

AESHNA CAERULEA (STRÖM, 1783) vs
AESHNA COERULEA (ANISOPTERA:
AESHNIDAE)

Apparently, very few workers have ever consulted H. STRÖM's original description of this species, published (1783) somewhat obscurely in a paper titled "Norske insecters beskrivelse med anmaerkinger", which has appeared in the *Nye Samling af det kongelige danske Videnskabers Selskabs Skrifter*, Vol. 2, pp. 49-93, 2 pls excl. (Odon.: p. 90), hence the persisting confusion in the spelling of its name. The description itself remained unnoticed until late in the 19th century; it is listed neither in Hagen's *Synonymia libellularum europaearum* (1840) nor in Rambur's *Histoire naturelle* (1842), nor in the Selysian European monographs (1840, 1850). In his *Synonymic Catalogue* (1890), Kirby was undecided, listing "*coerulea*" in the catalogue, but referring to it in the index under both "*coerulea*" and *caerulea*". The latter spelling was adopted by most British and French workers. In Central Europe, however, it was probably Erich Schmidt who is responsible for the spreading of the spelling "*coerulea*", which appears in his key monograph in the *Tierwelt Mitteleuropas* series (1929), likely so in imitation of the usage by his teacher, F. Ris.

C. LONGFIELD (1954, *Ent. mon. Mag.* 90: 145-148) was the first to draw the attention to this confusion, but her argument that "the spelling *cae*... and not *coe*... is the most usual interpretation of the original name", was unpersuasive to induce the uniformity. Consequently, in the recentmost catalogues, Davies & Tobin (1985) are using "*coe*", while Tsuda (1986) adopts the "*cae*" spelling.

A glance at Ström's original description makes the situation clear. The main text is in Gothic script, but the taxonomic names and species descriptions are in Latin. The name in ques-

tion is spelled clearly as "*Libellula (caerulea)*", where the "*ae*" is written as a diphthong. As stipulated by the *Code* (1985 edition, General Recommendations, E, 3), "vowels should not be linked together in printing diphthongs, since to do so risks errors in later transcriptions, e.g. *ae* and *oe* should be used, not *æ* and *œ*".

Accordingly, *caerulea* is the correct spelling of the name.

This conclusion is not *eo ipso* applicable to all names based on the Latin adjective, "*caeruleus*" (= "dark blue"), since grammatically the *oe* spelling is equally permissible. In each case, therefore, the spelling in the original description has to be consulted.

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