

THE LATIN NAMES OF BRITISH CENTIPEDES: COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

By producing the following lines I am afraid that I am labelling myself as a Dutch uncle with regard to Mr. Slawson's list (Slawson, 1998). Surely, tracing the meaning of scientific names is not at all as easy as one might think. Even to one with a thorough education in classical languages. Not having passed a classical training myself, having to work with only a few standard dictionaries and a little practical experience, I feel hardly qualified to solve the linguistic mysteries which previous authors sometimes have created. However, with the advantage of the access to a very complete library on myriapods, I feel sufficiently confident to enter the limelight without stage fright. Maybe the following list may help to correct a few obvious errors and offer some alternative solutions in a few ambiguous matters.

Chaetochelyne – From the Greek chaite: mane, and chelyne: lip. Obviously referring to the fringes along the lateral parts of the labrum.

Chalandea – This genus was dedicated by Brolemann (1909a: 330) to Mr Jules Chalande, of Toulouse, France, who published over 20 papers on myriapods between 1885 and 1911.

coleoprata – Possibly this is merely derived from the Greek koleopteros for beetle-like insects: with wings covered by a shield. In *Scutigera c.* seven larger tergites hide the reduced dorsal sclerites of the other segments.

Cryptops – From Greek krypto: hide and ops: eye.

Dicellophilus – The ending -philus in this and other geophilomorph genera appears to be used not for its literal meaning: friend, but rather to rhyme with *Geophilus*. With the use of such an identical suffix in new generic names authors intended to indicate similarity or taxonomic relationship to a previously named genus.

duboscqui – Brolemann (1896:116) based this species name on the name of a friend, Mr O. Duboscq, of Grenoble, France, author of several important papers on myriapods around the end of the nineteenth century.

electricus – Although it is tempting to associate this name with electricity in the modern sense, the Greek elektron actually means amber.

fucorum – This species name is based on the Latin name *Fucus* (seaweed). Therefore: of the seaweeds.

Haplophilus – see *Dicellophilus*.

Lamyctes – Perhaps this is based on the Greek mykter: snout or trunk, and the Greek prefix la: strengthening the meaning of the following word. But this explanation does not add much descriptive sense to the word.

melanops – Greek melas: black and ops: eye.

microps – Greek mikros: small and ops: eye.

monoeci – The name, written originally with a capital M (Brolemann, 1904:7), might allude to the type locality of the taxon, Monaco.

Nesoporogaster – Greek nesos: island. The type species of this genus was originally described from the Mediterranean island of Ibiza.

oblongocribellata – Latin cribellum: small sieve.

osquidatum – the stem of this species name, which was written originally with a capital O, is likely to be of geographical origin. Brolemann (1909b: 209) based the species on material from the western Pyrenees. The only geographical name, which I could trace in this area, showing resemblance is the “Col d’Osquich” or “Osquish” on the road between Larceveau and Mauleon-Licharre in the French Department Pyrenees-Atlantiques. Brolemann gave only a few specified localities and otherwise indicated relative abundance in general: “de ci, de là”. So maybe the “Col” was one of these localities.

parisi – *Cryptops p.* was not named after the capital of France as one is apt to believe. Actually, the species name refers to Mr P. Paris, of Dijon, France, the collector of the type specimen: “C’est a lui qu’est dédiée cette nouvelle espèce française.” (Brolemann, 1929: 12).

peyerimhoffi – Dedicated to Mr P. de Peyerimhoff, a French coleopterist.

pusillifrater – This name was originally proposed for a subspecies of *Geophilus pusillus*. The name was obviously coined to emphasize a “brotherly” relationship.

Schendyla – Maybe from the Greek schendyle: “a tool of ship carpenters and blacksmiths, perhaps a pair of tongs”.

seurati – The taxon bearing this name was dedicated to Prof. L. Seurat.

Strigamia – Gray, who introduced this name, did not give an explanation of its derivation. Although it looks like a Latin or Greek word I have not been able to trace it in available dictionaries. Perhaps this is just an example of a well sounding combination of letters. (The same explanation might hold for the diplopod genus name *Stosatea* Gray).

Tygarrup – This name is composed of the generic name *Arrup* with the prefix *Tyg-* added. It does seem neither of classical origin nor based on a modern personal or geographical name. My guess is that Chamberlin, who, I have been told, was also an expert on American Indian languages and actually introduced many an Indian name in the nomenclature of chilopods and diplopods, adopted this from an Indian dialect. A meaning is not given.

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