Case 2584

Glabellula Bezzi, 1902 (Insecta, Diptera): proposed designation of Platygaster arcticus Zetterstadt, 1838, as type species

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is to designate Platygaster arcticus Zetterstedt, 1838, as the type species of Glabellula, a genus of minute flies (family Bombyliidae), and to confirm that this generic name is a replacement name for Platygaster Zetterstedt, 1838.

1. The genus Glabellula Bezzi, 1902 consists of minute flies in the family Bombyliidae, which have an almost worldwide distribution (Schlüter, 1976, p. 355). Twenty species (including one in amber) have been described, and many more await description. Immatures are rarely found, though they have been recorded as inquilines in the nests of Formica spp. (de Meijere, 1924, p. xxxv and Andersson, 1974, p. 29).

2. The genus was originally described as Platygaster by Zetterstedt (1838, p. 574) with the type species Platygaster arcticus Zetterstedt, 1838, by monotypy. Zetterstedt (1842, p. 233), noting that his generic name was a junior homonym of Platygaster Latreille, 1809, in the Hymenoptera, proposed the replacement name Sphaerogaster.

3. Contemporary workers and subsequent catalogues have listed Sphaerogaster Zetterstedt, 1842 as a junior homonym of Sphaerogaster Dejean, 1821 (p. 95) in the Coleoptera. Sherborn (1930, p. 6060) and Neave (1940, p. 240), however, list Dejean’s Sphaerogaster as a nomen nudum and record Sturm (1826, p. 34) as a secondary reference for the name. Sturm’s use of Sphaerogaster makes it available because it was listed in his key to genera (p. 197) and so Sphaerogaster Sturm, 1826 is a senior homonym of Sphaerogaster Zetterstedt, 1842.

4. Loew (1873, p. 208) described a new genus, Glabellula, for his new species femorata from Turkestan. In Loew’s remarks concerning Glabellula (1873, p. 210) he indicated that this genus was possibly similar to Zetterstedt’s Sphaerogaster but he could not be sure because of the vagueness of Zetterstedt’s description. Loew also noted that Sphaerogaster Zetterstedt, 1842, was preoccupied and that if the two genera were found to be the same Glabellula could be used in place of Sphaerogaster. However, Glabellula Loew, 1873 cannot be used as a replacement name for two reasons: it was erected as a separate genus with its own type species and it is a junior homonym of Glabellula Swainson, 1840 in the Mollusca.

5. Bezzi (1902, p. 191) proposed a replacement name Glabellula with the statement ‘Glabellula, nom. nov. für Platygaster Zett. 1838 nec Latr. 1809 (Hym.), und Sphaerogaster Zett. 1842 nec Dej. 1831 [sic] (Col.), und Glabella Loew 1873 nec Swains. (Moll.)’. Because the type species of Platygaster (P. arcticus) and Glabella (G. femorata) are different, confusion exists over which becomes the type species for the nominal genus Glabellula.
6. The earliest indirect designation of a type species is found in Sharp (1903, p. 257) in the Zoological Record for the year 1902, in which he states that Glabellula (erroneously listed under Stratiomyidae) is a replacement name for Platygaster Zetterstedt, 1838. Sharp’s interpretation was followed in subsequent catalogs, e.g. Painter & Painter (1965, p. 415), Painter et al. (1978, p. 13). However, Bowden (1975, p. 166 & 1980, p. 384) treats Glabellula as a replacement name for Globella Loew, 1873.

7. The name Glabellula has been most commonly used for this genus since Bezzi’s (1902) paper, and is listed as such in all major Diptera catalogs since Bezzi (1903). Platygaster arcticus is the most widely known species and it is morphologically typical of the species in the genus. Globella femorata is the least known (apparently only from two papers other than the original description), and is morphologically atypical of the genus.

8. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:
   (1) to set aside all previous designations of type species for Glabellula Bezzi, 1902, and to designate Platygaster arcticus Zetterstedt, 1838, as the type species;
   (2) to confirm that Glabellula Bezzi, 1902 is a replacement name for Platygaster Zetterstedt 1838;
   (3) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name Glabellula Bezzi, 1902 (gender: feminine), type species by designation in (1) above, Platygaster arcticus Zetterstedt, 1838;
   (4) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name arcticus, as published in the binomen Platygaster arcticus Zetterstedt, 1838 (specific name of the type species of Glabellula Bezzi, 1902);
   (5) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
      (a) Platygaster Zetterstedt, 1838 (a junior homonym of Platygaster Latreille, 1809);
      (b) Globella Loew, 1873 (a junior homonym of Globella Swainson, 1840);
      (c) Sphaerogaster Zetterstedt, 1842 (a junior homonym of Sphaerogaster Sturm, 1826).

References


De Meijere, J. C. H. 1924. [Note: Glabellula arctica Zett. fn. n. sp. in nest van Formica exsecta Nyl.] Tijdschrift voor Entomologie, 67: xxxiv–xxxvi.


