



## **Case 3842 – Gelechioidea Stainton, 1854 (Lepidoptera): proposed conservation of the superfamily name by conditional reversal of precedence with three family- group names proposed by Bruand, 1851**

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**Case 3842 – GELECHIOIDEA Stainton, 1854 (Lepidoptera):  
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by Bruand, 1851**

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this application, under Article 23.9.3 of the Code, is to conserve at superfamily level the usage of the family-group name GELECHIOIDEA Stainton, 1854. The name is threatened by three senior family-group names described by Bruand, 1850 [1851], currently considered as valid families in the same superfamily as GELECHIIDAE: OECOPHORIDAE, ELACHISTIDAE and COLEOPHORIDAE, which are thus subjective senior synonyms at the superfamily level. Strict application of the Principle of Priority would result in confusion as the superfamily name GELECHIOIDEA has been almost universally used for this very diverse and economically important group of Lepidoptera.

**Keywords.** Family-group name; Superfamily; GELECHIOIDEA; GELECHIIDAE; OECOPHORIDAE; ELACHISTIDAE; COLEOPHORIDAE; *Gelechia*.

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1. In 1825, Hübner (Hübner, 1816–[1826]: 415) described the genus *Gelechia* as “5. Verein, Coitus 5” in his “Coenyphanten”, a subdivision of the large microlepidopteran family TINEIDAE. He included five species, of which *Phalaena (Tinea) rhombella* [Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775 (p. 139), traditionally cited as *Tinea rhombella* (see Sattler & Tremewan 1984), was later designated as type-species by Walsingham (1911: 59). Subsequent authors in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, who recognized this genus, did not follow Hübner’s higher classification, but kept *Gelechia* and related genera in TINEIDAE (Zeller, 1839: 197; Stainton, 1849: 17; Herrich-Schäffer, 1853: 43).

2. In 1854, Stainton described the family GELECHIDAE [sic] based on its type genus *Gelechia* in his “Insecta Britannica” (Stainton, 1854b: 10, 75) and he also listed the name without description in the “List of the specimens of British animals in the collection of the British Museum” (Stainton, 1854a: 52). Sattler (1973) cited the last paper as the valid description, while Nye & Fletcher (1991: xviii) considered Insecta Britannica to have been published earlier. According to Sherborn (1934) the “List” was published 13 August 1854, whereas for Insecta Britannica we have not been able to find a date earlier than 19 August 1854, based on an advertisement published in the weekly “Notes and Queries” of Saturday 19 August 1854 (Anonymous, 1854), whereas the issue of one week earlier does not mention this book. Thus, despite the fact that Insecta Britannica holds

the real description, the name was validly published by Stainton (1854a) in his “List of the specimens of British animals in the collection of the British Museum”. Stainton based the family amongst others on the characteristic shape of the labial palps and the shape of the hindwings, his concept of the family resembling partly the current concept of the superfamily GELECHIOIDEA. Stainton’s incorrect formation of the family name (correct stem = Gelechi-) was emended to GELECHIIDAE in an anonymously published list (Anonymous, 1858: 83).

3. A few years earlier in his Catalogue of the Lepidoptera of the French Département du Doubs, Bruand (1850 [1851]) had erected several family-group names (as Tribus) relevant to this application: ANACAMPSIDAE (page 40) for the genus *Anacamptis* Curtis, 1827: folio 189; OECOPHORIDAE (using the incorrect original spelling AECOPHORIDAE, page 45) for the genus *Oecophora* Latreille, 1796: 146; ELACHISTIDAE (p. 50) for the genus *Elachista* Treitschke, 1833: 177; and COLEOPHORIDAE (p. 54) for the genus *Coleophora* Hübner, 1822: 67. There are two versions of this publication by Bruand, a paper in the journal *Mémoires et Comptes Rendus de la Société Libre d’Émulation du Doubs* and a separate catalogue with different pagination; otherwise the contents are identical. Although 1850 is often given as publication year, we follow here Viette (1977) who showed that the earliest date we know for certain that the livraisons 5 and 6 were published was 11 March 1851. The name ELACHISTIDAE Bruand, 1850 and its type genus *Elachista* Treitschke, 1833, were placed on the Official Lists of family-group names and generic names in zoology (ICZN, 1988). In later years, Bruand published under his full name, Bruand d’Uzelle (e.g., Bruand d’Uzelle, 1859).

4. Ever since Stainton’s description, the family name GELECHIIDAE was recognised almost universally, using either the original spelling (Heinemann, 1870), the emended correct spelling GELECHIIDAE (selected references: Meyrick, 1883; Rebel, 1901; Dyar et al., 1903; Spuler & Meess, 1910; Hering, 1932; Gaede, 1937; Busck, 1939; Sattler, 1973; Zimmerman, 1978; Hodges, 1986; Minet, 1990; Leraut, 1997; Hodges, 1998; Elsner et al., 1999; Hodges, 1999; Huemer & Karsholt, 1999; Li, 2002; Park & Ponomarenko, 2007; Lee et al., 2009; Huemer & Karsholt, 2010; van Nieukerken et al., 2011; Karsholt et al., 2013; Huemer & Karsholt, 2020) or the spelling GELECHIADAE (Meyrick, 1895, 1925, 1928, Fletcher, 1929; Janse, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1954, 1958, 1960, 1963). A longer list of selected references is given in the Appendix. The composition of the family gradually narrowed to what is currently regarded as the monophyletic family, characterised amongst others by upcurved labial palpi, a basally scaled proboscis and hindwing with sinuate dorsal margin (Huemer & Karsholt, 1999; Karsholt et al., 2013).

5. Since Bruand described the ANACAMPSIDAE, this name has never been used at family level again. However, the genus *Anacamptis* was universally considered to belong to the GELECHIIDAE. Le Marchand (1947) was the first to use ANACAMPSINAE as subfamily name. This was followed by many workers until today (selected references: Sattler, 1973; Hodges, 1983; Heppner, 1984; Leraut, 1997; Bland et al., 2002; Ponomarenko, 2005; Ponomarenko, 2008; Ponomarenko, 2009; Karsholt et al., 2013; Heikkilä et al., 2014); a tribe ANACAMPSINI is more often recognised, either in ANACAMPSINAE or in GELECHIIDAE (Karsholt et al., 1996; Huemer & Karsholt, 1999; Ponomarenko, 2005; Ponomarenko, 2008; Lee et al., 2009; Ponomarenko, 2009; Karsholt et al., 2013; Ponomarenko, 2019). More references are given in the appendix. Following Article 35.5 of the Code, “Precedence for names in use at higher rank”, the senior family-group name ANACAMPSIDAE Bruand, 1851 is thus not to displace the junior GELECHIIDAE Stainton, 1854, which is to remain

the valid name at family level.

6. For the family name COLEOPHORIDAE Bruand, 1851, some authors have cited Hübner, 1825 as the authority (Sattler, 1973; Baldizzone et al., 2006). This refers to Hübner's *Verzeichniss bekannter Schmettlinge* (1816–[1826]), where Hübner presented a new classification system for Lepidoptera, as discussed in detail by Hemming (1937: 15). Hübner used the plural of *Coleophora*, Coleophorae, for his “Stirps” III (page 426). The use of these stirps names for family-group names, however, is against Art. 11.7.1.1, which states: “the generic name must be a name then used as valid in the new family-group taxon [Arts 63, 64] (use of the stem alone in forming the name is accepted as evidence that the author used the generic name as valid in the new family-group taxon unless there is evidence to the contrary)” (Speidel & Naumann 2004; Kitching 2019). As stated by Kitching (2019): “Throughout the whole of the *Verzeichniss*, Hübner never included the genus on which the Stirps name was based as a valid genus in that Stirps.” The same is true for *Coleophora*: the species he had previously placed in that genus (Hübner, 1822), are in the *Verzeichniss* (amongst others) in his new genera *Eupista* Hübner, 1825 and *Apista* Hübner, 1825. We thus regard Hübner's name as unavailable and use Bruand, 1851 as authority for COLEOPHORIDAE.

7. The superfamily GELECHIOIDEA Stainton, 1854, was introduced by Fracker (1915) while dealing with the classification of Lepidoptera based on larvae. He included the families ETHMIIDAE Busck, 1909, STENOMIDAE Meyrick, 1906, HEMEROPHILIDAE Walsingham, 1914, GELECHIIDAE, OECOPHORIDAE, BLASTOBASIDAE Meyrick, 1894 and COSMOPTERYGIDAE Heinemann & Wocke, 1876, but left the ELACHISTIDAE and COLEOPHORIDAE unplaced as to superfamily level. Mosher (1916), in her study of Lepidoptera pupae, also included ELACHISTIDAE; the COLEOPHORIDAE were added to the superfamily much later by Common (1970). Later, this superfamily became almost universally accepted in the lepidopterological literature, even though family inclusion and composition varied greatly among authors (some major references: Forbes, 1923; Braun, 1928; Escherich et al., 1931; Börner, 1939; Kiriakoff, 1948; Hodges, 1966; Common, 1970; Brock, 1971; Hodges, 1974; 1978; Zimmerman, 1978; Hodges et al., 1983; Heppner, 1984; Minet, 1990; Nielsen & Common, 1991; Leraut, 1992; Scoble, 1992; Nielsen et al., 1996; Heppner, 1998; Hodges, 1998; Kristensen & Skalski, 1998; Hodges, 1999; Holloway et al., 2001; Li, 2002; Kaila, 2004; Bucheli & Wenzel, 2005; Park & Ponomarenko, 2007; Bucheli, 2009; Mutanen et al., 2010; Kaila et al., 2011; Regier et al., 2013; Heikkilä et al., 2014; Sohn et al., 2015; Wang & Li, 2020). In the cited phylogenetic papers that appeared since the late 1990s, the superfamily is invariably seen as a monophyletic entity. To our knowledge, no one has suggested using any of the senior Bruand names to replace GELECHIOIDEA as superfamily name.

8. A group of taxonomists in Leningrad (St. Petersburg) developed a different classification of Lepidoptera, where the superfamily GELECHIOIDEA was raised to a higher level, as Gelechiiformes, still with Stainton as author. Within this taxon they recognised GELECHIOIDEA Stainton, 1854 as superfamily, but also COLEOPHOROIDEA Bruand, 1851 (Kuznetsov & Stekol'nikov, 1978; 1984; 2001; Lukhtanov & Puplesiene, 1996), ELACHISTOIDEA Bruand, 1851 (Kuznetsov & Stekol'nikov, 1978; 1984; 2001; Lukhtanov & Puplesiene, 1996) and sometimes OECOPHOROIDEA Bruand, 1851 (Sinev, 1992; Lukhtanov & Puplesiene, 1996). This system was not followed by other authors and in the recent catalogues of Russian Lepidoptera this system is no longer followed; only one superfamily GELECHIOIDEA is recognised (Sinev, 2008, 2019).

9. Strictly speaking, all three Bruand names have priority over GELECHIOIDEA Stainton, 1854 when their type genera are considered to belong to the same superfamily-level taxon. This situation was already pointed out by Hodges (1998), who announced an application to ICZN by him, an action that has never taken place. Art. 35.5, “Precedence for names in use at higher rank” cannot be applied to these names, as all have been used at superfamily rank. Still, all lepidopterologists, even those who use the Bruand superfamily names, agree to the priority of GELECHIOIDEA at the level where all these taxa are grouped. As this is one of the most diverse Lepidopteran superfamilies, with a large number of economically important species (e.g., *Phthorimaea operculella* (Zeller, 1873), *Tuta absoluta* (Meyrick, 1917), *Pectinophora gossypiella* (Saunders, 1844), *Coleophora laricella* (Hübner, 1817), etc.) and a vast list of literature using this name, change of the name would be very unfortunate. We point out that also the little-known family-group name EPIGRAPHIIDAE Guenée, 1845 is older than GELECHIIDAE Stainton, 1854 and also included in the superfamily GELECHIOIDEA. We do not include it in this application, as a proposal to suppress that name is submitted simultaneously (van Nieukerken et al., 2021) and Art. 35.5. can be applied in this case, as no superfamily name based on EPIGRAPHIIDAE was ever proposed.

10. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary power to give the family-group name GELECHIIDAE Stainton, 1854, type genus: *Gelechia* Hübner, 1825, precedence over any of the family-group names OECOPHORIDAE Bruand, 1851, type genus: *Oecophora* Latreille, 1796, ELACHISTIDAE Bruand, 1851, type genus: *Elachista* Treitschke, 1833 and COLEOPHORIDAE Bruand, 1851, type genus: *Coleophora* Hübner, 1822, whenever the names are considered to be synonyms;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
  - (a) *Gelechia* Hübner, 1825 (gender feminine), type species *Phalaena (Tinea) rhombella* [Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775 by subsequent designation by Walsingham (1911: 59),
  - (b) *Oecophora* Latreille, 1796 (gender feminine), type species *Tinea sulphurella* Fabricius, 1777 by subsequent monotypy by Latreille (1802: 417),
  - (c) *Coleophora* Hübner, 1822 (gender feminine), type species *Tinea anatipennella* Hübner, 1796), by subsequent designation by Kirby (1897: 309).
- (3) to place on the Official List of Family-Group Names in Zoology the following names:
  - (a) GELECHIIDAE Stainton, 1854, type genus: *Gelechia* Hübner, 1825, with the endorsement that it is to be given precedence over OECOPHORIDAE Bruand, 1851, ELACHISTIDAE Bruand, 1851, and COLEOPHORIDAE Bruand, 1851, whenever any of the latter names are considered to be synonyms of GELECHIIDAE;
  - (b) OECOPHORIDAE Bruand, 1851, type genus: *Oecophora* Latreille, 1796, with the endorsement that it is not to be given priority over GELECHIIDAE Stainton, 1854, and other family-group names based on *Gelechia* Hübner, 1825, whenever the two are considered synonyms; and
  - (c) COLEOPHORIDAE Bruand, 1851, type genus: *Coleophora* Hübner, 1822,

with the endorsement that it is not to be given priority over *GELECHIIDAE* Stainton, 1854, and other family-group names based on *Gelechia* Hübner, 1825, whenever the two are considered synonyms.

- (4) to update the entry for “*ELACHISTIDAE* Bruand, 1850” on the Official List of Family-Group Names in Zoology by:
- (i) change of the year of publication from 1850 to 1851, and
  - (ii) adding the endorsement that it is not to be given priority over *GELECHIIDAE* Stainton, 1854 and other family-group names based on *Gelechia* Hübner, 1825, whenever the two are considered synonyms.

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**Appendix. References for Case 3842. GELECHIOIDEA Stainton, 1854 (Lepidoptera): proposed conservation of the superfamily name by conditional reversal of precedence with three family-group names proposed by Bruand, 1851****Selected references using the superfamily name GELECHIOIDEA (81):**

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