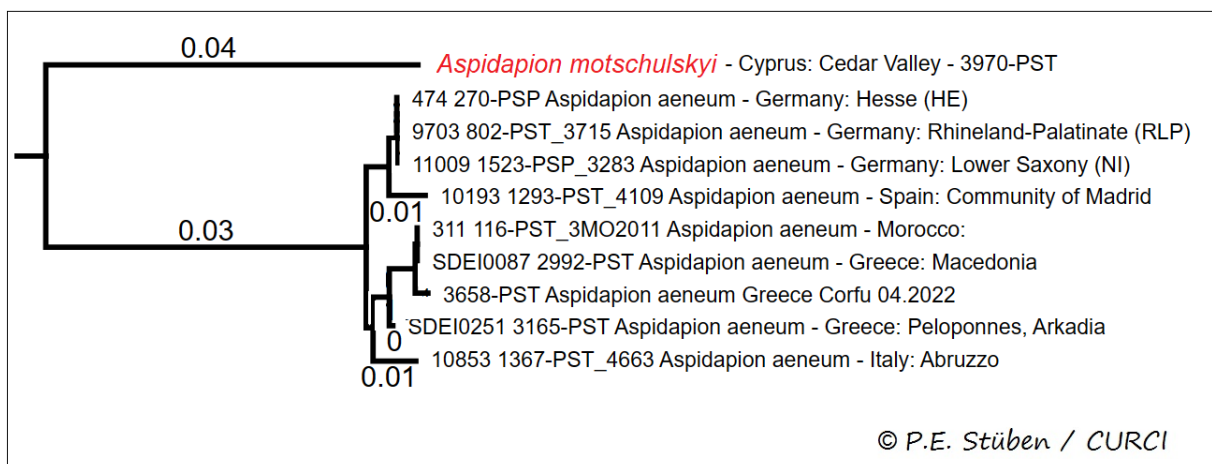


## ***Aspidapion motschulskyi* (Hochhuth, 1847) resyn.**

The ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA TO THE CATALOGUE OF PALAEARCTIC COLEOPTERA, VOLUMES 7 AND 8 (CURCULIONOIDEA) states succinctly and ex cathedra: „*Aspidapion (Koestlinia) motschulskyi* (Hochhuth, 1847), syn. nov. of *Aspidapion (Koestlinia) aeneum* (Fabricius, 1775). Giusto (2011) considered this to be an eastern vicariant of *A. aeneum*, but the characters on which the distinction is based are too weak and fit into the current known variability of *A. aeneum*, and these faint differences are probably related to the more steppic condition of the Eastern part of the species area.“ (Alonso-Zarazaga, 2016)

This is not a synonymisation as it contains no empirical scientific reasoning or evidence. They are simply assertions, assessments and mere opinions that may or may not be believed ("characters too weak" or "fit into the variability"). That's all, not even illustrations that could substantiate the claim that the species *Aspidapion aeneum* has a high degree of variability. - Once again, nothing more is given in these "annotated catalogues" (already a contradiction in terms), which are actually only intended to offer an uncommented and authentic reproduction of existing knowledge - and not one's own one- or two-line inspirations, because the renewed detailed description of *Aspidapion motschulskyi* by Giusto (2011) does not deserve that. (See my detailed review in 2018: Critical notes on the new Curculionoidea catalogues; [https://curci.de/data/snudebiller/sn19/btr\\_275/19j\\_text275.pdf](https://curci.de/data/snudebiller/sn19/btr_275/19j_text275.pdf))

In this redescription by Carlo Giusto, numerous morphological differential characters are mentioned in a very comprehensible manner (Giusto 2011: [http://pdf-hub.de/G/Giusto/Giusto\\_2011\\_291-304.pdf](http://pdf-hub.de/G/Giusto/Giusto_2011_291-304.pdf)), which already convinced us when collecting the species *A. motschulskyi* on Cyprus. These characters are conspicuous and constantly distinguishable from the those of the sister species *A. aeneum* from the western Mediterranean. Even if this were not the case, I would advise caution. Because then we would only be talking about 'cryptic species', i.e. morphologically indistinguishable species, **if we had at least endeavoured to make a molecular differential diagnosis beforehand**. And after the first mtCO1 sequencing, the direction of evidence seems to be given:



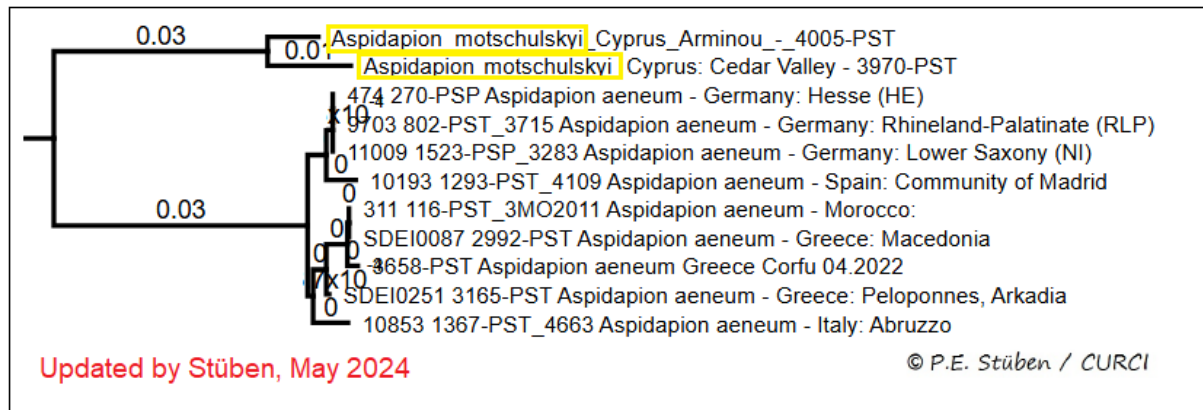


Fig. Molecular Neighbour Joining tree (mtCO1, 658bp, Follmer region) for *Aspidapion motschulskyi* and *A. aeneum* with the corrected p-distances according to Tamura-Nei, 1993 (substitution model); Laboratory routine see: Stüben & Kramp 2019.

This (p-distance ca. 7%!) doesn't mean that you can already be certain of this. Further specimens of *A. motschulskyi* from the entire Asia Minor region and other genes should confirm this first impression. But that is only my secondary concern here: The times in which, as a recognised specialist, you might just announce your two-line verdict ex cathedra (in a catalogue) without any additional, evidentiary arguments should be a thing of the past.

P.E. Stüben, 31. Dec. 2023