

Case 3374***Onthophagus sycophanta* Fairmaire, 1887 (Insecta, Coleoptera):
proposed conservation of the specific name**

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Abstract. The purpose of this application, under Article 23.9.3 of the Code, is to conserve the specific name of the dung beetle *Onthophagus sycophanta* Fairmaire, 1887 from China and Vietnam. This name is a junior primary homonym of the forgotten name *Onthophagus sycophanta* Mulsant, 1842 from Europe (Coleoptera, SCARABAEIDAE). *O. sycophanta* Fairmaire, 1887 has been in regular use since its description whereas *O. sycophanta* Mulsant, 1842 has never been used after its description. It is proposed to conserve the name *O. sycophanta* Fairmaire, 1887 by suppression of the name *O. sycophanta* Mulsant, 1842.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; Coleoptera; SCARABAEIDAE; *Onthophagus*; *Onthophagus sycophanta*; dung beetles; China; Vietnam.

1. In 1842 Mulsant (p. 106) described the dung beetle *Onthophagus sycophanta* as a variety of *Onthophagus tages* (Olivier, 1789). These names are currently regarded as junior subjective synonyms of *Euonthophagus gibbosus* (Scriba, 1790) and *Euonthophagus amyntas* (Olivier, 1789), respectively (Löbl et al., 2006). *Onthophagus sycophanta* Mulsant, 1842 has never been used as a valid name since, not even by the author himself in his second monograph on French Lamellicornia (Mulsant & Rey, 1871). The name was rediscovered during the preparation of the *Catalogue of Palaearctic Coleoptera* (Krell, 2006; Löbl et al., 2006, p. 162), but not used as a valid name.

2. Fairmaire (1887, p. 100) named a new dung beetle species from Yunnan *Onthophagus sycophanta*. Since then the name has been in regular use (see Boucomont & Gillet, 1921, p. 47, 1927, p. 148; Boucomont, 1929, p. 768; Balthasar, 1935, p. 325, 1963, p. 545; Wu, 1937, p. 981; Paulian, 1945, p. 98; Kabakov, 1979, p. 76; Kabakov & Yanushev, 1983, p. 158; Zhang, 1993, p. 269; Kabakov & Napolov, 1999, p. 76; Zhang & Luo, 2002, p. 433; Kabakov, 2006, p. 312; Löbl et al., 2006, p. 172). However, the references are too few to meet the conditions for a nomen protectum (Article 23.9.1.2 of the Code – Reversed Precedence). A junior synonym of this species name does not exist. Balthasar (1963) considered the species to be common. It is the type species of the subgenus *Phanaeomorphus* Balthasar, 1963, and is distributed throughout China and Vietnam.

3. *Onthophagus sycophanta* Fairmaire, 1887 has been in regular use since its description while the senior homonym *O. sycophanta* Mulsant, 1842 has never been used as valid since its description. Introducing a new name for the junior homonym

O. sycophanta Fairmaire would cause confusion, whereas suppressing the forgotten name would stabilize nomenclature.

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

- (1) to use its plenary power to suppress the specific name *sycophanta* Mulsant, 1842, as published in the binomen *Onthophagus sycophanta*, and all uses of the name before Fairmaire (1887), for the purposes of both the Principle of Priority and the Principle of Homonymy;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *sycophanta* Fairmaire, 1887, as published in the binomen *Onthophagus sycophanta*;
- (3) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the name *sycophanta* Mulsant, 1842, as published in the binomen *Onthophagus sycophanta* and as suppressed in (1) above.

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Comments on this case are invited for publication (subject to editing) in the *Bulletin*; they should be sent to the Executive Secretary, I.C.Z.N., Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, U.K. (e-mail: iczn@nhm.ac.uk).