The identity of *Pseudopediasia mikkolai* GANEV, 1987 (Lepidoptera : Pyralidae : Crambinae)

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Abstract. *Pseudopediasia* GANEV, 1987, is a junior homonym of *Pseudopediasia* BŁESZYŃSKI, 1963, and a junior subjective synonym of *Pediasia* HÜBNER, [1825]; *P. mikkolai* GANEV, 1987, is a junior subjective synonym of *Pediasia aridella caradjaellus* (REBEL, 1907). Problems associated with isolated descriptions of new taxa are discussed.

Samenvatting. De identiteit van *Pseudopediasia mikkolai* GANEV, 1987 (Lepidoptera : Pyralidae : Crambinae).
Pseudopediasia GANEV, 1987, is een jonger homoniem van *Pseudopediasia* BŁESZYŃSKI, 1963, en een jonger subjektief synoniem van *Pediasia* HÜBNER, [1825]; *P. mikkolai* GANEV, 1987, is een jonger subjektief synoniem van *Pediasia aridella caradjaellus* (REBEL, 1907). Problemen in verband met alleenstaande beschrijvingen van nieuwe taxa worden besproken.

Résumé. Quelle est l'identité exacte de *Pseudopediasia mikkolai* GANEV, 1987 (Lepidoptera : Pyralidae : Crambinae)
Pseudopediasia GANEV, 1987 est un homonyme plus récent de *Pseudopediasia* BŁESZYŃSKI, 1963, et un synonyme subjectif plus récent de *Pediasia* HÜBNER, [1825]; *P. mikkolai* GANEV, 1987, est un synonyme subjectif plus récent de *Pediasia aridella caradjaella* (REBEL, 1907). Les problèmes en rapport avec la description isolée de nouveaux taxa sont examinés.

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Introduction

GANEV (1987 : 36) described a new monobasic genus of crambine pyralid moth, *Pseudopediasia*. Its single included species, *P. mikkolai* GANEV, 1987 : 37, was described from a single example from the eastern USSR. Study of GANEV's paper and subsequent study of the holotype of *P. mikkolai* suggest that GANEV's conclusions as to the identity of his specimen are incorrect.

Pediasia HÜBNER, [1825]

Pediasia HÜBNER, [1825], *Verz. bekannter Schmett.*: 365. Type species : *Tinea fascelinella* HÜBNER, [1813], by subsequent designation by BŁESZYŃSKI, 1953, *Ann. Mus. zool. Pol.* **15** : 102.

Carvanca WALKER, 1856, *List Specimens lepid. Insects Colln Br. Mus.* **9** : 119. Type species : *Carvanca trisecta* WALKER, 1856, by monotypy.

Pseudopediasia GANEV, 1987, *Phegea* **15** : 36. Type species : *Pseudopediasia mikkolai* GANEV, 1987, by monotypy, **nom. praeocc. Syn. n.**

Pseudopediasia GANEV, 1987 : 36, is a junior homonym of *Pseudopediasia* BŁESZYŃSKI, 1963 : 133, a crambine pyralid genus restricted to South America. It is unnecessary to propose a replacement name as *Pseudopediasia* GANEV, 1987, is placed here in synonymy with *Pediasia* HÜBNER, [1825].

GANEV was clearly misled by the limited number of characters with which

he chose to describe his taxon and by the inadequate comparisons he made with other crambines. He noted the similarity between his genus and the monobasic *Neopediasia* OKANO, 1962, in the forewing markings and in the presence of a forewing cross-vein connection between Sc and R1. However, the female genitalia of *Neopediasia* are quite distinct. The cross-vein connection in the forewing, contrary to BŁESZYŃSKI (1965 : 358), is also found in many species of *Pediasia*, though not in the type species *fascelinella* HÜBNER. These veins approach each other closely but are not connected in some other species of this large genus. There is thus no justification for the separation of *Pseudopediasia* GANEV from *Pediasia* HÜBNER.

Pediasia aridella caradjaellus (REBEL, 1907)

Crambus caradjaellus REBEL, 1907, *Dt.ent.Z.Iris* **19** : 228, text figs. Lectotype ♂, Rumania : Sulina (MINGA, Bucharest) [not examined].

Crambus salinellus nepos ROTHSCHILD, 1911, *Entomologist* **44** : 50, pl. 1, figs 3, 3a, 7. Syntypes, Hungary (BMNH, London) [examined].

Crambus monotonus FILIPJEV, 1927. *Ezheg.gosud.Muz.N.M.Mart'yanova* **5** : 11, 22. Lectotype ♂, USSR : Witim (ZI, Leningrad) [not examined].

Crambus salinellus ludovicellus MARION, 1952, *Mitt.münch.ent.Ges.* **42** : 154, fig. 3. Holotype ♂, W. Germany : Bavaria, Kochel (ZSBS, Munich) [not examined].

Pediasia aridella caradjaella (REBEL); BŁESZYŃSKI, 1965 : 381.

Pseudopediasia mikkolai GANEV, 1987, *Phegea* **15** : 37, figs 1, 2. Holotype ♀, USSR : Novosibirska oblast, Karasuk Steppe (ZMU, Helsinki) [examined]. **Syn. n.**

Examination of the female holotype of *mikkolai* and its genitalia showed it to be inseparable from specimens of *Pediasia aridella caradjaellus* in the BMNH collection, including specimens studied by BŁESZYŃSKI.

Discussion

Isolated descriptions of new taxa, such as that discussed above, are of questionable scientific value. They add significantly to biological knowledge only if published for taxa belonging to groups for which a detailed corpus of knowledge already exists. Even then, the description and precise placement of a new taxon strengthens that corpus of knowledge only if the work adds significantly to structural, biogeographic or behavioural data, or tests critically the basis of the previous classification. The naming of *Pseudopediasia mikkolai* merely formalises the recognition of its existence.

It might be thought that the corpus of knowledge of crambine Pyralidae would be great enough to permit accurate placement of a single specimen. However, no monograph describes fully the extent of intraspecific variation and sexual dimorphism in this particular group. The fate of *Pseudopediasia mikkolai* underlines the need for extreme caution in the naming of new taxa by nonspecialists. It is always wise to seek second and third opinions.

This case serves also to illustrate the undesirability of basing a new taxon on limited material or even, as in this instance, on a single specimen. Had GANEV

also had males of *mikkolai* he would, no doubt, have been able to correctly identify the species. Isolated descriptions of new taxa based on single specimens are legion. Very few are defensible and a disproportionate number turn out to be synonyms.

Unlike all other disciplines in science, systematics has a quasi-legal basis and all previous work **must** be taken into account. Correcting erroneous earlier work and cataloguing the history of mistakes - «error-tracking» - is becoming an increasingly expensive and unproductive part of the systematist's duties. Isolated descriptions of new taxa, based on inadequate material, inevitably generate mistakes which damage the credibility of entomology and entomologists, and leave an unwelcome burden to posterity.

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Boekbesprekingen

Aichele, D. & R. en Schwegler, H.-W. & A. *: Blumen in Wald und Flur*
11 x 18 cm, 190 p., 480 kleurenfoto's, 80 gekleurde en 96 pentekeningen in de tekst, Franckh'sche Verlagshandlung, W. Keller & Co., Postfach 640, D-7000 Stuttgart 1, 1987, gebonden in slappe kaft, DM 22,- (ISBN 3-440-05729-1)

Dit kleine determineerwerkje is erg praktisch uitgevoerd. Het kleine formaat en het lichte gewicht dragen ertoe bij dat het gemakkelijk in elke tas of jaszak kan weggestopt worden. Boven dien is het voorzien van een plastic omhulsel waardoor het tegen heel wat stoten kan. Ondanks het kleine formaat bevat het 480 kleurenfoto's (meestal 3 per bladzijde) en kan men er de meest voorkomende planten uit bossen en velden mee determineren. Dit gebeurt met de foto's die gerangschikt zijn volgens de kleur van de bloemen. Binnen deze kleurgroepering vindt men eerst bloemen met 4 kroonblaadjes, dan 5 enz.

De zeer korte tekst geeft schematisch weer op welke kenmerken speciaal moet gelet worden en waar de plant normaal aan te treffen is. Met enkele symbolen die in de inleiding verklaard worden wordt aangegeven wanneer de plant bloeit, hoe hoog hij kan worden, of het een één- of tweejarige of vast plant betreft en op welke groeiplaatsen hij meestal wordt gevonden. Het boekje is zeer verzorgd uitgegeven en zal dan ook vele goede diensten kunnen bewijzen tijdens wandelingen.

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