

DASYTROGUS REITTER, 1902, THE VALID NAME OF THE
GENUS CURRENTLY KNOWN AS *MADOTROGUS* REITTER, 1902
(Coleoptera, Melolonthidae)

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Stability and universality in the scientific names of animals are certainly highly desirable, as well as that the name of each taxon is unique and distinct. That is exactly what the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (referred to hereafter as the Code) seeks to promote, as stated in its Preamble. It is for that reason, and that reason alone, that I am a firm advocate of the strict adherence to the rules set up in the Code, regardless of whether we do agree with them or not.

In the text that follows and the References, ICZN stands for the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature.

Dasytrogus Reitter, 1902 is listed in the Catalogue of Palearctic Coleoptera (Smetana & Král 2006) as synonym of *Madotrogus* Reitter, 1902. That, however, is in breach of Article 24.1 of the Code (ICZN 1999), which rules that when synonyms are established simultaneously, but proposed at different ranks, the name proposed at higher rank takes precedence.

Reitter (1902) established in the same work *Dasytrogus* (pp. 166, 230) and *Madotrogus* (pp. 232, 251), the former as a genus of the Rhizotrogina, the latter as a subgenus of *Amphimallon* Latreille, 1825. Therefore, according to Article 24.1 of the Code, whenever they are considered to be synonyms, *Dasytrogus* takes precedence.

The synonymy between *Dasytrogus* and *Madotrogus* was proposed by Nikolajev (1976) who chose to give precedence to *Madotrogus*. He wrote:

«7. *Madotrogus (Dasytrogus) transcaspicus* (Brenske, 1886), comb. n. - *Dasytrogus* Reitter, 1902 ist nicht eine selbständige Gattung, sondern bildet eine Untergattung von *Madotrogus* Reitter, 1902. Die einzelne,

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sandbodenbewohnende *Dasytrogus*-Art wurde von einigen *Madotrogus*-Arten (*M. glabricollis* Rtt., *M. ferganicus* Protz. und andere) durch langbehaarten Halsschild und hellgefärbte Zähne der Vorderschienen unterschieden. Aber auch *M. ferganicus* besitzt behaarten (nur ausserordentlich fein und kurz) Halsschild, und viele ammophile Arten charakterisiert man durch helle Färbung des Körpers, weshalb diese.

Merkmale zu Charakterisierung der Gattungen ungenügend sind. Die Untergattung unterscheidet sich von *Madotrogus* in sp. (*M. glabripennis* Ball., *M. palpalis* Moser, *M. afghanus* Petr. und *M. tadjhcorum* Nikolajev) durch schmales spindelförmiges Endglied der Maxillartaster und durch längeren Fühlerfächer, welche länger ist, als das Schaft.»

{7. *Madotrogus (Dasytrogus) transcaspicus* (Brenske, 1886), comb. n. - *Dasytrogus* Reitter, 1902 is not a self-standing genus, but forms a subgenus of *Madotrogus* Reitter, 1902. The single, sandy soil inhabiting *Dasytrogus* species differs from some species of *Madotrogus* (*M. glabricollis* Rtt., *M. ferganicus* Protz. and others) by the long pilosity of the pronotum and the light coloured teeth of the fore tibiae. However, also *M. ferganicus* has a setose (only extraordinary fine and short) pronotum, and many ammophilous species are characterized by the light colour of the body, for which reason these features are insufficient to characterize genera. The subgenus differs from *Madotrogus* s. str. (*M. glabripennis* Ball., *M. palpalis* Moser, *M. afghanus* Petr. and *M. tadjhcorum* Nikolajev) by the slender spindle-shaped last segment of the maxillary palpi and the longer antennal club, which is as long as the stalk.}

The automatic determination of precedence of names as ruled in Article 24.1 of the current edition of the Code was a novelty introduced in the 4th edition. Article 56(c) of the 2nd edition (ICZN 1964) established already a similar rule for homonyms published simultaneously, but concerning synonyms the choice of precedence was left to the discretion of the first reviser, as ruled in Article 24(a): «Names published simultaneously. - If more than one name for a single taxon, or identical names for different taxa, are published simultaneously, whether in the same or different works, their relative priority is determined by the action of the first reviser.», and: «(i) The expression “first reviser” is to be rigidly construed. In the case of synonyms, an author must have cited two or more such names, must have made it clear that he believes them to represent the same taxonomic unit, and must have chosen one as the name of the taxon.»

Under Article 24 of the then in force 2nd edition of the Code, Nikolajev's 1976 statement clearly qualifies as an action of the First Reviser.

The 3rd edition (ICZN 1985) did not change that situation. Therefore, between Nikolajev's 1976 action and 1 January 2000, date when the 4th edition of the Code came into force, the valid name of the genus was indeed *Madotrogus* Reitter, 1902. Since 1 January 2000 it is *Dasytrogus* Reitter, 1902.

So, this is an instance where the Code seems to promote nomenclatural instability rather than stability. One could expect that provisions were foreseen to prevent such situations. That, unfortunately, is not the case. Article 24.2.2 of the current edition determines that: «If two or more names, different or identical, and based on the same or different types, or two or more nomenclatural acts, are published on the same date in the same or different works, the precedence of the names or acts is fixed by the First Reviser unless Article 24.1 applies.» In the case under discussion here, Article 24.1 applies indeed. Furthermore, Article 24.2.5 rules that: «If it is shown subsequently that the precedence of names, spellings or acts can be objectively determined, the action of the First Reviser is nullified.» Under Article 24.1, the precedence of *Dasytrogus* over *Madotrogus* can be objectively determined, thence under Article 24.2.5 Nikolajev's 1976 action is nullified. If any doubts would remain, Article 86.3 clears them off: «The rules governing zoological nomenclature contained in former editions of the International Rules of Zoological Nomenclature and of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, and any amendments affecting the Code, have no force unless reaffirmed in this edition, and then only as herein expressed.»

In consequence, according to the current edition of the Code, *Dasytrogus* Reitter, 1902 (type species *Amphimallus transcaspicus* Brenske, 1886, by monotypy) is the valid name of this genus, and *Madotrogus* Reitter, 1902 (type species *Rhizotrogus glabricollis* Reitter, 1888, by original designation) either its junior subjective synonym or subgenus.

Although unfortunate, I don't think that the replacement of *Madotrogus* with *Dasytrogus* as the valid name of the genus will cause confusion. Besides, a reversal of precedence under Article 23.9 is not permitted because the first condition of Article 23.9.1, requiring that the senior synonym has not been used as a valid name after 1899, is not met.

SUMMARY

The reasons are explained why, according to the current edition of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, *Dasytrogus* Reitter, 1902 is the valid name of the ge-

nus currently known as *Madotrogus* Reitter, 1902. The nomenclatural history of the case is reviewed, showing that, under the two previous editions of the Code, *Madotrogus* was indeed its valid name by the choice of the first reviser.

RIASSUNTO

Dasytrogus Reitter, 1902 nome valido per *Madotrogus* Reitter, 1902 (Coleoptera, Melolonthidae).

Vengono spiegati i motivi per cui, secondo l'ultima edizione del Codice Internazionale di Nomenclatura Zoologica, *Dasytrogus* Reitter, 1902 sia il nome valido del genere *Madotrogus* Reitter, 1902. L'analisi della storia nomenclatoriale di questo caso evidenzia che *Madotrogus*, accettato nelle penultime due edizioni del suddetto Codice, derivasse da una scelta del primo revisore.

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