

On the gender of heteropteran generic names ending in *-dema*

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It is recommended to accept uniformly the feminine (not neuter) gender for all heteropteran generic names ending in *-dema*.

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The problem of the gender attributed to several dozens of Heteropteran names ending in *-dema* has a long and confused history.

Laporte (1832-1833) established the first three such names: *Sphaerodema* (stated to be formed from “sphaera” and “demas” (body), with two species names used in feminine), *Stenodema* (stated to be formed from “stenos” and “soma” (sic!) (body), with one species name (*virens*) of indefinite gender) and *Eurydema* (as a sub-generic name; etymology not given; species names used in feminine in combination with the generic name *Pentatoma*).

Spinola (1837) added *Cymodema* and *Emesodema*, with etymology not stated, but species names used in feminine.

Amyot & Serville (1843) indicated origin of *-dema* from “demas” for *Cymodema*, *Emesodema*, *Eurydema* and *Sphaerodema*, with species names used in feminine for the first three, but in neuter for *Sphaerodema*. *Stenodema* was not mentioned in the work.

Dohrn (1859) used *Emesodema* and *Sphaerodema* with species names in feminine.

Fieber (1860-1861; genera established by him are asterisked) used *Emesodema*, **Macrodema*, **Lamprodema*, **Homalodema* (see Index in Fieber, p. 429!), *Cymodema*, **Hadrodema* with species names in feminine and **Cyphodema* with a species name of indefinite gender; the origin of *-dema* from “demas” is indisputable for all the names.

Baerensprung (1860) was apparently the first who used in his catalogue all the three included names with the ending *-dema* (*Cymodema*, *Hadrodema*, *Emesodema*) as of neuter gender.

Stål (1868, 1876) used *Eurydema* as of feminine gender. Putton accepted feminine gender in the first edition of his catalogue (1869), but neuter in the second (1875) and later editions. Also

Reuter consistently used the names ending in *-dema* (of which some were established by him) as of neuter gender, and this became later the almost universal practice (Horváth, Distant, Oshanin, Van Duzee, etc.). Nevertheless, Lethierry & Severin (1893-1896) in the world catalogue of Heteroptera and Kirkaldy (1909) in the catalogue of Pentatomoidea accepted feminine, and Royer (1909) stated that the heteropteran names ending in *-dema* should be feminine.

Dupuis (1952), in a discussion with Grensted (1952), argued in detail for feminine gender of *Eurydema*. Later, Steyskal (1973) discussed the problem and indicated that at least *Stenodema* must be feminine, but retained neuter for many other genera of Miridae; he indicated the need for a general and uniform solution of this problem.

The Code (1st edition published in 1961) for the first time regulated the gender of the genus-group names. According to the Code, the situation is as follows. The Greek “demas” is of neuter gender, but if changed to *-dema* it becomes of feminine gender, as most Latin words ending in *-a* (Art. 30.1.3 of the 4th edition). Unfortunately, there is a similar Greek word “deme” or “dema” (bundle, band), neuter, and, according to Art. 26, if etymology was not indicated in the original paper, *-dema* should be formally considered as being this word, and therefore, the corresponding generic names should be neuter. It is obvious that the authors of heteropteran names ending in *-dema* meant “demas” (body) rather than “dema” (bundle, band), and the common sense is coming here in conflict with the formal rule. However, this does not concern *Stenodema*, because Laporte implicitly showed that he had body (“demas”) in mind and, hence, the gender of *Stenodema* under the Code must be feminine.

Further confusion was added by the Commission, which included *Stenodema* in the Official List as of neuter gender (Opinion 898). This name and its gender were not subjects of discussion, simply T. Jaczewski, who proposed to add this name to the ruling of the Commission at a later stage, followed the usage prevalent at his time. In the North American catalogue by Henry & Froeschner (1988), *Stenodema* was given as of feminine gender, but later (1992) the authors indicated that the gender should be neuter in accordance with the ruling by the Commission.

The uncertainty in application of the Code to the heteropteran names ending in *-dema* is confusing. It will be hardly reasonable to consider Laporte's *Sphaerodema* and *Stenodema* as of feminine gender, but his *Eurydema* as of neuter, only because the etymology of the later was not given. A similar situation is with Fieber's 5 names: all of them were stated to be formed from "demas" in the 1860-1861 work, but 3 names were proposed in this work and should be feminine, whereas other 2 names were established in an earlier work (Fieber, 1858) without stated etymology and, hence, should be neuter under the Code.

I have proposed to the editors of the "Catalogue of the Heteroptera of the Palaearctic Region" to accept feminine gender for all generic names ending in *-dema*, and this proposal has been accepted and followed. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature should be asked to correct the gender of *Stenodema* in the Official List and accept a general ruling on the heteropteran names ending in *-dema*.

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