

The validity of the family name Roeslerstammiidae Bruand (Lepidoptera)

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Abstract. Roeslerstammiidae Bruand, [1851], originally proposed as Röslerstammiidae, an incorrect original spelling, is a justified emendation and the valid family-group name based on the type genus *Roeslerstammia* Zeller, 1839. The recent rejection of Roeslerstammiidae by Heppner (2005) is refuted, and the priority over Amphitheridae Meyrick, 1913, is maintained.

Zusammenfassung. Roeslerstammiidae Bruand, [1851], ursprünglich in der ungültigen Schreibweise Röslerstammiidae veröffentlicht, ist eine berechtigte Emendation und ein gültiger Familienname basierend auf *Roeslerstammia* Zeller, 1839 als der Typusgattung. Der kürzlich erfolgten Ablehnung dieses Names durch Heppner (2005) wird widersprochen, und die Priorität über Amphitheridae Meyrick, 1913, wird beibehalten.

Key words. Family name; Nomenclature; Priority; Microlepidoptera

The Roeslerstammiidae are a small family of Microlepidoptera (Gracillarioidea) with only two European representatives in the genus *Roeslerstammia* Zeller, 1839 (Agassiz & Friese 1996; Karsholt 2004), but they are more diverse in the Old World tropics with about 60 species (Davis & Robinson 1998; Heppner 2005). After a long period of uncertain placement, Kyrki (1983) recognized that the genus *Roeslerstammia* and the tropical species placed in the Amphitheridae belong to the same family.

In a recent review of the family, Heppner (2005) is challenging the validity of the senior family name Roeslerstammiidae and is re-establishing the junior Amphitheridae as the valid name. We examine the reasons put forward by Heppner, and show that his rejection is based on a misinterpretation of the *Code* (International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature 1999).

Heppner provided two arguments against the validity of Roeslerstammiidae:

- 1) The original author based the name on a misspelled genus name;
- 2) The original type genus was misidentified, and is not the same as *Roeslerstammia* Zeller, 1839; Bruand did not specifically include nominal species that are *now* (2006) in *Roeslerstammia*.

Zeller (1839) described the genus *Roeslerstammia* (not *Röslerstammia* as cited by Heppner) to accommodate five species, viz.: A. 1. *granitella*, 2. *assectella*, 3. *heleniella*, 4. *cariosella* and B. 5. *erxlebeniella* [current names *Digitivalva granitella* (Treitschke, 1833), *Acrolepiopsis assectella* (Zeller, 1839), *Acrolepia autumnitella* Curtis, 1838, *D. reticulella* (Hübner, 1796) and *Roeslerstammia erxlebelli* (Fabricius, 1787)].

This assemblage is now considered to belong to two families, the Acrolepiidae (first four species) in the Yponomeutoidea and the Roeslerstammiidae in the Gracillarioidea. In the first half of the 19th century the division of the Microlepidoptera into genera was in full swing, and many of the newly established genera contained still assemblages based on superficial similarity, which we would now no longer consider as natural. Zeller did not designate a type species; this was done almost a century later by Fletcher (1929), who selected the last species: *Roeslerstammia* (*Chrysitella*) *erxlebeniella* Zeller, 1839, a junior objective synonym and unjustified emendation of *Alucita erxlebelli* Fabricius, 1787. According to Huemer (1997), the designation was invalid, because the type species did not belong to the nominotypical subgenus, but was described in the 'section' *Chrysitella* Zeller; Kyrki (1983) held the different opinion that the designation had been correct according to the *Code*. For various reasons, including problems with the identity of the type species, *Roeslerstammia* (*Chrysitella*) *erxlebeniella* Zeller, 1839, was again formally designated as the type species by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature (1998).

Bruand ([1851]) erected the family Röslerstammidae [sic!] and included the genus *Röslerstammia* [sic!]. Röslerstammidae, without the second 's' is an incorrect subsequent spelling (ICZN art. 33.3), because there is no indication that Bruand had intentionally changed the name. Moreover, there would be no reason to do so, as the name is based on the 19th century lepidopterist 'Fischer von Röslerstamm'. Also the use of ö rather than oe is an incorrect subsequent spelling. [However, it should be noted that both spellings, Röslerstamm and Roeslerstamm are used by Fischer himself (Fischer von Röslerstamm 1834–[1843])]. Bruand included ten species, amongst them the first two also listed by Zeller, now belonging to Acrolepiidae. Other species included by him are now regarded as belonging to Agonoxenidae, Epermeniidae, Gelechiidae, Momphidae and Scythrididae respectively. Bruand did not include what we now regard as the type species (*R. erxlebelli*), but neither did he explicitly exclude it. He did not list that species, simply because he had not found it in the French department 'Doubs', the subject of his paper.

The family-group name based on the genus *Roeslerstammia* was later used again by Herrich-Schäffer (1857) as Röslerstammia [again an incorrect subsequent spelling], who did not cite any species.

A few other authors used the family group name for subordinate taxa, and Handlirsch (1925) was the first to make the justified emendation to Roeslerstammiini when he used it as a tribe within Tineidae. An overlooked fact is that Moriuti (1982a; 1982c) raised Roeslerstammiidae to family status before Kyrki (1983) discussed its family status and synonymised it with the junior name Amphitheridae. All family group names are listed in the catalogue below.

Let us now look again at Heppner's (2005) reasoning: his first argument is about the use of a misspelled type genus. This is dealt with by the *Code* in article 32.5.3, which reads:

“A family-group name is an incorrect original spelling and must be corrected if it

32.5.3.1. has an incorrectly formed suffix [Art.29.2]

32.5.3.3. is formed from an incorrect subsequent spelling of a generic name
[Art 35.4.1.]”.

According to this article there is thus no problem, the incorrect original spelling Röslerstammidae must be emended to Roeslerstammiidae, the corrected ‘oe’ and ‘st’ according to 32.5.3.3 and the ending ‘iidae’ according to 32.5.3.1. and 35.4.1: the ending ‘idae’ should be placed after the stem of *Roeslerstammia*, being ‘Roeslerstammi’. This emendation was done by Handlirsch (1925).

The second argument refers to article 65.2, which deals with the misidentified or altered concept of the type genus for the family.

Bruand erected the family on the basis of a genus named by him ‘*Röslerstammia*’, which – as we have seen – is an incorrect subsequent spelling of *Roeslerstammia* Zeller. According to Heppner (2005), Bruand did not cite the type species *Roeslerstammia erxlebelli* and thus is using a different concept. However, nowhere does the Code demand that the type species be cited when establishing a family name; only the type genus is relevant. That *Röslerstammia* is the type genus follows from article 11.7.1.1 [‘indicated by express reference to the generic name or by inference from its stem...’]. According to article 65.1 ‘It is to be assumed, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary, that an author who establishes a nominal family-group taxon has correctly identified its type genus’. As shown above, Bruand’s concept of the genus was not very different from that of Zeller; he merely included several additional species, whilst retaining those of the original species that were known to him. It would be too far-fetched to conclude that by not citing a type species that was to be designated more than 75 or even 150 years later, he misidentified the genus or altered its concept!

Moreover, article 65.2 only deals with situations where “stability or universality is threatened, or confusion is likely to be caused”. The rest of the article requires that in all cases the Commission is asked for a ruling. Heppner (l.c.) has not shown that the stability is threatened nor has he taken steps to ask the Commission for a ruling.

In our view (and that of other lepidopterists whom we have canvassed) there is no threat to stability: two family names, Amphitheridae and Roeslerstammiidae were synonymised in 1983, a synonymy not questioned ever since. Both names had been used in relatively few publications before 1983, but Amphitheridae more often. Contrary to Heppner’s view, the family-group name Roeslerstammiidae was used several times between Bruand (1851) and Kyrki (1983) (see below), even shortly before Kyrki’s work, in 1982, together with Amphitheridae in the same book as two valid family names (Moriuti 1982a, 1982b, 1982c, 1982d). Since 1983 the name Roeslerstammiidae is in almost universal use; only Heppner maintains Amphitheridae in several papers (Heppner 1984). It is true that Moriuti also used Amphitheridae as well (Moriuti 1984, 1987), but from the treatment in *Moths of Japan* (1982, as cited above) we conclude

that he considered *Roeslerstammia* and *Amphithera* as belonging to two different families. Below we provide a catalogue of citations for this family, without the aim to be exhaustive.

A few other statements in Heppner's (2005) paper need to be corrected: the first paragraph on page 25 is somewhat confusing but, in short, Heppner is stating that Kyrki (1983) preferred the name Roeslerstammiidae because the genus *Roeslerstammia* is the oldest genus of the family. However, such argumentation is absent from Kyrki's paper; he simply followed priority of the family names. A next statement that the rule of priority does not apply to higher category names is essentially true, but only for ranks higher than Family-Group names, whereas Family-Group names are ruled by the *Code* and follow the Principle of Priority (articles 1.2; 23).

Finally Heppner (l.c.) lists the Neotropical genus *Dasycarea* Zeller, 1877, as Amphitheridae but of uncertain affinity, overlooking the fact that Becker (1999) had transferred it from Roeslerstammiidae to Acrolepiidae. As to the best of current knowledge the Roeslerstammiidae are absent from the New World, and only known from the Australian, Oriental and Palaearctic regions.

Our conclusion is that as long as the type genera of Amphitheridae and Roeslerstammiidae are considered to belong to the same family, the senior name Roeslerstammiidae is the valid one.

Our argumentation was checked and approved by the following specialists: D. Davis (Smithsonian Institution, Washington, USA), P. Huemer (Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck, Austria), K. Sattler (Natural History Museum, London, UK), J. van Tol (National Museum of Natural History Leiden, Netherlands, member ICZN). We also informed J. Heppner (Gainesville, USA), who after reading our argumentation maintains his interpretation of the invalidity of Roeslerstammiidae.

Catalogue of Roeslerstammiidae

Röslertammiidae Bruand, [1851]: 43 [incorrect original spelling]

Type genus *Röslertammia*, an incorrect subsequent spelling of *Roeslerstammia* Zeller, 1839.

Röslerstammia Herrich-Schäffer, 1857: 58. [incorrect subsequent spelling]

Roeslerstammiini [justified emendation] [as tribe of Tineidae: Tineinae]; Handlirsch 1925: 878.

"Roeslerstammiinen" [as subfamily of Tineidae or family, not clear from text]; Börner 1939: 1410.

Roeslerstammiinae [as subfamily of Yponomeutidae]; Kloet & Hincks 1945: 134.

Roeslerstammiidae [as family]: Moriuti 1982a: 206; 1982c: 194; Kyrki 1983: 322; 1984: 80; Buszko & Baraniak 1985: 3; Schnack 1985: 51; Nye & Fletcher 1991: xxv; Common 1990: 186; Scoble 1992: 234; Robinson 1988: 120; Budashkin & Kostjuk 1993: 81; Huemer & Tarmann 1993: 29; Robinson et al. 1994: 41; Gaedike

et al. 1995: 15; Agassiz & Friese 1996: 46; Agassiz 1996: 110; Nielsen 1996: 44; Savenkov et al. 1996: 10; Leraut 1997: 92; Budashkin 1997: 431; Huemer 1997: 22; De Prins 1998: 36; International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature 1998: 244; Karsholt & Stadel Nielsen 1998: 23; Laštůvka 1998: 21; Gaedike & Heinicke 1999: 50; Davis & Robinson 1998: 109; Becker 1999: 150; Aarvik et al. 2000: [27]; Jürivete et al. 2000: 19; Huemer & Segerer 2001: 207; Holloway et al. 2001: 195; Kullberg et al. 2002: 59; Buszko & Nowacki 2000: 21; Rákossy et al. 2003: 32; Karsholt 2004 – internet.

Oeslerstammiidae [lapsus]; Svensson et al. 1987: 3–12.

Amphitheridae [as family]; Meyrick 1914: [64]; Diakonoff 1955: 71; Moriuti 1978: 1; 1982b: 226; 1982d: 199; Heppner 1984: 18; Moriuti 1984: 407; 1987: 87; Heppner & Inoue 1992: 65; Heppner 1998: 19; 2005: 24.

Amphiterinae [as subfamily of Tineidae]; Handlirsch 1925: 887.

There are many online citations for Roeslerstammiidae, only a few for Amphitheridae (checked January 2006), these are not listed here.

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