

## Forum

# The correct spelling of the Latinized name for Rostombekov's rock lizard

Robert W. Murphy

Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Biology, Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 2C6  
e-mail: drbob@rom.on.ca

Darevsky (1957a) described a new subspecies of rock lizard named in honor of the eminent Georgian biologist Dr. Rostombekov, *Lacerta saxicola rostombekowi*. The taxon is now known to be a parthenogenetic species and is now referred to as *Lacerta rostombekovi*. The original spelling of Rostombekov's rock lizard was based on the transliteration of the Russian character "Б" to a "w." This spelling appears on several pages in the original publication (Darevsky, 1957a), including the description (p. 35), tables of scale characteristics (p. 37, 53), figures (Fig. 4, p. 34; Plate 2; Fig. 5, p. 36; Fig. 6, p. 38; Fig. 13, p. 54), text (p. 47, 51, 54), map (unnumbered fold out page), key (p. 49), and the Armenian summary (p. 56). The original spelling was retained in the monumental paper which first documented parthenogenesis in reptiles (Darevsky, 1958), and elsewhere (Darevsky, 1957b). However, in subsequent transliterations the Russian character appears as a "v," the spelling changed to *rostombekovi* by Darevsky (Darevskii, 1967) to parallel more recent transliterations of Russian.

Such spelling differences owing to transliterations remain common. For example, Academician Ilya Darevsky's name, as recognized today, has appeared in various forms, including Darevskii (Darevskii, 1967) and Ilja Darevski (Gans et al., 1987), among other combinations and citations. The spelling transliteration of *rostombekowi* was not a clerical or typographical error. Subsequent to Darevsky's (Darevskii, 1967) review of the rock lizards, all authors have used this changed spelling. Indeed, the original spelling has not appeared in synonymies. Unfortunately, according to Article 32 (c, ii) of the *Code*, (International Union of Biological Sciences, 1985), this change in spelling from *rostombekowi* to *rostombekovi* does not fall into the category of a "correction of an incorrect original spelling" because changes to correct transliterations, that is to correct for the use of a "w" as opposed to a "v," are disallowed. Consequently, the correct spelling of Rostombekov's rock lizard is *Lacerta rostombekowi*.

**Acknowledgements.** This research was supported by the Natural Sciences and Research Council of Canada Grant A3148. N.L. Orlov provided a translation of critical sections of the original paper. This is contribution 134 from the Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Biology, ROM.

## References

- Darevskii, I.S. (1967): Rock Lizards of the Caucasus. Leningrad, Nauka.
- Darevsky, I.S. (1957a): Systematics and ecology of rock lizards (*Lacerta saxicola* Eversmann) in Armenia. Zool. sb. AN Armenia SSR **1957**: 27-57 [In Russian].
- Darevsky, I.S. (1957b): Reptilian fauna and its zoogeographical analysis. Zoo. Inst. Acad. of Sci. (Scientific Council) **1957**: 3-27 [In Russian].
- Darevsky, I.S. (1958): Natural parthenogenesis in certain subspecies of rock lizard, *Lacerta saxicola*. Doklady Acad. Nauk S.S.S.R., Ecology **122**: 730-732 [In Russian].
- Gans, C., Darevski, I., Tatarinov, L.P. (1987): *Sharovipteryx*, a reptilian glider? Paleobiology **13**: 415-426.
- International Union of Biological Sciences. (1985): International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, University of California Press, Berkeley.

*Received: March 16, 1998. Accepted: August 4, 1998.*