



Cyber nomenclaturalists and the “CESA itch”

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Not long ago, Neal Evenhuis (2008) treated us to a historical review of the mental affliction known by the quaint term “mihi itch”. This condition is unique to taxonomists and manifests itself in the sufferer’s near uncontrollable desire to name species. The mihi itch is less prevalent than it once was, but in recent years a new “itch” has afflicted some of our fellow taxonomists. This I term the “CESA itch” (see below), and you may have seen its effects already in a taxon of interest to you.

The CESA itch is seen most commonly in cyber nomenclaturalists. These are persons who scour the Internet for lists and databases containing seemingly valid generic names that potentially have junior primary homonyms lurking in their midst. The cyber nomenclaturalist, upon finding such a resource, diligently checks each and every “valid” generic name against a nomenclator like *Nomenclator Zoologicus* (Neave 2005) or *Systema Dipteroorum* (Pape & Thompson 2010) in the hope of discovering senior primary homonyms that predate “valid” generic names. Then, invoking the Principle of Homonymy (ICZN 1999, Article 52), new replacement names are published (generally a few at a time in a periodical edited by the authors) to take the place of the preoccupied names.

The two most active groups of cyber nomenclaturalists are located in Turkey. I shall focus on just one of them to illustrate the nature of the work in which such groups indulge. This group consists of Prof. Dr. Ahmet Ömer Koçak and Asst. Prof. Dr. Muhabbet Kemal Koçak, professors at Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi and co-owners of the *Centre for Entomological Studies Ankara* (CESA) (<http://www.cesa-tr.org/>). Together, these scientists manage CESA, edit its various publications, conduct research activities, and surf the Internet looking for taxonomic names they can replace with their own. In what might be seen as acts of unnecessary self-indulgence, they have incorporated the acronym of their Centre (CESA) into over 60 of their new replacement names (Table 1). It therefore seems fitting to christen this activity of homonym-hunting and replacement the “CESA itch”, in honor of the Centre that has created such a preponderance of CESA-inspired replacement names.

Koçak & Kemal (2009a) have rationalized their nomenclatural activities within the context of their studies on the insects of Turkey, explaining that getting the names right is a necessary part of their work:

“Of course, Turkey, our land is placed in the focus of this survey. By doing this, we should search the fauna of not only the neighbour countries, but also the continents, namely Eurasia and Africa, as their faunal elements inhabit in various regions of Turkey in various rates. During our searches in the related literature, we have met with some difficulties. Usually the Turkish authors of various insect groups, if use the scientific names of the taxa in their publications, frequently mis-spelled the names, used the name with incorrect incomplete author names, or without date of publications. These cases are less frequently seen among the publications by the foreign authors. We preferred, under these circumstances, to prepare correct scientific name lists of the pterygot orders under discussion; consequently we made inevitably more nomenclatural than laboratorial studies at the beginning. Without corrected faunal and taxonomical lists, such an enormous attempt cannot be successful. We strongly believe this; therefore we have to make some preferences concerning Entomofauna survey, i.e., first nomenclatural studies, taxonomical and faunal lists in our database systems, than the studies in the laboratory concerning the identifications the materials collected by us and their evaluations, including their descriptions.” (Koçak & Kemal 2009a: 2.)