



Oteroi/oteroorum and raffonei/raffoneae: The difference between grammatical correctness and validity in Zoological Nomenclature

Oscar J. ARRIBAS ¹

¹ Avgda. Fco. Cambó 23; 08003 Barcelona. oarribas@xtec.cat

RESUM

Es presenten un parell de casos de nomenclatura de lacèrtids en els que s'ha suggerit el canvi del nom específic en funció del gènere i nombre gramaticals de les persones a les quals van ser dedicats. No obstant això, el Codi de Nomenclatura Zoològica solament diu que el nom específic ha de coincidir amb el genèric en el seu gènere gramatical (masculí o femení) i correcte o no, qualsevol altre canvi posterior es una emenda injustificada. Incorrecte o no, la prioritat està per davant de la correcció gramatical en referència a les persones homenatjades. Altres casos de noms de rèptils en situació similar son discutits.

PARAULES CLAU: Codi Internacional de Nomenclatura Zoològica; nomenclatura zoològica; prioritat; emenda injustificada; correcció gramàtica; etimologia; *Podarcis raffonei*; *raffoneae*; *Timon lepidus oteroi*, *oteroorum*; Squamata; Lacertidae.

ABSTRACT

It is presented two instances of Lacertid nomenclature in which changes in the species names in function of grammatical gender or number of the honored persons have been suggested. However International Code of Zoological Nomenclature only rules to concord in gender the species name with the genus one. Whatever other change, reasonable or not, is an unjustified emendation, as nomenclatural priority is mandatory over grammatical correctness. Similar cases on reptile and amphibian nomenclature are also commented.

KEY WORDS: International Code of Zoological Nomenclature; zoological nomenclature; emendation; grammatical correctness; etymology; *Podarcis raffonei*; *raffoneae*; *Timon lepidus oteroi*, *oteroorum*; Squamata; Lacertidae.

RESUMEN

Se presentan un par de casos en nomenclatura de *Lacertidae* en los que se han sugerido cambios en los nombres específicos en función de la corrección del género y número gramaticales respecto a las personas homenajeadas en los epítetos específicos. No obstante, el ICZN solo obliga a que el nombre específico se decline en latín en concordancia con el del género (si es masculino o femenino). Cualquier cambio fuera de éste es una enmienda injustificada, ya que el principio de prioridad está por delante de la corrección gramatical respecto a las personas homenajeadas.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Código Internacional de Nomenclatura Zoológica; prioridad; enmienda; Corrección Gramatical; *Podarcis raffonei*; *raffoneae*; *Timon lepidus oteroi*, *oteroorum*; Squamata; Lacertidae.

Recently some herpetological data-bases (now in part corrected) and a European field guide (SPEYBROEK et al., 2016) have adopted the nomenclatorial changes suggested in MICHELS & BAUER (2004), although these recommendations were not new. From all the taxonomical changes treated in the aforementioned article I will focus only in the Lacertid issues.

These authors justify the changes in that specific names are declined as genitives ended in “-i” for a men (“-ii” if not ended in a vowel), “-ae” for a women and “-orum” if dedicated to two or several persons with the same surname (i.e. typically father and son or brothers, etc.), which is intrinsically true (see ARRIBAS, 1993).

The correct spelling, *Timon lepidus oteroi* (Castroviejo & Mateo, 1998) (Original Combination: *Lacerta lepida oteroi*) was dedicated to the late Joaquín Otero and his widow, marquises of Revilla and, as dedicated to the two persons, the name was corrected by MICHELS & BAUER (2004) to “*Lacerta lepida oterorum*” (= *Timon lepidus oterorum*), “from the Otero’s”. Notwithstanding, the widow had not Otero’s surname. The “-orum” should only be applicable to relatives with the same surname, but Spanish naming keeps the maiden name of the wife. Same authors also corrected *Podarcis raffonei* (Mertens, 1952) (Original Comb: *Lacerta sicula raffonei*) to “*Lacerta sicula raffoneae*” (= *Podarcis raffoneae*) also dedicated to a woman “Benanntist die rasse, dem Wunsche des Sammlersentsprechend, nach Raffone, den Familiennamen seiner verstorbenen Frau” (Mertens, 1952: 313) [in consequence, the race is named by desire of its collector, after Raffone, the surname of his dead wife]. So the declination correct should be -ae.

Although longtime ignored, these changes were “rediscovered”, applied, and recently growing in some databases (with a peak of 609 results for *oteroorum* and 515 for *raffoneae* against 4340 for *oteroi* and 6600 for *raffonei* in Google access 2/9/2015, but yet decreasing in 2017, 362 results for *oteroorum* and 465 for *raffoneae* against 1.180.000 for *oteroi* and 6630 for *raffonei* in Google access 6/3/2017). In fact, the INTERNATIONAL CODE OF ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE (ICNZ, 1999) states that genus and species names shall correspond in gender, but nothing about the etymology in reference to the gender (masculine or feminine) or number (singular or plural) of the honored persons.

The own page of the International Committee of Zoological Nomenclature states: “However names based on personal names with incorrectly Latinized endings are not corrected as this would cause instability (Article 32.5.1, glossary definition of Latinization). I.e. a species which was named *smithi* after a woman with the surname *smith* is not incorrectly spelled even though the normal feminine Latinization is *smithae*. (see at the ICZN site:

<http://iczn.org/content/what-correct-original-spelling>.

Latin grammar is ever desirable, but in Zoological nomenclature (in Botany is more strict) some Latin rules are usually not respected (for instance the double “-ii” for not vowel-ended names; or that oddly, even male gender names ended in “-a” shall be declined as if they were feminine), and priority (even in wrongly latinized names) is mandatory over grammatical correctness.

Although etymologically MICHELS & BAUER (2004) are right, in fact the incorrect spelled names in Latin are the valid ones (Correct Original Spelling, sensu Arts. 32.1 and 32.2 and do not match any of the requirements of Art 32.5 to be corrected *a posteriori*), and the emendations to *oteroorum* and *raffoneae* are unjustified emendations (Art. 33.2.3) sensu ICNZ (1999). Their incorrectness is not due to an incorrect original spelling nor a lapsus calami in the sense of the Article 32.5 of the Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN, 1999).

A recent example of this has been published by CROCHET (2015) concerning the spelling of *Psammotromus edwardsianus* (Dugès, 1829): “The specific name of the species from Eastern Spain and France is often spelt “*edwardsianus*” (...) since the name was meant to honor H. Milne Edwards (Dugès 1829). However, the original spelling “*Lacerta Edwardsiana*” can be found four times in the description (three times in the text, once in the table)(...); it is thus clear that this spelling is not an incorrect original spelling and that Article 32.5 of the Code of Zoological Nomenclature does not apply: “*edwardsianus*” is clearly an incorrect subsequent spelling.” *Psammotromus edwardsianus* (Dugès, 1829), although does not reflect the true surname of Milne Edwards, is the valid name (see the meticulous and elegantly reasoned paper of CROCHET, 2015).

The case of *Vipera latasti*/*V. latastei* is similar and a particularly empoisoned one, as ALONSO-

ZARAZAGA (2013) says. The name has changed from one to another repeatedly along time, even in recent times, as usually occurs following uncritically novelties or recent publications that use them. In fact, the arguments of ALONSO-ZARAZAGA (2013) hold true when saying that the unique time that the (very informally) proposed name for the new viper appears in the original description, is as *Vipera latasti*, as also appears this name in the list of new species published in this volume on p. 355 of the same volume. Being only spelled once, is difficult to argue for a lapsus calami, and also impossible that the plate (published in a posterior issue of the same year number, changed to *latastei*) was simultaneously published with the original description) (see ALONSO-ZARAZAGA, 2013). Summarizing, *V. latasti* Boscà, 1878 seems to be (incorrect or not) the valid name, and *latastei* an unjustified posterior emendation. However, the question does not seem to be closed (see commentaries 30 a & 30 b in pages 1342 and 1343 from SALVADOR 2014 and SALVADOR et al. 2014) and a claim was raised to the Committee of Zoological Nomenclature to “validate” only *latastei* as a valid name by considering to the same author in the following year, acting as the first reviser of the original name with multiple spellings in the original work (Art. 24.2). The claim has been accepted and the official name is finally the correctly spelled “*latastei*”.

The case of *Atlantolacerta andreanskyi* is similar. The correct spelling is *andreanskyi*, as used in the type description (Werner 1929), rather than *andreanszkyi* (with a “z”). This latter spelling is following the real name of the Hungarian botanist, Baron Gábor Andreánszky (1895–1967), to whom the species was dedicated, and was used subsequently by the same author (Werner 1931), but it does not have priority. Also, it is clear that *andreanskyi* is not a lapsus calami, as Werner used this spelling more than once in his original paper and misspells Andreánszky’s name in a similar way (ARNOLD et al., 1997).

Other question concerning the grammatical gender and grammatical number is for instance *Alytes obstetricans almogavarii* ARNTZEN & GARCÍA-PARÍS, 1995. As being dedicated to a collective, the Almogavars, originally a muslim guerrilla (*al-mugāwir*, «the raiders») first known from Sarakusta (the Muslim Zaragoza, Spain) and later adopted as skirmishers patrol-style by all Cristian kingdoms of Iberian Peninsula along the so-called Reconquest period in the Middle Age. The warriors that acquired immortal fame in the Eastern Mediterranean during XIII and XIV centuries were the kingdom of Aragon almogavars, rough people originating from the mountains of Sistema Iberico and Pyrenees. Being a collective, *almogavarorum* should have been a more correct name, but *almogavarii* (declined as if the taxon was dedicated to a person called Almogavar as a surname, is the nomenclatorial valid act without discussion). Note that in this case, the authors respected the double “-ii”, a rule not frequently respected in Zoological nomenclature.

Finally, as stated above, names ended in “-a” shall be declined as feminine, even if dedicated to a male gender subjects. The example is *Archaeolacerta bedriagae* (Camerano, 1885) (dedicated to the Russian herpetologist Jacques Vladimir von Bedriaga). Fortunately no one has suggested correcting it to *bedriagai*, treating it as masculine, nor has suggested to change the name of *Chalcides bedriagai* (Boscà, 1880) to the correct Latin declined one, as feminine. Both are valid nomenclatorial names. In the same sense, when describing *Iberolacerta martinezricai*, I tried to name it as (Original Combination) “*Lacerta cyreni martinezricae*” but editors of the journal corrected it to *martinezricai* (ARRIBAS, 1996). The correct declination should have been in feminine (ending in “-a”) but as was stated above, in zoological nomenclature, usually this rule is not respected and names of male gender people are declined as masculine even if ending in a “-a”.

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