

REVIEW

R.J. JOHNS: *Index Filicum. Supplementum sextum pro annis 1976–1990*. The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 1996. 344 pp. ISBN 1-900347-11-3. Price unknown.

This sixth supplement to the original and invaluable *Index Filicum* continues the tradition of cross-referencing all basionyms to their new names. It covers the period from 1976 to 1990, a mere 15 years in the nearly 250 years that separate us from Linnaeus. Yet it contains 344 pages full of new species and new combinations (statistics on the numbers of each category are not provided). The dates for this volume are not very strict: important publications before 1976 that were not fully indexed in the previous volume have been incorporated in the main body, not in the *Addenda*, *Corrigenda et Emendanda* (ACE). Compare, for instance, the mere 16 new combinations in *Sphaeropteris* made by R.M. Tryon in 1970 listed in the previous Supplement with the nearly 100 listed here!

For the first time in pteridological history, pteridologists now also have access to infraspecific names, and have less excuse to ignore some of them quietly. Whether this is an advantage remains to be seen. Records only go back to 1976 (although some older infraspecific names are listed in the ACE), which means that lots and lots of older names (and all their corresponding autonyms) are still waiting to take up their proper place in the priority. With nomenclatural rules on infraspecific names as intricate as they are now, and without the excuse of ignorance, it is very tempting to move away from the use of infraspecific categories altogether.

There are several reasons why this huge collection of references still does not absolve monographers from their practice of checking and rechecking anything that has appeared in print. One is that apparently claims by authors for the priority of names have not been evaluated. It seems that any name or combination with “nom. nov.” or “comb. nov.” behind it in the original publication has been included, even if the combination has been made earlier. The treatment of these isonyms is not consistent. In one case, we find two isonyms directly above each other (p. 91: *Crypsinus nigrovenius* (Christ) K. Iwats. 1975 and *C. nigrovenius* (Christ) V.N. Tu 1979). In a comparable case (*Hyalotrichopteris* L.D. Gómez 1982 vs. *Hyalotrichopteris* W.H. Wagner 1979) the later name is marked as isonym. In another case, the isonymy of *Belvisia annamensis* (C. Chr.) V.N. Tu 1979, predated by *B. annamensis* (C. Chr.) Tagawa 1976, has gone completely unnoticed. Another reason is that, despite the obvious care with which the data have been assembled, some errors have unavoidably crept in. For a future installment of ACE, I can here offer the following corrections:

Page 209: *Lycopodiella contexta* Holub and *L. × copelandii* Cranfill are (like all new combinations made in *Lycopodiella* by Cranfill in 1981) cited under *Lycopodium*.

Page 293: *Pyrrosia lingua* var. *heteractata* should be spelled correctly *heteracta*.

Page 300: The combinations *Selliguea bellisquamata*, *S. plebiscopa* and *S. werneri* are erroneously included under *Selenodesmium*.

Inspection of 10 randomly chosen pages provided three of these errors or inconsistencies and one minor typographic error, leaving 7 pages without obvious errors. Inspection of some of the genera I have been closely involved with, provided the other examples. Extrapolating these results is perhaps not warranted, considering the small sample, but unless I had some exceptionally bad luck in randomly selecting the pages, this Supplement is far from error-free. Nevertheless, like its predecessors, it is an indispensable reference tool for all pteridologists.

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