Bazboltonia nom. nov., a replacement name for the preoccupied Neotropical ant genus Boltonia Camacho & Feitosa 2022 (Hymenoptera: Formicidae)

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In our recent revision and reclassification of the ant subfamily Ectatomminae (Camacho et al. 2022), we proposed the new genus name Boltonia Camacho & Feitosa to accommodate a single species, B. microps Borgmeier 1957, transferred from the genus Heteroponera Mayr. At that time, we believed Boltonia to be an available name, but recent evidence led us to conclude that this is a preoccupied name and that our ant genus needs a replacement name.

The name Boltonia was proposed twice in the entomological literature. Pruvost (1919) created the genus †Boltonia for a paleodictyopteran insect, with †Boltonia robusta as its type species. One year later, Handlirsch (1920) also named a genus †Boltonia, for a stem-dictyoptera “roachoid”, designating †Gerablattina (Apithoroblattina) sulcata Bolton 1911 as its type species. Currently, †Boltonia Handlirsch is a junior synonym of †Necymylacris Bolton 1917 (Blattodea) (Durden, 1969). Both Pruvost (1919) and Handlirsch (1920) named their genera after the paleoentomologist Herbert Bolton.

Strand (1929) considered that the name applied for both dictyopteran fossils was preoccupied by Boltonia Koenig 1825, who apparently proposed the name when describing a new genus of ascidians (Tunicata). Strand then created the replacement names †Boltopruvostia for †Boltonia Pruvost and †Sulcoboltonia for †Boltonia Handlirsch. Nevertheless, Strand’s assumption was incorrect. Koenig never created a genus named Boltonia. He used the name Boltonia for comparison in the discussion of another taxon, but he was referring to the tunicate Boltenia Savigny 1816, and simply misspelled the name. In fact, Boltenia Savigny is a valid current name (Shenkar et al., 2022).

We initially judged that the substitute name created by Strand to replace Boltonia Koenig 1825 would render our new genus name Boltonia available, since it was proposed based on a nonexistent original homonymy. However, Strand’s replacement name for †Boltonia Handlirsch 1920 is needed, because of the description of †Boltonia Pruvost 1919. Thus, by 1920 there were two available names with the spelling Boltonia and, consequently, there was actual homonymy. In addition, according to Article 10.6 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, “A name once available remains so irrespective of its invalidity as a junior synonym, a junior homonym, an unjustified emendation, an unnecessary substitute name, or a suppressed name […].” In the case of Boltonia, the first formal use of the name is therefore valid and for all nomenclatural purposes †Boltonia Pruvost 1919 must be considered an available name.

Thus, based on the aforementioned taxonomic history and in accordance with the article 60 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, we here propose the new replacement name Bazboltonia nom. nov. for Boltonia Camacho & Feitosa 2022. Accordingly, a new combination is herein proposed for the single species currently included in the genus: Bazboltonia microps (Borgmeier 1957) comb. nov.

Bazboltonia nom. nov.
Boltonia Camacho & Feitosa, 2022: 14 (Insecta, Hymenoptera). Preoccupied by †Boltonia Pruvost, 1919 (Insecta, Orthoptera)
Type-species: Heteroponera microps Borgmeier 1957, by original designation.
Etymology. Following the original proposal in Camacho et al. (2022), the genus name is proposed in honor of the legendary ant taxonomist Barry Bolton, whose lifelong nickname is ‘Baz’.

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Bazboltonia microps (Borgmeier 1957) comb. nov.

Heteroponera microps Borgmeier, 1957: 112, figs. 23–26 (worker), BRAZIL.

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