

ENTOMOLOGICAL ETYMOLOGY, A CORRECTION (ZYGOPTERA: MEGAPODAGRIONIDAE, *RHIPIDOLESTES*)

In a recent paper a new species of *Rhipidolestes* was described, *R. yangbingi*, (D.A.L. DAVIES 1998, *Odonatologica* 27(1): 105-109). This curious species from west China was named after its discoverer, Mr Yang Bing. Some discussion included in that paper about the meaning of the name *Rhipidolestes*, a genus defined by F. RIS, (1912, *Supplta ent.* 1: 44-85) proves to have been misleading and we now provide the correct interpretation.

The possible meaning(s) offered for *Rhipido-* in an appropriate dictionary were (a), Gr. *rhipis-*, *rhipidos-* = dim; or (b), Gr. *rhipidion* = a fan; or (c), Gr. *rhipe* = flight, sweep or swing. As the specimen(s) destined for the new genus were given to Ris by H. Sauter, a well-known collector in East Asia, option (c) seemed unlikely as the specimens will have been dead and a description related to some behavioural feature unlikely. As no fan-like pattern was obvious from a cursory examination, 'dim' was chosen but with meagre support, in that the species was rather dull coloured.

A closer study of Ris's original paper in which the genus was established to accommodate the new species, now *R. aculeatus*, from Taiwan (Formosa at that time), shows that Ris recognized the new species as belonging to Selys's Legion 'Podagrion' (now our Megapodagrionidae). However, from a careful study of the venation he was unable to accommodate it in any of the genera known in that family at that time. From p. 58 of Ris's paper we now have the following translation: "the taxon newly described here has very special features of venation, particularly by the origins of M3 and Rs and secondly by the fact that all the sectors from M1a to Cu2 diverge evenly like rays and as a result Cu1 and Cu2 are shortened. This is similar in style to *Argiolestes*, e.g. *A. icteromelas*; the venation has been compared with that of *Argiolestes*, *Podopteryx*, *Podolestes*, *Amphilestes*, *Synlestes*, *Chlorolestes*,

*Neurolestes*, *Nesolestes* and *Protolestes*; none of these genera could fairly be thought to include our species." And "The even divergence of the principal sectors like rays and the even disposition of the supplementary sectors between them is why the venation (pl. IV, fig.4) forms the specific regular feature of a fan. (*rhipis* - the fan)". The name of the new genus was thus well chosen.

The name selected by Ris for the first species, now the type species, of the genus is an adjective derived from the latin *aculeus* – a thorn or sting and has to be changed in gender from *aculeata* to *aculeatus* because of the original incorrect spelling (Code 32 d ii) : the Greek word *lestes* (robber) is always masculine (sic). Ris had followed Selys ('father of odonatology') who, also in compound names, erroneously treated this word as feminine. Thus Selys induced others to make the same mistake: Hagen, for instance, originally used the correct gender, as seen in *Lestes alacer* Hagen, 1861; but this was cited with feminine termination as *Lestes alacris* in his collaborative work with E. DE SELYS LONG-CHAMPS (1862, *Bull. Acad. r. Belg.* [II] 13: 304). Thus there are now many adjectival species-group names combined with generic names ending with *-lestes*, which were originally described with feminine gender. All these should now be corrected to masculine form.

This would seem to be the place to ask what happened to *Amphilestes*? In a long and detailed masterpiece on Megapodagrionidae by P. CALVERT (1913, *Proc. Acad. nat. Sci. Philad.*, 65:225-272) in relation to wing fossil fragments of *Phenacolestes*, a small footnote on page 258 points out that *Amphilestes* Owen has precedence over *Amphilestes* Selys. The name *Rhinagrion* was suggested for the latter, emphasizing the prominent epistome ("nose"). The former genus contains very early Mesozoic fossils that are fragments of the earliest mammals. They are probably Triconodont Marsupials, found in Europe and America and existing before the Dinosaurs had reached their peak, (F.E. BEDDARD, 1902, *The Cambridge Nat. Hist.*, 10, *Mammals*, pp. 99-100).

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