Comment on the proposed conservation of the specific name *Boccardia proboscidea* Hartman, 1940 (Annelida, SPIONIDAE)  
(Case 3520; see BZN 67: 203–210)

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The application by Radashevsky & Harris (BZN 67: 203–210) asked for conservation of the specific name *Boccardia proboscidea* Hartman, 1940, used for a widely dispersed mudworm (family SPIONIDAE) described from California and requested that all previous type designations for *B. proboscidea* be set aside in favour of a neotype. Part of their rationale for designating a neotype was based on the fact that while Hartman (1940) stated that the holotype was deposited at the United States National Museum (USNM), the vial Hartman sent to the USNM contained 12 specimens.

However, designation of a neotype would limit the name-bearing types of *B. proboscidea* to one specimen and deprive all the other specimens of this status. Such an act would contradict Hartman’s concept of type specimens which was based on the 1st and 2nd editions of the ICZN. Prior to 1999 the Code did not require a type specimen. Only after 1999 were holotype or syntypes required to be designated for any newly-described species-group taxon (Articles 72.2, 72.3 of the current Code).

We do not know exactly why Hartman listed the multiple-specimen type lot of *B. proboscidea* as ‘the holotype’. In a letter dated 19 February 1937 to Dr Waldo Schmitt, Curator of Invertebrates, USNM, she said ‘I have sent off to you today, eight vials containing polychaetous specimens designated as holotypes’. In his return letter dated 27 February 1937, Dr Schmitt replied ‘In a few cases you had more than one worm in a bottle marked holotype. Of course, we shall select the nicest looking one for the holotype, but in the future it would be better if you were to specifically designate one species [sic; lapsus for specimen] of a lot as holotype either by tying on a bit of thread or else putting it in a separate vial’ (excerpts of the Hartman-Schmitt correspondence provided courtesy of the Smithsonian Institution Archives). Besides *B. proboscidea*, other spionid species with multi-specimen ‘holotypes’ are *Polydora amarincola* Hartman, 1936 (USNM 20214, 5 specimens, status listed as type in the USNM catalogue), *Polydora brachycephala* Hartman, 1936 (USNM 20215, 4 specimens, status listed as syntype in the USNM catalogue), *Pygospio californica* Hartman