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Nomenclatural notes on Hylecoetinae (Coleoptera, Lymexylidae)

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Elateroides SCHAEFFER, 1777 is a poorly used senior synonym of the popular *Hylecoetus* LATREILLE, 1806. Eventhough *Hylecoetus* has a long credit of quotations as a valid generic name, *Elateroides* is far from qualifying as *nomen oblitum* and has prevalence over *Hylecoetus*. While there is no doubt about the identity of the species illustrated and referred to in the original publication of *Elateroides*, no species epithet was provided, and this generic name was thought as not yet typified. However, it appears that *Elateroides primus* SCHALLER, 1783, which has been overlooked since its original description, was the first available species name included in *Elateroides*. The type species of *Elateroides* is thus *E. primus* SCHALLER, 1783, which is presently considered as a junior subjective synonym of *Cantharis dermestoides* L., 1761 (**new synonymy**).

Keywords: Coleoptera, Lymexylidae, *Elateroides*, *Hylecoetus*, nomenclature, type species

INTRODUCTION

Hylecoetus LATREILLE, 1806, are mycophagous wood-boring beetles. The genus includes three species, two of them occurring in the Palaearctic region where they can cause locally damage to timber. The considerable literature dealing with identification of imagoes and larvae, distribution, bionomics, arboreal hosts, fungal association, and possible control of these potential pests generally refers to *Hylecoetus*. However, it appears that this name has a senior synonym, i.e. *Elateroides* SCHAEFFER, 1777.

DISCUSSION

In 1777, SCHAEFFER published the name *Elateroides* (masculine gender) in association with a few characters and a colour plate (plate cxxxix) figuring unambiguously *Cantharis dermestoides* Linné, 1761. Subsequently SCHAEFFER (1779 : pl. 279 figs 7 a-b) produced further illustrations of the taxon referred to as 'ELATEROIDES PRIMUS' and 'Erster [Gothic italic letters] Afterspringkäfer [Gothic standard letters]'. All the names figuring in this publication share a similar formation and typographic style, some times with a short diagnosis (up to three words, with nouns written in standard and adjectives written in italic Latin letters) inserted between the generic name and its associated spelled number (example: STENOCORUS thorace inermi DECIMUS SEXTIS). In this context, whether '*primus*' was meant as a specific epithet or not is questionable. In my opinion, SCHAEFFER's *E. primus* is not an available species name. This species epithet was made available by SCHALLER (1783: 322), who mentioned a beetle 'named *Elateroides primus*' with references to the figures of SCHAEFFER's 1779 work (ICZN 1999: Art. 12.2.7). *Elateroides primus* SCHALLER, 1783, is thus the first species included in *Elateroides* SCHAEFFER, 1777, and consequently its type species by subsequent monotypy (ICZN 1999: Art. 69.3). HARRER (1784: 237) quoted *Elateroides* (without specific epithet) as a synonym of *Meloe marci* L., 1767 (= *Cantharis dermestoides* L.) in *Attelabus* L., 1758.

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Twenty years later, LATREILLE (1806: 266) considered *Elateroides* as a junior synonym of *Lymexylon* Fabricius, 1775, and erected a new genus *Hylecoetus* to accommodate *Cantharis dermestoides* L. (type species by monotypy). Occasionally misspelled *Hylecaetus*, *Hyloecetus*, *Hyloecotus* or *Xylecoethus*, LATREILLE's name *Hylecoetus* became very popular. A rapid search in our library allowed me to find that it has been used as valid during the past 50 years by at least 52 authors in 72 publications ranging from general textbooks on biology, handbooks, forestry manuals and faunistic lists to specialised studies dealing with systematics, larvae and natural history of the group.

Elateroides encountered less success, but after an eclipse of a century, it was used as the valid senior synonym of *Hylecoetus* in three major works dealing with the coleopterological faunas of Hungary (KUTHY 1897), Bohemia (KLIMA 1902) and Russia (JAKOBSON 1908), as well as in five forestry papers published in Polish journals between 1884 and 1908. A further half century passed until the precedence of *Elateroides* over *Hylecoetus* is pointed out again in the monumental series treating the entomological fauna of former USSR (KRYZHANOVSKIJ 1966). *Elateroides* was then used as valid in Poland again in half a dozen forestry papers published between 1969 and 1980 and in the catalogue of the fauna of Poland (BURAKOWSKI et al. 1986), and in Russia by NIKITSKY et al. (1998). The only usages of *Elateroides* as a valid generic name I could find out of the East European literature are credited to LAWRENCE & NEWTON (1995) and BEUTEL & POLLOCK (2000).

Meanwhile, the other authors who didn't ignore *Elateroides* quoted it erroneously either as a junior synonym of *Lymexylon* (CHENU 1860), as an invalid senior synonym of *Hylecoetus* (LACORDAIRE 1857, GEMMINGER & HAROLD 1869, SEIDLITZ 1891a & 1891b, SCHENKLING 1915, LUCAS 1920, LENG 1920, WINKLER 1925, REITTER 1911, WHEELER 1986, and CAMPBELL 1991), or as a *nomen nudum* (KUROSAWA 1985).

According to the ICZN (1999) reversal of precedence is allowed if a senior synonym has not been used as a valid name since 1899 (Art. 23.9.1.1), and if its competing junior synonym has been used as its presumed valid name in a least 25 published works by at least 10 authors during the last 50 years (Art. 23.9.1.2). *Hylecoetus* clearly meets the conditions of Art. 23.9.1.2. However, its senior synonym *Elateroides* contravenes Art. 23.9.1.1 by no less than 10 publications, half of which being systematic catalogues or faunas. In these circumstances, the Principle of Priority (Art. 23.2) applies and *Elateroides* SCHAEFFER, 1777 has preference over *Hylecoetus* LATREILLE, 1806.

CONCLUSION

The nomenclatural act and the status of names discussed above may be summarized as follows:

***Elateroides* SCHAEFFER, 1777: plate cxxxix; type species *Elateroides primus* SCHALLER, 1783, by subsequent monotypy.**

Hylecoetus LATREILLE, 1806: 266; type species *Cantharis dermestoides* LINNAEUS, 1761: 201, by monotypy.

dermestoides LINNAEUS, 1761: 201 (*Cantharis*)

primus SCHALLER, 1783: 322 (*Elateroides*) **syn. nov.**

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