing Trachysphyrus and Itamoplex, was introduced by Ashmead (1899, p. 570) based on the genus Mesostenus Gravenhorst, 1829 (p. 750).

Fitton & Gauld (1976, p. 247; 1978, p. 245) pointed out that many of the family-group names used by Townes, which were based on the earliest available generic name in each group, did not comply with the provisions of the Code and were therefore invalid. In place of GELINAE Viereck, 1918 (CRYPTINAE Kirby, 1837 of authors) they followed Townes (1944) and adopted (1976) HEMITELINAE Foerster, [1869] (pp. 141, 173), based on Hemiteles Gravenhorst, 1829 (p. 635), believing Townes to have acted as first reviser in selecting HEMITELINAE. Subsequently (1978) they adopted PHYGADEUONTINAE Foerster, [1869] (pp. 144, 181), type genus Phygadeuon Gravenhorst, 1829 (p. 780), after demonstrating that Townes (1944) had not acted as first reviser.

Fitton & Gauld (1976, p. 249; 1978, p. 246) pointed out that if the Commission were to suppress Cryptus Panzer the valid name for the genus would become Cryptus Fabricius, with the concomitant family-group names CRYPTINI and CRYPTINAE.

Additional references


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