ON THE USE OF THE GENERIC NAME MACROPOSTHONIA DE MAN, 1880
(NEMATA : CRICONEMATIDAE)

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For several years, the status of Macroposthonia de Man, 1880 has been controversial. Some taxonomists (namely De Grisse, Loof, and Siddiqi) consider it as valid, whereas others (namely Luc and Raski) reject it and place it among genera dubia.

In an attempt to solve the problems resulting of such a disagreement, a meeting was held, on May 2nd 1988, at the Institute of Zoology, State University Gent, Belgium. The participants were: A. Coomans, A. De Grisse, E. Geraert, P. A. A. Loof, M. Luc and D. J. Raski.

After heated, but friendly, discussions, all the participants agreed that the arguments for considering Macroposthonia a genus dubium are well-founded and convincing. Consequently they recommend all taxonomists should avoid use of the name Macroposthonia.

These arguments were developed earlier (Luc & Raski, 1981), and are briefly reviewed below:

— the type species, M. annulata de Man, 1880, was described on males only. These males clearly belong to Criconematidae, but in that family males show no or insufficient differential characters at generic level, although the curved, acute tail with caudal alae, is known only in species reassembled in "Macroposthonia" sensu De Grisse & Loof, 1965,
— the type specimens are lost,
— the type locality refers to a moist meadow, close to the town of Leiden, The Netherlands, but building activity over the past one hundred years prevents sampling for topotypes, and neotype, except maybe in remaining gardens and parks.

So the species is known only by the original description (de Man, 1880) and the illustration published later (de Man, 1884),
— identification of M. annulata to "Criconemoides" kirjanovae Andrassy, 1962, as proposed earlier by De Grisse and Loof (1965), is questionable because the male of M. annulata differs from that of C. kirjanovae by several characters:
  • fore-part of body conical, non-annulated vs rounded, annulated,
  • lateral field with two incisures vs four,
  • caudal alae well-developed vs poorly developed.

As a matter of fact, only the first character appears to be firmly established. Concerning the two other i) de Man often used to draw only two incisures in animals proven later to have four (various Tylenchus, Plectus); ii) de Man's lateral and ventral drawings of the tail are somewhat different, the caudal alae appearing more developed on the latter which is perhaps a theoretical reconstruction (?) from data obtained in lateral view. But both cases are unproven hypotheses and as such they cannot be used to argue for the adequation of M. annulata and "C." kirjanovae.

Consequently, since i) the type is not extant; ii) a neotype cannot be established, and iii) characters of M. annulata prevent its identification with "C." kirjanovae, or with any other species in the group, there is sound evidence and logic to support the consideration of Macroposthonia, as a genus dubium and Macroposthonia annulata a species dubia.

REFERENCES


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