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Remarks on the name *Cercomacra* Sclater, 1858 (Aves: *Thamnophilidae*) and its type species

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A recent molecular phylogeny of *Cercomacra* Sclater, 1858 found the genus to be polyphyletic (Tello et al. 2014). Two non-sister clades in putative *Cercomacra* were uncovered: *Cercomacra sensu stricto*, including *Cercomacra manu* Fitzpatrick & Willard, 1990, *C. brasiliana* Hellmayr, 1905, *C. cinerascens* (Sclater, 1857), *C. melanaria* (Ménétries, 1835), *C. ferdinandi* Sneath, 1928, *C. carbonaria* Sclater & Salvin, 1873 and *C. nigricans* Sclater, 1858; and *Cercomacroides* Tello & Raposo, 2014, including *Cercomacroides nigrescens* (Cabanis & Heine, 1859), *C. laeta* (Todd, 1920), *C. parkeri* (Graves, 1997), *C. tyrannina* (Sclater, 1855) and *C. serva* (Sclater, 1858). This split required a prior re-examination of the apparently difficult facts surrounding the name of the type species of *Cercomacra* to ensure that the appropriate group would retain that name leaving the balance to the new genus-group name, *Cercomacroides*. The findings of that re-examination are nomenclatural rather than taxonomic and are complex enough to deserve a historical explanation, which is presented here. In summary, Hellmayr (1905) was correct in clarifying the identity of the type species chosen by Sclater (1890), but he did not suggest any nomenclatural action to fix the misidentified type species. Subsequent information provided by Cory & Hellmayr (1924) regarding the type specimen of *Cercomacra brasiliana* was incorrect, and the holotype is not in St. Petersburg as they implied.

Vieillot (1817) described ‘le Fourmilier ardoisé’ naming it *Myrmothera caerulescens* and giving the *terra typica* as ‘la Guyane’. His description provides no indication as to whether he had one or more examples of this taxon before him. A description in Latin followed in livraison 91 of the *Tableau Encyclopédique et Méthodique* (Vieillot 1822), on 6 July¹ in the 27th part on ornithology of this work; here again there is no indication that more than one bird was available to him. In July 1835, Ménétries in his *Monographie de la famille des Myiotherinae*, a work based on collections made in Brazil, included what he believed to be the same species although he placed it instead in the genus *Formicivora*. He gave measurements and descriptions of the male and female and depicted these in his plate no. 6. He reported the species to be found only in the Province of Rio de Janeiro at the foot of the “serra d’Estrella”.

The genus *Cercomacra* was established by Sclater, 1858, who saw this genus as a link between the genera *Formicivora* and *Pyriglena*. He provided a diagnosis and listed five species: (1) *caerulescens*, from SE Brazil (making no explicit mention of the Guyane *terra typica* of Vieillot); (2) *cinerascens*, from E Peru and E Ecuador; (3) *tyrannina*, from New Granada (now Colombia), Bogota; (4) *nigricans*, again from New Granada, Santa Marta and Bogota, and (5) *atrothorax*, from Cayenne and Bolivia. But he did not designate a type species. In this circumscription of *Cercomacra*, he brought together five taxa that at one point or another had been assigned the following generic names: *Myrmothera*, *Formicivora*, *Ellipura* and *Pyriglena* demonstrating the confusion that had preceded him when collections were small and comparisons between them difficult. In what follows, of these five species, it is only the names *C. caerulescens* and *C. cinerascens* and the composition of Sclater’s study material that concerns us.

Over 30 years later Sclater finally designated a type species for *Cercomacra*—when he prepared the text for the *Furnariidae* in the *Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum* (Sclater 1890) by which time he had ten species in it. His type species by subsequent designation was *Cercomacra caerulescens*, which, being rooted in the name *Formicivora*

1. See Evenhuis (2003).

Thus, the genus name *Cercomacra* must remain attached to the clade that includes *Cercomacra brasiliiana* Hellmayr, 1905; this also includes the species *Cercomacra nigricans* Sclater, 1858, *Cercomacra carbonaria* Sclater & Salvin, 1873, *Cercomacra cinerascens* (Sclater, 1857), *Cercomacra ferdinandi* Sneathlge, 1928, *Cercomacra melanaria* (Ménétries, 1835) and *Cercomacra manu* Fitzpatrick & Willard, 1990.

This explanation yields a result that is consistent with the intent of Hellmayr and does not disrupt stability in the nomenclature applied to these species.

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