

On the Validity of the Northern Red Hartebeest, *Alcelaphus bubalis selbornei* (Lydekker, 1913)

By JAMES M. DOLAN

Eingang des Ms. 18. 4. 1964

In the Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London for the year 1913, RICHARD LYDEKKER described a new subspecies of Hartebeest from Kimberly, South Africa, under the name *Bubalis caama selbornei*. The idea and manner of not only subspecific but also specific distinction as understood by many older authors leaves a good deal to be desired (BOHLKEN, 1958; DOLAN, 1963). The purpose of this paper is a reevaluation of the systematic position of *Alcelaphus bubalis selbornei* as understood and described by LYDEKKER.

Taken in the broadest sense, the Hartebeests comprise the tribe Alcelaphini Simpson, 1945, which is, as far as can be definitely established, entirely African in distribution. The occurrence of the now extinct North African Hartebeest, *Alcelaphus b. bubalis* (PALLAS, 1766) in Asia Minor has not been satisfactorily verified. The tribe Alcelaphini is comprised of the recent genera, *Damaliscus* Sclater and Thomas, 1894: Korrigum, Tiang, Sassaby, Topi, Blessbok and Bontebok; *Beatragus* Heller, 1912: Hunter's Antelope; *Alcelaphus* De Blainville, 1816: the true Hartebeests; *Connochaetes* Lichtenstein, 1814: White-tailed Gnu and finally *Gorgon* Gray, 1850: the Brindled and Blue Gnus. The first three genera resemble one another rather closely in their general external appearance, but differ considerably from the latter two genera. Nevertheless, there are a number of homogenous characteristics. All of the animals are of large size, the tail being medium or long with a terminal crest or clothed in long hairs. The nostrils are large and valvular, the lower margins of which are clothed with short stiff hairs, the muzzle possessing a small bare muffle. The face glands are situated close to the eye, but do not form a line of pores; the pedal glands are set in a deep interdigital cleft, and may be absent or rudimentary in the hind feet. The dew claws are always well developed. Teats number two or four. Horns, heteronymous in form are well developed in both sexes. They are of moderate length, and either upright, ridged, and singly or doubly curved, with smooth tips, or smooth throughout, and directed at first mainly outward or downward. Shallow lachrymal depressions are present in the skull, although there are no supraorbital pits or lachrymal vacuities. The members of the genus *Alcelaphus* can be easily distinguished by the abnormally elongated face and the fact that the horns are mounted on an elevated pedicle. The Cape Red Hartebeest, *Alcelaphus bubalis caama* (CUVIER, 1816) represents the southernmost subspecies within the genus *Alcelaphus*.

During the early part of the last century, this antelope occurred over the entire Cape Province, from the south to the north. However, by the turn of the century it was reduced to a few herds, all on private land, in the Orange Free State, Natal and Griqualand. ROBERTS (1951) refers these animals to *Alcelaphus bubalis selbornei* (LYDEKKER, 1913). According to LYDEKKER, the Cape Red or Rooi Hartebeest is replaced in Bechuanaland, Western Transvaal, Ngamiland and South-West Africa, by the Northern Red or Selborne's Hartebeest.

The type specimen of *Alcelaphus bubalis selbornei* was presented to the British Museum (NH) by the De Beers Mining Company in 1912, at the insistence of Lord SELBORNE. This animal, a male (BM No. 12. 10. 10. 1), was shot on the Kimberly

Game Farm, where the stock was originally imported from the Transvaal. According to LYDEKKER, *Alcelaphus bubalis selbornei* is to be distinguished from the typical South African animal, *Alcelaphus bubalis caama*, by means of its much paler coloration, which is yellowish fawn or tawny, somewhat resembling the Kongoni or Coke's Hartebeest *Alcelaphus bubalis cokei*; by the poor development and intensity of the dark markings, and by the less sharp definition of the white on the back and sides of the lower part of the rump. In his type specimen there is general tawny tint which tends to chestnut on the loins as in *Alcelaphus bubalis cokei*, but on the back



Alcelaphus bubalis selbornei (Lydekker, 1913) in the Amsterdam Zoo. (Aufn. Drs. P. J. H. VAN BREE, 25. 5. 1964)

the color is much the same as that of the flanks. Unlike the Cape Red Hartebeest, the face blaze does not form a continuous band of black from the base of the horns to the muzzle, only broken up in the area of the eyes by a thin white band, but rather, is mingled throughout with fawn colored hairs. The nuchal stripe is indistinct. The dark patches on the shoulders and legs are less intense and are likewise intermixed with fawn colored hairs. The leg patch stops short of the knee, where it forms a dark spot. Dark areas on the shanks are present as a single small patch about the middle of their length. The dark areas of the thighs, which appear than in *Alcelaphus bubalis caama*, are also characterized by their lack of intensity.

In 1914, the year following the original description LYDEKKER wrote of this animal:

„The pale colouration and imperfect development of the dark markings in this specimen seem to be abnormal or due to immaturity, as other heads from the Kimberly herd show full development of the face-blaze.“ It is interesting to note that after making this declaration, LYDEKKER did not re-evaluate his description of the previous year.

In a period of almost three years spent in Europe, it was possible for me to examine skins of both *caama* and *selbornei* in the collection of the British Museum (NH) as well as living specimens of the Northern Red or Selborne's Hartebeest, *Alcelaphus bubalis selbornei*, in the Gardens of Royal Zoological Society in Amsterdam. Upon my return to the United States, I also studied specimens of *selbornei* in the private collection of Mr. ROLAND LINDEMANN at the Catskill Game Farm. The Catskill herd consists of seven animals (1963) and that in Amsterdam four (1962), the parent

stock being imported from South-West Africa. These animals, in opposition to the description given by LYDEKKER, may be described as follows: General body color cinnamon or bright reddish brown, with a band of black hairs from the base of the horns to the muzzle, intercepted in the occipital region by a line of light colored hairs, varying in width. Lower lip, forepart of the shoulders, anterior portion of the limbs, almost to the hoof, dark plum colored; posterior portion of the forelimbs somewhat lighter than the general body color. Anterior portion of the hindlimbs colored much like the forelimbs. A large black stripe covers a great portion of the posterior haunch extending down to the knee. The upper portions of the haunches are pale yellow or whitish in coloration, as are their insides and the belly. Two dark, narrow stripes, each beginning behind an ear, join on the ridge of the neck, then forming a dark oval extending the entire length of the back.

This description agrees with skins accorded to *Alcelaphus bubalis caama* in the British Museum (NH), as well as with the descriptions of the Cape Hartebeest given by LYDEKKER, SCLATER & THOMAS, SHORTRIDGE and WARD. There are no recorded cranial differences. Under the circumstances, it is to be concluded that the Hartebeest which formally ranged from the southern Cape Province to the Rua Cana Falls of the Cunene River in South-West Africa is referable to *Alcelaphus bubalis caama* (Cuvier, 1816), *Alcelaphus bubalis selbornei* (LYDEKKER, 1913) representing an abnormally colored individual and therefore synonymous with the former.

Literature

- BEST, GERALD A. (1962): Records of Big Game, XI Ed. (Africa), Roland Ward Ltd., London.
BOHLKEN, HERWART (1958): Vergleichende Untersuchungen an Wildrindern (Tribus Bovini Simpson 1945); Zool. Jahrbücher, Bd. 68, H. 1/2, Jena.
DOLAN, JAMES M. (1963): Beitrag zur systematischen Gliederung des Tribus Rupicaprini Simpson, 1945; Z. f. zoologische Systematik und Evolutionsforschung, Bd. 19, H. 3/4, Frankfurt.
LYDEKKER, RICHARD (1913): The Transvaal race of the Cape, or Khama Hartebeest; Proc. Zool. Soc. London, pp 818—821.
LYDEKKER RICHARD (1914): Catalogue of the Ungulate Mammals in the British Museum (Natural History); Brit. Mus. Nat. Hist. Vol. II, London.
ROBERTS, AUSTIN (1951): The Mammals of South Africa; Central News Agency, South Africa.
SCLATER, P. L., & OLDFIELD THOMAS (1894—1900): The book of antelopes; R. H. Porter, 4 vols. in parts, London.
SIMPSON, GEORGE G. (1945): Classification of Mammals; Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., Vol. 85, New York.
SHORTRIDGE, G. C. (1934): The Mammals of South-West Africa; William Heinemann Ltd., London.

Authors address: Dr. JAMES M. DOLAN, San Diego Zoological Society, San Diego, California

Zur Verbreitung der Brandmaus, *Apodemus agrarius* (Pallas, 1771), im mittleren Europa

Von H. RICHTER

Eingang des Ms. 20. 4. 1964

Vor Jahresfrist erging die „Aufforderung an die mitteleuropäischen Theriologen“ (KRATOCHVIL, 1963), den durch das Gebiet verlaufenden Arealgrenzen verschiedener

ZOBODAT - www.zobodat.at

Zoologisch-Botanische Datenbank/Zoological-Botanical Database

Digitale Literatur/Digital Literature

Zeitschrift/Journal: [Mammalian Biology \(früher Zeitschrift für Säugetierkunde\)](#)

Jahr/Year: 1965

Band/Volume: [30](#)

Autor(en)/Author(s): Dolan James

Artikel/Article: [On the Validity of the Northern Red Hartebeest, *Alcelaphus bubalis selbornei* \(Lydekker, 1913\) 179-181](#)