Letter to the Editor

Correction of Orthography of Epithets in *Pasteurella* and Some Problems with Recommendations on Latinization

Two errors were made by us in the spelling of epithets based on personal names in new species of *Pasteurella* (16). Because it was known that there were to be new recommendations on latinization (11), publication of corrections had been deferred until the new edition of the *Bacteriological Code*, which has been published recently (10).

The species *Pasteurella bettii* was proposed under the impression that the epithet commemorated a man. The epithet was taken from the American Type Culture Collection catalog (1), from which the strains were obtained for study (15). However, I have been informed by Dr. R. E. Weaver (18), and the information has been confirmed by Dr. W. Frederiksen and Dr. R. Mutter (5, 13), that the epithet commemorates a woman, the late Miss Elizabeth (Betty) O. King. Dr. Weaver explained that the epithet *bettii* came from a manuscript by Mrs. D. G. Hollis, which was not published because of uncertainty concerning the correct genus in which to place these strains (at one time referred to as CDC Group HB-5).

Although it is unusual to form an epithet from the abbreviation of a first name, rather than from a family name, it appears that the preferable latinization is *bettyae* (M.L. fem. n., genitive "of Betty"). This is in accordance with Appendix 9 of the new edition of the *Bacteriological Code* (10), section A (2) (b) (iii), which indicates that the Latin genitive of a personal name ending in -y is formed by adding -i for a man and -ae for a woman, and Professor T. O. MacAdoo concurs with this (12). Since the epithet originated in another author's unpublished manuscript (although this was not known at the time of proposal), the citation should contain the word *ex*, as well as the abbreviation *corr.* to indicate a correction. It would therefore be cited under Rule 61 and Chapter 4 Advisory Note B (3) (b) (with the addition of a reference to this communication if clarification is desired) as *Pasteurella bettyae* *corr.* Sneath and Stevens 1990 *ex* Hollis.

The other instance also illustrates some problems of latinization. There is some difference of view on the appropriate formation of a name that indicates an occupation. The 1975 edition of the *Bacteriological Code* (9) followed botanical practice: personal names ending in -er were latinized by adding a single -i, whereas those ending in a consonant other than -er received a double -ii, but this has been considered inconsistent (11). At the meetings of the Judicial Commission and the International Committee on Systematic Bacteriology in Osaka (6, 17), it was explained by Professor H. G. Trüper that the distinction originated in the medieval convention in which occupational names were latinized by adding -us and other names were latinized by adding -ius, thus Farmer, *farmerus*, *farmeri*, and Robinson, *robinsonius*, *robinsonii*. In the event the previous convention was retained, but owing to a *lapsus memoriae* we had inadvertently formed the epithet in *Pasteurella mairi*, to commemorate Dr. Nicholas S. Mair, by adding -i instead of -ii (as required by the ending -ir instead of -er). It appears, therefore, that the epithet should be corrected, and the name should be cited (with the addition of a reference to this communication if

clarification is desired) as *Pasteurella mairii* *corr.* Sneath and Stevens 1990.

Another instance of problems of latinization has arisen from the proposal of two subspecies within the genus *Staphylococcus* which bear orthographic variants of an epithet indicating hydrolysis of urea. These are *Staphylococcus capitis* subsp. *ureolyticus* (2) and *Staphylococcus cohnii* subsp. *urealyticum* [sic] (8). The latter name is a junior homonym, and because no two subspecies within a genus may bear the same subspecific epithet (Rules 12b and 13c), *urealyticus* in the name of this subspecies of *S. cohnii* will have to be replaced. But the point at issue is the correct latinization. The epithet is formed from the word *urea*, conventionally regarded as a modern Latin noun, *urea*, and a Greek adjective, *lyticus*. Appendix 9, Table 4, of the new edition of the *Bacteriological Code* indicates that in a Latin-Greek combination the preferred connecting vowel is -i-, and the omission of a connecting vowel is permitted when the suffix begins with a vowel. The strict application of these conventions would lead to the form *ureailyticus*. It seems implausible to treat *urea* as having the root *ure-*, which would lead to *ureilyticus*. However, precedent can be found in medicine and bacteriology for *urealyticus*. The synthesis of urea is known as ureapoeisis (Latin-Greek compound, *urea* and *poiein*, to form [4]), and the bacterial names (*Ureaplasma urealyticum* (14), *Bacteroides ureolyticus* (7), and *Arthrobacter ureafaciens* (3)) do not contain the inserted letter -i- after *urea*. Inasmuch as the root of the modern Latin noun *urea* is not *ureo-*, the form *urealyticus* seems preferable. But the formation of compound words is evidently not always straightforward, and both convention and euphony have a part to play.

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