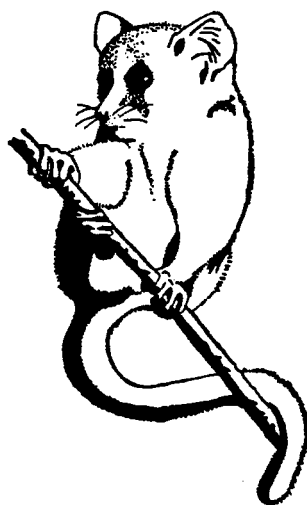


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The scientific names of the South African steenbok and grysbok (*Raphicerus campestris* and *R. melanotis*)

by L.C. ROOKMAAKER

Dokter Guepinlaan 23, 4032 NH Ommeren, Holland

Summary. — The first scientific name applied to the steenbok was « *Antelope dama* var. *rupestris* » given by J.R. Forster in his translation of Levaillant's *Reisen in das Innere von Afrika* (1796). In an earlier volume of the same work, published in 1790, Forster named the grysbok as « *Antelope dama*, var. *melanotis* ». As these names were not accompanied by a description of the animal, they are both considered as *nomina nuda*.

Résumé. — Le premier nom latin du « steenbok » a été *Antelope dama* var. *rupestris*, donné par J.R. Forster dans sa traduction des *Voyages de Levaillant dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique* (1796). Dans un volume antérieur du même travail, publié en 1790, Forster nomme le « grysbok » *Antelope dama* var. *melanotis*. Comme ces noms n'ont pas été accompagnés d'une description de l'animal, ils sont tous les deux considérés comme *nomina nuda*.

1. INTRODUCTION

The South African antelopes were first critically differentiated in the course of the second half of the 18th century. Important contributions to this process were made by a number of travellers, among whom may be mentioned Anders Sparrman (1748-1820), Carl Peter Thunberg (1743-1828), François Levaillant (1753-1828) and Johann Reinhold Forster (1729-1798). The results of their journeys were only partly published and often appear in rather unexpected places. When these people visited the Cape of Good Hope in the 1770's, the colonists had already classified the small antelopes now included in the genus *Raphicerus*. They distinguished three kinds on the basis of their colour, known in vernacular as 'steenbok' (sometimes called 'vlaktebok'), 'bleekbok' and 'grysbok'. This popular classification usually was followed by the early travellers. Presently, the 'bleekbok' is supposed to be identical to the steenbok *Raphicerus campestris* (Thunberg, 1811) and different from the grysbok *Raphicerus melanotis* (Thunberg, 1811). As will appear, the scientific nomenclature of these species was greatly confused in the 18th century. In this paper, the classifications of Sparrman and Thunberg will be briefly mentioned, while more attention is paid to that of Forster. For the sake of clarity, all names mentioned will be summarized in the form of a synonymy at the end of the paper.

2. SPARRMAN AND THUNBERG

In the account of his travels, Sparrman (1783 : 632 ; 1977 : 170) distinguished two species :

- (1) the 'vlaksteen-bok' or 'steenbok' which he supposed to be a variety of Penant's red antelope,
- (2) the 'grysbok' which he called *Antilope grimmia* Pallas, a name now attributed to the common duiker (*Sylvicapra grimmia*).

Thunberg's contributions span a longer period. At first, in his travel journal, Thunberg (1788 : 167) did not commit himself. He mentioned (1) the « steenbok *Capra grimmia* » and (2) the « grysbok, *Capra* ». Many years later, Thunberg studied the South African mammals in more detail reviewing both the material available in Uppsala and some published sources. This resulted in two small papers on new species and a larger revision of all known South African mammals (discussed by Rookmaaker in press). All three papers were published in 1811, but it cannot be established in which chronological order they appeared. In one of the small papers which contained the first scientific description of *Antilope monticola*, Thunberg (1811 b) listed the known antelopes, including the steenbok « [A.] capensis » and the grysbok « [A.] melanotis ». These names are not accompanied by any description of the animal's characteristics.

In his revision of the South African mammals, Thunberg (1811 a) mentioned the antelopes again, this time with appropriate references and notes on their appearance. They included :

35. *Antilope melanotis*, greisbock (p. 312),
36. *Antilope campestris*, steenbock (p. 313).

The type specimen of Thunberg's *A. melanotis*, a skull in good condition, is among the few specimens in the Zoological Museum of Uppsala which can definitely be attributed to the time of Thunberg.

3. J.R. FORSTER

The contributions by J.R. Forster should be read in this context. His views about these antelopes were first given in a short note included in the Paris edition of Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle* (Rookmaaker 1985 : 208-210). In this instance, Forster (1782 : 185-186) distinguished three kinds using vernacular names only, (1) the 'steenbock' or 'bouquetin', (2) the 'grysbok' or 'chèvre gris', and (3) the 'b[l]eebok' or 'chèvre pâle'. The zoological results of Forster's journey around the world, including two short transit stops at the Cape of Good Hope, were discussed more fully in his *Descriptiones Animalium*. This work was largely completed in 1775 in manuscript, but it remained unpublished until it was edited by Lichtenstein in 1844. In this book, Forster (1844 : 374-376) classified the three antelopes as varieties or subspecies of *Antelope Tragulus* :

- Antelope Tragulus* α *Melanotis* - grysbok
 β *Rupesttris* - steenbok
 γ *Pallida* - bleekbok.

The manuscript obviously was consulted by Lichtenstein (1814 : 177) who used these names as early as 1812. Forster, however, named these antelopes

again in another work which, unlike the *Descriptiones Animalium*, was published during his life. The stories about the two expeditions undertaken by François Levaillant in the South African interior were published in French in 1790 and 1795. Forster prepared a German translation of both these accounts. His German edition of Levaillant's *Voyage dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique* appeared in 1790 (1 volume), while his rendition of the *Second voyage* followed in 1796 (2 vols.). Levaillant consistently followed Buffon in refusing to use the Linnean system of nomenclature and identified all animals by French names only. In his translations, Forster often added binominal names either in footnotes or within brackets in the text. Such names include the valid first scientific names of *Pelea capreolus* (Forster, 1790) and a bird *Torgos tracheliotos* (Forster, 1796) which rightly entered zoological nomenclature (Rookmaaker 1986).

Forster gave different names to the steenbok and grysbok when Levaillant mentioned their presence in the course of his narrative. The 'bleekbok' does not appear. At the beginning of the first book, Forster (1790 : 21) named the steenbok as « *Antelope Dama Plinii* » and the grysbok as « *Antelope Dama*, var. *melanotis* ». At the start of the second journey, Levaillant again mentioned the grysbok which Forster (1796 : 132) here named « *Antelope Dama*, var. *grisea* ». I would suggest that this is a mistake, a slip of the pen, because it is contrary to Forster's consistent use of *melanotis* in all his other known manuscripts and publications. *A. grisea* had been used earlier by Boddaert in 1785 to denote the animal now known as *Damaliscus dorcas* (Pallas, 1766).

Finally, Forster (1796 : 161) explained the names he had given in a footnote :

« Der Steenbock ist die Abart der *Antelope Dama*, welche ich deshalb *rupestris* genannt habe, weil sie sich in Felsen aufhält. Der Grysbok ist ebenfalls eine Abart der *Antelope Dama*, und ich habe sie *melanotis* (Schwarzohr) genannt ».

4. CONCLUSION

It would appear from the above references that the steenbok and grysbok were first named by J.R. Forster, i.e.

steenbok : *Antelope dama rupestris* Forster, 1796 : 160,

grysbok : *Antelope dama melanotis* Forster, 1790 : 21.

This conclusion would upset the present nomenclature, but the names cannot be rejected for that reason only. However, I believe that Forster's names for these species both are unavailable. The reason is that Levaillant mentioned only the names of the animals in the vernacular and in this case did not provide any remark about their appearance or differentiating characteristics. He stated his intention to include these details in a *Histoire Naturelle des Animaux* which never materialised. A mere mention of a name and locality does not constitute a description, definition or indication. Forster did not add anything, except the footnote quoted above. In that sentence, he identified the animals as subspecies or varieties of another antelope and explained the species names, *rupestris* : living in the fields, and *melanotis* : having black ears. I do not consider these statements to be either indications or definitions in the sense of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, 1985. Hence, it is possible to continue to use the prevalent names for the steenbok and the grysbok given by Thunberg (1811 a) : *Raphicerus campestris* and *R. melanotis*.

5. SYNONYMS

Steenbok

- 1783 *Antilope grimmia* Sparrman, Resa, I : 632. Not *Capra grimmia* Linnaeus, 1758 which is *Sylvicapra grimmia*.
- 1788 *Capra grimmia* Thunberg, Resa uti Europa, Africa, Asia, I : 167. As preceding entry.
- 1790 *Antelope dama* J.R. Forster, Levaillant's Reisen in das Innere von Afrika, p. 21. Not *Antelope dama* Pallas, 1766 which is *Gazella dama*.
- 1796 *Antelope dama* var. *rupestris* J.R. Forster, Levaillant's [Zweite] Reisen in das Innere von Afrika [II] : 160. Nomen nudum.
- 1811 *Antelope capensis* Thunberg, Kungl. Vetenskaps Akademiens Nya Handlingar, 32 : 93. Not *A. capensis* P.L.S. Müller, 1776 which is *Hippotragus leucophaeus*.
- 1811 *Antelope campestris* Thunberg, Mémoires Acad. Imp. Sc. St. Pétersbourg, 3 : 313.
- 1844 *Antelope tragulus* β *rupestris* J.R. Forster, Descriptiones Animalium, p. 374. Published earlier by Lichtenstein (1814).
- 1844 *Antelope tragulus* γ *pallida* J.R. Forster, Descriptiones Animalium, p. 374. Published earlier by Lichtenstein (1814).

Grysbok

- 1790 *Antelope dama*, var. *melanotis* J.R. Forster, Levaillant's Reisen in das Innere von Afrika, p. 21. Nomen nudum.
- 1796 *Antelope dama*, var. *grisea* J.R. Forster, Levaillant's [Zweite] Reisen in das Innere von Afrika [II] : 132. Not *Antelope grisea* Boddaert, 1785 which is *Damaliscus dorcas*.
- 1796 *Antelope dama* var. *melanotis* J.R. Forster, Levaillant's [Zweite] Reisen in das Innere von Afrika [II] : 160. Nomen nudum.
- 1811 *Antelope melanotis* Thunberg, Kungl. Vetenskaps Akademiens Nya Handlingar, 32 : 93. Nomen nudum.
- 1811 *Antelope melanotis* Thunberg, Mémoires Acad. Imp. Sc. St. Pétersbourg, 3 : 312.
- 1844 *Antelope Tragulus* α *melanotis*, J.R. Forster, Descriptiones Animalium, p. 374. Published earlier by Lichtenstein (1812).

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