Didermocerus Brookes, 1828, v. Dicerorhinus Gloger, 1841, (Mammalia: Rhinocerotidae), and the validity of a catalogue of the anatomical and Zoological Museum of Joshua Brookes, 1828. Z.N.(S.) 1779

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The purpose of this application is to request the Commission to determine whether the name Didermocerus Brookes, 1828, (A Catalogue of the Anatomical and Zoological Museum of Joshua Brookes . . . : 75), or the name Dicerorhinus Gloger, 1841, (Handbuch Naturgesch. : 125), is to be used for the recent and fossil rhinoceroses genus in question. In doing so, it will be necessary to consider whether Didermocerus Brookes was validly published.

2. Since Didermocerus and Dicerorhinus share the same type species: Rhinoceros sumatrensis Fischer, 1814, (Zoogn. 3 : 301), they are clearly objective synonyms, although Gloger incorrectly attributed the authorship of Rhinoceros sumatrensis to Cuvier—an understandable mistake. During the 19th century, most authors referred all rhinoceroses to the genus Rhinoceros Linnaeus, 1758, but in the present century the junior synonym Dicerorhinus Gloger has frequently been used both for the extant Rhinoceros sumatrensis Fischer, and for a number of stratigraphically important fossil species.

3. In 1945, G. G. Simpson (Bull. Amer. Nat. Hist. 85) rejected the prior name of Didermocerus largely on the grounds of disuse, saying (p. 142): “The first name applied to the genus was Didermocerus, but this was never used and can reasonably be left in desuetude on the convenient, if somewhat sophisticated grounds that its appearance in a sales catalogue was not publication . . .”. However, Simpson was not entirely consistent since at the same time he accepted the name Acinonyx Brookes (Mammalia: Felidae) which Brookes proposed in the same work. (If the present International Code had been in use at the time, Simpson could reasonably have asked for the suppression of Didermocerus as a nomen oblitum.) Ellerman & Morrison-Scott, 1951, (Checklist of Palaearctic & Indian Mammals, 1758–1946), rejected Simpson’s claim that Didermocerus was not validly published, saying (p. 339): “Simpson (1945) calls this Dicerorhinus, and suggests, somewhat half-heartedly, that the name Didermocerus may conveniently be dropped, on the ground of its publication in a sale catalogue. This in itself is no bar to “publication” within the meaning of the Règles, and the catalogue was on sale to the public for half a crown. Moreover, Simpson adopts Acinonyx which appears in the same publication.” As a result of its use in Ellerman & Morrison-Scott’s authoritative Checklist the name Didermocerus has been, to some extent, restored to use so it cannot now be regarded as a nomen oblitum. However, the majority of zoologists and nearly all palaeontologists have continued to use Dicerorhinus.

4. The Commission could stabilize the position in any one of three ways. Following Ellerman & Morrison-Scott, the Commission could accept Brookes’ Catalogue as a genuine publication within the meaning of the Code. This would, however, cause some disturbance since Didermocerus is still used far less
frequently than *Dicerorhinus*, although the use of *Didermocerus* is now increasing. Secondly, the Commission could accept Simpson’s argument, and regard Brookes’ *Catalogue* as invalid for purposes of nomenclature. It might then be necessary for the well-established name *Acinonyx* Brookes to be validated by the use of the plenary powers. A less logical third alternative would be to explicitly or implicitly accept Brookes’ *Catalogue*, but suppress *Didermocerus* under plenary powers. In my view, this alternative has little to commend it except that it would stabilize the prevailing usage without disturbing *Acinonyx*.

5. The Commission is therefore requested to consider three alternative sets of proposals, as follows.

*Alternative A*

The Commission is requested:

(1) to place the following work on the Official List of Works Approved as Available for Zoological Nomenclature:


(2) to place the generic name *Didermocerus* Brookes, 1828 (gender: masculine), type-species, by monotypy, *Rhinoceros sumatrensis* Fischer, 1814, on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology;

(3) to place the generic name *Dicerorhinus* Gloger, 1841, on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology, as a junior objective synonym of *Didermocerus* Brookes, 1828.

*Alternative B*

The Commission is requested:

(1) to place the following work on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Works in Zoological Nomenclature:


(2) to place the generic name *Dicerorhinus* Gloger, 1841, (gender: masculine), type species by monotypy, *Rhinoceros sumatrensis* “Cuvier” = Fischer, 1814, on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology;

(3) to place *Didermocerus* Brookes, 1828 on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology, on the ground that it was published in a Work declared to be unavailable for purposes of nomenclature under (1) above.

*Alternative C*

The Commission is requested:

(1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the generic name *Didermocerus* Brookes, 1828, for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for the purposes of the Law of Homonymy;

(2) to place the generic name *Dicerorhinus* Gloger, 1841, (gender: masculine), type-species by monotypy, *Rhinoceros sumatrensis* “Cuvier” = Fischer, 1814, on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology;

(3) to place the generic name *Didermocerus* Brookes, 1828, (as suppressed under the plenary powers in (1) above) on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology.