

REQUEST FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF *DIDERMOCERUS* BROOKES,  
1828 (MAMMALIA). (Z.N.(S.) 1779)

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In 1967, one of us expressed concern that the names *Didermocerus* Brookes, 1828 and *Dicerorhinus* Gloger, 1841 were both in current use for a genus of rhinoceros (Boylan, 1967, *Proc. Yorks. Geol. Soc.* **36** : 115–125). At the same time the Commission was requested to determine the matter, and towards this end three different alternative sets of proposals were submitted (Boylan, 1967 *Bull. Zool. Nomencl.* **24** : 55–56). Subsequently, there have been both official and private comments on the alternatives outlined in the original application, and a survey of the recent usage of the two alternative names has been made.

*Didermocerus* Brookes, 1828 and *Dicerorhinus* Gloger, 1841 are objective synonyms because they share the same type-species by monotypy, *Rhinoceros sumatrensis* Fischer, 1814 (*Zoogn.* **3** : 301).

*Didermocerus* Brookes, 1828 was published in a sale catalogue (*A catalogue of the anatomical and zoological museum of Joshua Brookes Part One*, London: 76 pp) and appears on page 75 as Lot 16 of the rhinoceros specimens, seven of which are labelled *Didermocerus sumatrensis*. The sale catalogue fulfills the conditions laid down in Article 8 of the Code and is therefore an available publication for purposes of zoological nomenclature. One other name, *Acinonyx* Brookes, 1828—the generic name of the cheetah—has already been placed in the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology with the Name No. 971, in Opinion 384, published 20th April 1956.

However, the name *Didermocerus* remained unused until Ellerman and Morrison-Scott, 1951 (*Checklist of Palaearctic and Indian Mammals, 1758–1846*) resurrected it. Simpson, (1945, *Bull. Am. Mus. nat. Hist.* **85**) noted the priority of *Didermocerus* but rejected the name because it was unused and that as it had appeared in a sale catalogue it had not been properly published. On the other hand Simpson did use *Acinonyx* (*Tom. cit.*: 120): an inconsistency that was noted by Ellerman and Morrison-Scott. Clearly *Didermocerus* cannot reasonably be rejected on the grounds that the Brookes' *Catalogue* is not an available publication when *Acinonyx* Brookes, 1828 from the same work is accepted.

Since the publication of Ellerman and Morrison-Scott's *Checklist*, *Didermocerus* has come into use and since 1951 at least 19 authors have used the name in 28 publications referring to the extant Sumatran rhinoceros and Lord Medway in a letter to the Commission wrote that *Didermocerus* was in general and widespread use in South and South-East Asia.

On the other hand *Dicerorhinus* Gloger, 1841 (*Handbuch Naturgesch* : 125) is used by nearly all palaeontologists for a number of important fossil species and is also used by many zoologists for the extant Sumatran rhinoceros, *Rhinoceros sumatrensis* Fischer, 1814. D. A. Hooijer (*Bull.* **24** : 202) strongly supported the continued use of *Dicerorhinus*. C. P. Groves (1967, *Saugetierk.*

Mitt. 15 : 222) suggests that *sumatrensis* should be included in the genus *Rhinoceros* as it shares many characters in common with *Rhinoceros sondaicus* Desmarest 1822, but in his comment to the Commission (*Bull.* 24 : 279) he states that he has reverted to the use of *Dicerorhinus*. So far as we are aware the only use of *Didermocerus* for a fossil species was by one of us (Boylan, 1967 *Proc. Yorks. Geol. Soc. op. cit.*) but although still convinced of the correctness of this usage under the Code, the form "*Dicerorhinus*" has subsequently been preferred in order to avoid confusion in palaeontological literature.

The three proposals between which the Commission was asked to choose in the original application may be summarised as follows: (A) recognise the validity of the Brookes' *Catalogue* and of *Didermocerus* and reject *Dicerorhinus*; (B) reject the Brookes *Catalogue* and adopt the next available name i.e. *Dicerorhinus*; or (C) suppress the (valid) generic name *Didermocerus* by the use of the Commission's plenary powers.

As Sir Terence Morrison-Scott (*pers. comm.*) has rightly pointed out whichever decision is reached it will clearly be a long time before the preferred usage is fully adopted and the position stabilised. Nor can a decision be reached on the relative merits of the two generic names without considering the significance of the Brookes *Catalogue* itself. Apart from its importance in respect of *Acinonyx*, Groves (*Bull.* 24 : 279) also points out that if the Commission decides not to validate the name *Pan* Oken, 1816 (*Bull.* 31 : 29) for the chimpanzee, the next available name is *Theranthropus* which appears on page 48 of the Brookes *Catalogue*.

We are of the opinion that the Brookes *Catalogue* must be regarded as a valid work, and in Opinion 384 (*Acinonyx*) the Commission has by implication supported this view. Therefore of the three proposals outlined in the original application (Boylan, 1967, *Bull. loc. cit.*) proposal B does not seem to us to be acceptable. The remaining courses of action open to the Commission are therefore either to insist on the use of the prior name of *Didermocerus* (against the prevailing usage particularly in palaeontology where much of the taxonomic research into this particular group is concentrated) or to suppress *Didermocerus* in favour of *Dicerorhinus* by use of the plenary powers. A survey of the literature has shown that since 1951 more than 40 authors have used *Dicerorhinus* in 56 publications.

It should be noted that if the *nomen oblitum* rule of the present Code had been in existence in 1951 *Didermocerus* might well have been suppressed by the Commission before the publication of Ellerman and Morrison-Scott's *Checklist*.

The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is therefore requested to:

1. Use its plenary powers to suppress the name *Didermocerus* Brookes, 1828 for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of Law of Homonymy;
2. Place the sale catalogue "A catalogue of the anatomical and zoological museum of Joshua Brookes Part One" published in London in 1828 on the Official List of Works Approved as available for Zoological Nomenclature;

3. Place the following name on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology: *Dicerorhinus* Gloger, 1841 (gender: masculine), type-species by monotypy *Rhinoceros sumatrensis* Fischer, 1814;

4. Place the specific name *sumatrensis* Fischer, 1814 (type-species of *Dicerorhinus* Gloger, 1841) on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology;

5. Place the name *Didermocerus* Brookes, 1828, suppressed under the plenary powers in (1) above, on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology.

## REFERENCES

The following references are to serve as an indication of the usage of the names *Didermocerus* Brookes 1828 and *Dicerorhinus* Gloger, 1841, since the publication of Ellerman and Morrison-Scott's 1951 *Checklist*. Except where otherwise stated all references are to the Sumatran rhinoceros *D. sumatrensis*. Fossil species are indicated with †.

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