APPLICATION TO PLACE ON THE OFFICIAL INDEX OF REJECTED NAMES IN ZOOLOGY, THE GENERIC NAME RATTON AND THE SPECIFIC NAMES R. AGRESTE, R. BLANCODEBAXO, R. COLIBREVE, R. ESPINOSO, AND R. TUCOTUCO, DATED FROM BRANTS 1827. Z.N.(S.) 1775

By Alfredo Langguth (Dr. Senckenbergische Anatomie der Universität, Frankfurt a.M., Germany)

In the Spanish edition of his work on the Mammals of Paraguay, Felix de Azara (1802) gives a more complete account of the cricetids than that published 1801 in the French edition. Three new mice are there described: ratton agreste, ratton blanco-debaxo and ratton colibreve. Azara did not apply linnean nomenclature to the mice he described but vernacular names.

2. The first naturalist to apply linnean nomenclature to these three animals was Brants (1827). Brants used Desmarest’s names for the mice described in the French edition but realized that the other three of the Spanish edition remained without names. He simply took Azara’s vernacular names and employed them as linnean. The name Ratton was used by him for a very heterogeneous division including:

- Ratton agreste
- Ratton blanco debaxo
- Ratton colibreve
- Ratton espinoso
- Ratton tucotuco

The last two animals do not belong to the cricetids. R. espinoso is a junior objective synonym of Euryzygomatomys spinosus (G. Fischer).

3. Brants placed the name Ratton in the same category as other generic names like Mus and Spalax. There is no doubt that Brants used Ratton as a generic name. This has been also realized by Neave who listed the genus Ratton in the “Nomenclator zoologicus”.

4. The next naturalist to give linnean names for the mice of the Spanish edition was J. B. Fischer (1829). He named only two of the three new mice of 1802. The names are:

- M[us] azarae
- M[us] dubius

No other new names seem to have been applied to the cricetids concerned.

5. J. B. Fischer’s names for the two above mentioned mice have been generally accepted. They are the only names mentioned in the revision of the taxonomy of Azara’s mice by Tate (1932), in the “Index Animalium” of Sherborn and in the Catalogue of Cabrera (1961). The ratton colibreve remained unnamed. Probably because of their identity with the vernacular names of Azara, the five Brants names were never considered as senior synonyms by subsequent authors. According to Art. 23(b) of the Code they are to be considered forgotten names. After more than 130 years’ oblivion, however,
the name *agreste* in the combination *Akodon agreste* has been recently employed by Hershkovitz (1966 : 106).

6. Since:
   (a) Brants names have never been employed and their introduction will not contribute to the stability of the neotropical rodent nomenclature but to more confusion;
   (b) The use of the name *Akodon colibreve* (Brants) as the appropriate name for the colibreve will cause the dropping in synonymy of his very probably junior synonym *Akodon obscurus* (Waterhouse) a generally employed and well characterized nominal species for which a type is available;
   (c) This is a typical case covered by Art. 23(b) of the Code and Art. 23(b) (ii) does not seem to have been observed.

7. I proposed that the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature:
   (1) use its plenary powers to suppress the following names for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy:
      (a) the generic name *Ratton* Brants, 1827, p. 184;
      (b) the specific name *agreste* Brants, 1827, p. 184, as published in the binomen *Ratton agreste*;
      (c) the specific name *blancodebaxo* Brants, 1827, p. 185, as published in the binomen *Ratton blancodebaxo*;
      (d) the specific name *colibreve* Brants, 1827, p. 186, as published in the binomen *Ratton colibreve*;
      (e) the specific name *espinoso* Brants, 1827, p. 186, as published in the binomen *Ratton espinoso*;
      (f) the specific name *tucotuco* Brants, 1827, p. 187, as published in the binomen *Ratton tucotuco*;
   (2) to place the names suppressed under the plenary powers in (1) above on the appropriate Official Indexes of Rejected and Invalid Names in Zoology.

References


BRANTS, A. 1827. Het Geslacht der Muizen door Linnaeus opgesteld..., Berlin, pp. XII + 190, 1 pl.


