

SECOND REPORT ON THE STATUS OF THE GENERIC NAMES
"ODOBENUS" BRISSON, 1762, AND "ROSMARUS"
BRÜNNICH, 1771 (CLASS MAMMALIA) (A REPORT PREPARED
AT THE REQUEST OF THE THIRTEENTH INTERNATIONAL
CONGRESS OF ZOOLOGY, PARIS, 1948)

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(Commission's reference : Z.N.(S.) 614)

The following Report is submitted to the Commission in accordance with a request addressed to me, as Secretary to the Commission, by the Thirteenth International Congress of Zoology, Paris, 1948, that I should examine, in consultation with interested specialists, the situation created by a decision taken during that Congress by the International Commission that the new generic names in Brünnich's *Zool. Fund.* of 1771 were available names and therefore that the generic name *Rosmarus* Brünnich, 1771 (: 34, 38—39) was an available name, the future status to be accorded to which required investigation.

2. The name *Rosmarus* Brünnich, 1771, is the name of a nominal genus established without cited nominal species. The species which alone are eligible for selection as the type species of this genus are those which were cited under this generic name on the first occasion on which any such species were so cited (1950, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 4 : 159—160, 346). The first author to cite any nominal species in connection with this generic name was Palmer who in 1904 (*N. Amer. Fauna* 23 : 612) so cited the single species *Phoca rosmarus* Linnaeus, 1758 (*Syst. Nat.* (ed. 10) 1 : 38). This action constituted, under the provisions cited above, an "indication" under Rule (c) in Article 30 of this species as the type species of *Rosmarus* Brünnich by monotypy. In addition, Palmer so selected this species under Rule (g) in the same Article. The generic name *Rosmarus* Brünnich is an available name in the sense that it is not a junior homonym of any earlier such name consisting of the same word. It is necessary therefore next to consider whether it is an available name also from the point of view of synonymy. Here we find that the same species (*Phoca rosmarus* Linnaeus) is the type species, by selection by Merriam (1895, *Science* (n.s.) 1(14) : 375) of the nominal genus *Odobenus* Brisson, 1762 (*Regn. Anim.* (ed. 2) : 30). Thus, if Brisson's *Regnum animale* of 1762 were a nomenclatorially acceptable work, the generic name *Rosmarus* Brünnich, 1771, would, as a junior objective synonym of *Odobenus* Brisson, 1762, thus be the valid generic name for the Walrus.

3. It is sufficient here to note (1) that under another decision by the Paris Congress of 1948 a detailed survey of the status of, and of the names used in,

Brisson's *Regnum animale* of 1762 is in course of preparation for submission to the Commission, (2) that, like the same author's later (1763) *Ornithologie*, the *Regnum animale* is a typically non-binominal work of the type formerly known as "binary" (that is, a work in which universal generic names are employed, but the principles of binominal nomenclature are not applied and in the case of many species the "specific name" used consists of a string of Latin words constituting an abbreviated specific diagnosis). My view is therefore that, in the absence of action by the International Commission, the *Regnum animale* of 1762 is not an available work and in consequence that the name *Odobenus* Brisson, 1762, is not an available name. Thus, under the *Règles* the next name, *Rosmarus* Brünnich, 1771, is the oldest available, and, therefore, the valid, generic name for the Walrus.

4. The International Congress of Zoology has laid it down that the Commission is to consider the question of validating under its Plenary Powers generic names published in works rejected by it as not complying with the requirements of Article 25 where such names are in common use and for this purpose has inserted in the *Règles* an Article prescribing a simplified procedure under which the Plenary Powers may be used by the Commission when considering applications for the validation of names as from works rejected for the foregoing reason (1950, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 4 : 65). It is necessary here to consider whether or not it is desirable that the generic name *Odobenus* Brisson, 1762, should be validated under the foregoing provisions.

5. In the winter of 1951/1952 I prepared an Interim Report on the present case, in which I appealed to specialists to furnish statements of their views on the action which it was desirable should be taken in this case and this was published in April 1952 (*Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 7 : 225—226, Case 27). At the same time Public Notice of the possible use by the Commission of its Plenary Powers for the purpose of validating the name *Odobenus* Brisson, 1762, was given in the manner prescribed by the International Congress of Zoology.

6. Two comments were received in response to the foregoing appeal. These were from :—(1) Dr. T. C. S. Morrison-Scott (*British Museum (Natural History), London*) ; (2) Professor E. Raymond Hall (*University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, U.S.A.*). Dr. Morrison-Scott, after drawing attention to the fact that in the *Checklist of palaearctic and Indian Mammals 1758 to 1946* by J. R. Ellerman and himself published in 1951, the name *Odobenus* Brisson had been used in preference to the name *Rosmarus* Brünnich and this course had been "adopted by Miller, Ognev, Simpson, and virtually all recent authors". Dr. Morrison-Scott added that he hoped that the International Commission would endorse this action, since considerable confusion would be caused if this and other names proposed by Brisson were to be rejected. Professor Hall took the opposite view, stating that, if Brisson's *Regnum animale* were to be rejected, he would favour the use of the name *Rosmarus* Brünnich if that were the next available name after *Odobenus* Brisson.

7. At the time when I was requested to furnish the present Report, I was asked to include in it "Recommendations as to the action to be taken" by the Commission (1950, *Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 4 : 313, Point 7). I have accordingly considered this matter carefully in the light of the information available and I am of the opinion that in the interests of nomenclatorial stability the best course would be for the Commission, without prejudice to the general question of the status to be accorded to names, in Brisson's *Regnum animale*, to use its Plenary Powers in the present instance for the purpose of validating the generic name *Odobenus* Brisson, 1762, with *Phoca rosmarus* Linnaeus, 1758, as type species, thus preserving this well-known name for the Walrus. If this recommendation were to be approved, the name *Rosmarus* Brännich, 1771, would sink as a junior objective synonym of *Odobenus* Brisson, 1762.

8. In the discharge the duty imposed upon me in the present matter, I now submit the following recommendations for the consideration of the International Commission, namely that it should :—

- (1) use its Plenary Powers, without prejudice to the general question of the status to be accorded to generic names in Brisson's *Regnum animale* of 1762, for the purpose of validating, in so far as may be necessary, the generic name *Odobenus* Brisson, 1762, with *Phoca rosmarus* Linnaeus, 1758, as type species ;
- (2) place the under-mentioned generic name on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* :—*Odobenus* Brisson, 1762 (gender : masculine), as validated under the Plenary Powers under (1) above (type species, by designation under the same Powers : *Phoca rosmarus* Linnaeus, 1758) ;
- (3) place the specific name *rosmarus* Linnaeus, 1758, as published in the combination *Phoca rosmarus*, on the *Official List of Specific Names in Zoology* ;
- (4) place the under-mentioned generic name on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology* :—*Rosmarus* Brännich, 1771 (a junior objective synonym of *Odobenus* Brisson, 1762, as validated under the Plenary Powers under (1) above).



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