

Commission to use its plenary power to conserve the junior homonym and place both names on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology.

Comments on the proposed conservation of the ichnogenus *Coprinisphaera* Sauer, 1955 (Ichnotaxa, Insecta, Coleoptera, COPRINISPHAERIDAE)

(Case 3360; see BZN 63: 243–246)

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Genise et al. (BZN 63: 243–246) proposed the conservation of the ichnogenetic name *Coprinisphaera* Sauer, 1955 by suppressing the senior synonym *Fontanai* Roselli, 1939. I fully support that *Coprinisphaera* should be used as the valid name for the fossil dung balls. It is not only a widely used name in ichnotaxonomy but has entered the geological literature also by naming the ‘*Coprinisphaera* ichnofacies’ as already documented by Genise et al. (BZN 63: 243–246) and complemented by the following references: Sauer (1965, pp. 271–272), Martinez (1982, p. 48), Genise & Bown (1994, p. 109), Hasiotis et al. (1994, fig. 149), Genise & Cladera (1995, p. 78), Genise & Laza (1998, p. 220), González et al. (1998), Genise (2000a, pp. 50, 53, 55; 2000b, p. 28; 2000c, p. 115), Buatois et al. (2000), Verde (2000, pp. 112–113), Genise et al. (2001), Hasiotis (2002, pp. 79–80, 132), Genise (2003, p. 19), Bellosi et al. (2004, pp. 33, 35), Buatois & Mángano (2004, pp. 312, 327), Dieni & Genise (2004a, p. 29; 2004b, p. 31), Genise & Cladera (2004, pp. 632, 636), Genise et al. (2004b), Genise & Bellosi (2004, p. 41), Hasiotis (2004, pp. 184–185, 188, 190, 200, 236, 238, 239, 250), Hembree & Hasiotis (2004), Bellosi et al. (2005), Radies et al. (2005, pp. 116–118), Sánchez et al. (2005), Chure et al. (2006, p. 243), Hasiotis (2006, p. 401), Hasiotis & Bourke (2006, pp. 217–218), Sánchez et al. (2006; 2007), Bromley et al. (2007, pp. 144, 146), Buatois & Mángano (2007, pp. 286–289, 315); Durringer et al. (2007, pp. 333, 350), Ekdale et al. (2007, p. 570), Genise (2007), Hasiotis (2007, p. 265), Hasiotis et al. (2007, pp. 174, 182, 192), Hunt & Lucas (2007, pp. 59–60, 63), Krause et al. (2007), Krell (2007, p. 3), MacEachern et al. (2007a, pp. 54–58, 61; 2007b, p. 114), Melchor et al. (2007, p. 16), Verde & Genise (2007), Verde et al. (2007, pp. 342–343); with the secondary incorrect spelling *Coprinsphaera*: Halffer & Matthews (1966, p. 154), Retallack (1991, pp. 182, 296), Durringer et al. (2000, p. 264). It would be confusing if the *Coprinisphaera* ichnofacies was defined by an ichnogenus with a different name.

The senior subjective synonym *Fontanai* Roselli is still in use (Buatois & Mángano 2007, 288; MacEachern et al. 2007, 58), but these authors did not consider its synonymy with *Coprinisphaera* proposed by González et al. (1998) and Laza (2006). Both names were mentioned as valid ichnogenera. *Fontanai* has never been used as a valid senior synonym of *Coprinisphaera*.

Dealing with non-organic entities without tokogenetic or phylogenetic relationships and poor in characters, ichnotaxonomy is notoriously difficult and subjective. It is current understanding by many ichnologists that ‘producer-based criteria, as such [...] may not be considered relevant for ichnotaxonomy, because the assignment

generally is too ambiguous' (Bertling et al., 2006). Ichnotaxonomy is at a stage of structural typology. With increasing ichnotaxonomical knowledge and new finds the assignment of traces to trace-makers might become more reliable and eventually an accepted ichnotaxonomical criterion. Currently I consider it rash to suppress a subjective senior synonym in ichnology because it might represent a distinct ichnotaxon in a future refined ichnotaxonomy. Therefore I suggest the modification of the application by Genise et al. (BZN 63: 244) and ask the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature:

- (1) to use its plenary power to give the name *Coprinisphaera* Sauer, 1955 precedence over the name *Fontanai* Roselli, 1939, whenever the two are considered to be synonyms;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name *Coprinisphaera* Sauer, 1955 (gender: feminine), with the endorsement that it is to be given precedence over the name *Fontanai* Roselli, 1939 whenever the two are considered to be synonyms, type ichnospecies by monotypy *Coprinisphaera ecuadoriensis* Sauer, 1955;
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *ecuadoriensis* Sauer, 1955, as published in the binomen *Coprinisphaera ecuadoriensis* (specific name of the type ichnospecies of *Coprinisphaera* Sauer, 1955).

I do not ask for *Fontanai* Roselli to be placed on the Official List because it should currently not be used as a valid genus-group name. Names that should not be used as valid should not be on the Official List. Putting *Fontanaichmus* Roselli, 1976 (junior objective synonym of *Fontanai* Roselli, 1939) on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology as asked for by Genise et al. in (4)(b) (BZN 63: 244) is appropriate but unnecessary because it is a junior objective synonym anyway.

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We support the reversal of precedence of *Coprinisphaera* Sauer 1955 over *Fontanai* Roselli 1939 as proposed by Krell, instead of the conservation of the ichnogeneric name *Coprinisphaera* Sauer, 1955 by suppressing the senior synonym *Fontanai* Roselli, 1939 as proposed by Genise et al. (BZN **63**: 243–246), thus avoiding the suppression of a name that might represent a distinct ichnotaxon in a future refined ichnotaxonomy.