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The gender of “*cleis*”: correct spelling of *Chiasmocleis superciliarbus* Morales and McDiarmid, 2009, and *Elachistocleis magnus* Toledo, 2010 (Anura, Microhylidae)

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Morales and McDiarmid (2009) and Toledo (2010) described and named, respectively, *Chiasmocleis superciliarbus* and *Elachistocleis magnus*. We argue that the specific epithets of both names are discordant with the gender of their respective genera and need correction.

Méhely (1904) described *Chiasmocleis* to accommodate a single species, *Engystoma albopunctatum* Boettger, 1885. Despite not providing an etymology for his new genus, Méhely (1904) changed the gender of the specific epithet to feminine, presumably to be in accord with the gender of *Chiasmocleis*, resulting in the combination *Chiasmocleis albopunctata*. Parker (1927) described *Elachistocleis* to accommodate *Rana ovalis* Schneider, 1799 and elevated *Rana ovale bicolor* Guérin-Méneville, 1838 to full species status, in the combination *Elachistocleis bicolor*. The type species of *Elachistocleis* is *Rana ovalis* Schneider, 1799¹, by original designation. Originally, Parker (1927) provided the new combination *Elachistocleis ovale* (specific epithet neuter in gender) for the type species, but later (Parker 1934) corrected the name to *Elachistocleis ovalis*.

Because neither Méhely (1904) nor Parker (1927) provided etymologies for their genera, it was difficult for some workers to ascertain their original intent, and subsequent decisions about gender were sometimes made by implication. The diagnoses of both *Chiasmocleis* and *Elachistocleis* are largely based on pectoral girdle characters (Méhely 1904; Parker 1927, 1934; Carvalho 1954), and therefore we can trace the construction of the names based on those characteristics:

- (1) *kleis* = κλείς (from the Greek) = clavicle, and is a feminine substantive.
- (2) *chiasmus* = *Chiasmós* = χιασμός (from the Greek); refers to a diagonal “X” shape, and is hence also used as an adjective.
- (3) *elachistos* = ?λάχιστος (from the Greek); meaning “small”, “least” or “minimum”, and is hence also used as an adjective.

Therefore, *Chiasmocleis* = *Chiasmus* + *cleis* and *Elachistocleis* = *Elachistos* + *cleis* both should be treated as feminine genera.

De Sá *et al.* (2012) recently transferred *Chiasmocleis superciliarbus* to *Syncope* using the combination *Syncope superciliarbus*. *Syncope* is also feminine in gender and the species name needs correction too. Walker (1973) explicitly stated in the etymology that *Syncope* is derived from the Greek. By implication, Walker (1973) meant:

Syncope = συγκόπτω (from the Greek) = *sunkoptō*; derived from the Greek verb meaning “cut up”— in allusion to the shortening of the number of vertebrae, by loss of an anterior pre-sacral.

sunkoptō is a combination of two words, σύν (*sun*, “with”) + κόπτω (*koptō*, “cut”).

Given the above, the names of two microhylid species need correction. Below are the recommended mandatory changes:

1. *Rana ovalis* is considered a *nomen dubium* (name of unknown or doubtful application) referred to a *species inquirenda* (species of doubtful identity needing further investigation) (see Caramaschi 2010). The status of *R. ovalis* is, nonetheless, irrelevant to the problem being treated here, and *Rana ovalis* should still be considered the type species of *Elachistocleis*.

Syncope superciliarba (Morales and McDiarmid, 2009)
Chiasmocleis superciliarbus Morales and McDiarmid, 2009: 72.
Chiasmocleis superciliarba—corrected spelling.
Syncope superciliarbus—De Sá *et al.* 2012: 11

Elachistocleis magna Toledo, 2010
Elachistocleis magnus Toledo, 2010: 64.

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