

PEDICULUS DENTATUS SCOPOLI, 1763

BY THERESA CLAY AND G. H. E. HOPKINS

IN Part II of our examination of the early literature on Mallophaga (Clay and Hopkins, 1951, *Bull. Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.), Ent.* 2 : 1-37) we accepted (p. 15) the general belief that *Pediculus dentatus* Scopoli, 1763 (*Entomologia Carniolica* : 383) is an *Anatoecus*, and erected for it a neotype whereby the name was fixed on that one of the two species of this genus which occurs on *Anas platyrhynchos* in which the genitalia of the male possess an effractor. We are, however, indebted to Dr. S. von Kéler for writing to tell us that certain points in Scopoli's description do not bear out this identification.

On re-examining Scopoli's very brief description we find ourselves in agreement with Dr. von Kéler in considering that it does not refer to an *Anatoecus* but to a *Trinoton*. In particular the size ("2 lin.", or roughly 4½-5 mm., according to whether Scopoli was using the Paris line or some other) is much too large for an *Anatoecus* but in very fair agreement with a *Trinoton*, while other points in the description, though not excluding *Anatoecus*, are somewhat more suggestive of *Trinoton*. We can only assume that the fact that *dentatus* had been thought to be an *Anatoecus* for about 100 years,* coupled with our unfamiliarity with the line as a unit of measurement, caused us to overlook the importance of the measurement given by Scopoli.

In the circumstances it becomes necessary to consider what procedure will cause the least confusion and inconvenience. To bring the specific name *dentatus* into use for a *Trinoton* after about 100 years of application to an *Anatoecus* (as a synonym during the earlier portion of the period but as the valid name during over half of it) would, in our opinion, be a piece of wanton mischief which would be utterly opposed to the spirit of the International Rules of Zoological Nomenclature and which we refuse to consider. To suppress the name, though far less objectionable, would be highly inconvenient because it has been in use for a number of years as the oldest name for the duck-infesting *Anatoecus* in which the male has an effractor. The inconvenience and probable confusion which would result from not using the name in this sense would be greatly increased by the fact that it would then be necessary,

* Denny (*Anoplura Britannica* : 102) placed it here (with a query) in 1842 and Giebel (*Insecta epizoa* : 115) removed the query in 1874.

in order to find out what is the valid name of the species, to examine the types of four names proposed by Rudow and by Giebel—and every one of these types is known to have been destroyed.

We therefore propose to ask the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to validate the neotype which we erected for *Pediculus dentatus* Scopoli, notwithstanding the fact that it does not entirely agree with the original description, and we ask all workers on Mallophaga to continue to use the name *Anatoecus dentatus* (Scopoli, 1763) for the duck-infesting species of *Anatoecus* in which the male has an effractor until the decision of the Commission is published.
