



The distressing case of *Polyhomoa itoi* Azuma, 1949 and *Kyidris mutica* Brown, 1949

Richard E. Petit

806 St. Charles Road, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582 r.e.petit@att.net

Paul Callomon

Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia PA 19103 callomon@ansp.org

A recent paper (Petit 2008) briefly discussed the hundreds of molluscan taxa described in the Japanese journal *Yume-hamaguri* that were obliterated with the introduction of Article 9.1 in the *International Code of Zoological Nomenclature* in 1985. In the process of abstracting that journal for a longer and more detailed paper, the present authors found the description of an ant, obviously unexpected in a journal named for a mollusk. In attempting to discover the fate of this taxon we uncovered what must rank among the most vituperative and venomous pieces of zoological literature ever written. The history of this taxon follows, together with our comments.

Masao Azuma, a frequent contributor to the molluscan journal *Yume-hamaguri*, was proficient in several fields of natural history. In the issue of that journal for September 1948 he published a paper describing a new species of ant with a complete description and a drawing (Azuma, 1948: 26). The new species was named *Strumigenys (Cephaloxys) itoi* Azuma, n. sp (Fig. 1)

The following year, the species was again described in the journal *Hyogo Biology* (Azuma, 1949). Azuma had reconsidered the generic placement of the species and proposed the new genus *Polyhomoa* for its reception. The 1948 *Yume-hamaguri* description was noted in synonymy. It is notable that Azuma dates both the genus and species as 1949. The bottom of the cover of the preprint, reproduced here as Figure 1, is printed: Vol. I, No. 4, p. 34–37, (30th Aug. 1949). It should be made clear at this point that this is a preprint as provided for in the *Code* (Article 21.8 of the 1999 edition). It has its own pagination (pp. 1-4) as opposed to the journal pagination (pp. 34–37), its own cover, is clearly dated on the cover

and the 1949 date is cited in the text. It is notable that Azuma dates both the genus and species as 1949 instead of separately dating the species from 1948. This was because the availability of mimeographed works was in question at the time (see Petit 2008). It is interesting that the figure in the *Yume-hamaguri*, drawn on a mimeograph stencil, is much more detailed than the one published by offset printing in *Hyogo Biology*.

On September 20, 1949, an ant now considered to belong to this same species was described by W. L. Brown, Jr. as *Kyidris mutica*.

In attempting to determine the relative priority of the two names, Dr. W. S. Creighton investigated the situation and published a paper (1950) indicating that priority belonged to Brown. based on his interpretation of 30 August 1949 being “the acceptance date of the article, not its date of publication.” Creighton acknowledged in his paper that he could not read Japanese, although the determining information is actually rendered in English.

Dr. Brown was certainly upset by the discovery that Azuma’s paper may have been prior to his, but he became even more so when he found that Creighton’s conclusion was incorrect as the “acceptance date” is clearly stated on Azuma’s paper. Actually, to say that he was upset may be the understatement of the century. He published, with K. Yasumatsu, a paper that really must be read to be believed (Brown & Yasumatsu, 1951). After first referring to Azuma’s name as “this wretched synonym”, he then contradicted Creighton, stating that he had “misinterpreted the facts regarding date of acceptance of the separate.” Note this strange word-