

Comment on the proposed designation of a neotype for *Conus jaspideus* Gmelin, 1791

(Case 3396; see BZN 64: 144–148)

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We disagree with the assumption in the application that Vink's (1991) neotype designation for *Conus jaspideus* is invalidated by Clench's (1942) previously unnoticed lectotype designation. The application states (para. 5): '... Vink's (1991) designation of a neotype cannot supersede the existing lectotype, even in the situation where the type series has not been extant'.

This contradicts Article 75.1 which says neotypes can be designated 'when no name-bearing type specimen (e.g., holotype, lectotype, syntype or prior neotype) is believed to be extant. . . .'. Inasmuch as the authors confirm that none of the specimens of the original type series, including the lectotype, can be traced, their mention of an 'existing lectotype' (para. 5) is a misstatement and Vink's neotype designation (which they seek to confirm) stands. Also, Article 75.8 pertains only to the rediscovery of name-bearing types themselves, not to overlooked lectotype designations. There is thus no need for action by the Commission.

Comments on the proposed conservation of the usage of the generic name of *Drosophila* Fallén, 1823 (Insecta, Diptera) by fixation of *Drosophila melanogaster* Meigen, 1830 as type species.

(Case 3407; see BZN 64: 238–242; BZN 65: 55–57)

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I wish to express my strong support for the application. *Drosophila melanogaster* is one of the few names in zoology that are recognised as such within numerous biological disciplines, and it is one of the first names that every student of biology meets having entered the field. As such its preservation is a matter of importance far beyond the field of taxonomy. As the object of the Code of Nomenclature is to promote stability and universality, it is difficult to think of a case where a decision by the Commission would be more important.

As the situation is now, the genus *Drosophila* includes a huge number of species, and it is well known that many specialists would prefer to divide it into more natural groups, were it not for the fact that *melanogaster* would belong to another genus; the expected confusion has been a strong deterrent. In fact, here the nomenclature rules have actually interfered with systematic work. To agree to the proposal would free research. As of yet, the genus has not been dismembered, and a change of subgeneric names would be a matter concerning a comparatively small number of taxonomists.

There have been numerous trifling cases, where usage has been preserved for names that only specialists recognise, and in my opinion no real confusion would have resulted, even if many of those names had been changed. This case is different, its implications are of the widest nature, and I hope the Commission will approve the application.

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I tend to be conservative and believe that the Commission should not use its plenary powers every now and then to rescue junior names favoured by a mere handful of researchers, but I agree with Polaszek (BZN 65: 55) that if there be one binomen in zoological nomenclature that should be cast in concrete, it is *Drosophila melanogaster* Meigen, 1830.

For decades, this species has been the most widely used model in genetics and developmental biology. The supremacy of *D. melanogaster* over its congeners in current research is still overwhelming: a search in ISI Web of Science® with the species name as topic resulted in 26,608 hits for *D. melanogaster* since 1987 (checked on 24 April 2008), against 11 for *D. funebris*, the present type species of *Drosophila* Fallén. The other *Drosophila* of the *funebris*-group defended by Yassin (BZN 65: 56) lay also far behind *D. melanogaster*, the most frequently cited of these being *D. virilis* with 368 records. Note that *D. simulans* Sturtevant, 1919, one of the closest relatives of *D. melanogaster*, fares better (893 records). This species, important in speciation studies, would also be preserved from a change of genus by the designation of *D. melanogaster* as type species of *Drosophila*.

It is clear that with the development of phylogenetic knowledge, the strict application of the Code would soon result in the transfer of *D. melanogaster* to *Sophophora* Sturtevant. Although some strict taxonomists would perhaps acknowledge such a change, a multitude of molecular and developmental biologists would regard with utmost incomprehension their flagship species renamed *Sophophora melanogaster*. This would cause extreme confusion, especially because so many non-taxonomists are involved. This is an exceptional case, where the whole credibility of the Commission is at stake. I highly recommend that the Commission vote in favour of the application of van der Linde et al. (BZN 64: 238–242).