

VI. "NOMENCLATURALLY EXTINCT" WORKS

One of the causes of instability in botanical nomenclature is found in that our predecessors did not verify the nomenclatural bearing of an unknown number of (often very rare) works. In PENNANT's 4-volume "Outlines of the Globe" (1800), a standard geographical work at its time (1) a chapter was found recently devoted to a "Flora Indica". The compiler had unintentionally made some name changes which remained unrecorded in scientific botany. Not long ago ROTHMALER unearthed many such works (2). It must be realized that, quite probably, many other works will be detected necessitating future unexpected and undesirable name changes.

Our proposal is to exclude, onwards of 1951, for botanical nomenclature, all works which, up till that date, have not been used for purposes of priority. In other words, to declare these to be "nomenclaturally extinct".

Works which have been partly used - that is, only a certain number of the new names have been adopted by later authors, which happened in the case of several of Rafinesque's works, - do not fall under this provision, as the exclusion of such works would bring about name changes for the names which have been adopted legitimately.

This proposal is a cautious and harmless approach towards a kind of "black list". Those who reject a "black list" idea might agree with this proposal seeing that it does not affect any recognized work from which a name has been adopted. It is "blacklisting" only those works which - at present - are non-extant from a nomenclatural standpoint.

Besides, it will not be necessary to compose any "list". The proposed new rule authorizes merely to neglect names and epithets from works which have hitherto had no importance for nomenclature.

It relieves us, moreover, from exhausting bibliographic "digging" which is now our duty prescribed by the present Rules in order to use the earliest legitimate name or epithet in denoting our taxa.

Some bibliophile botanists seem keen to detect forgotten nomenclatural heritage, but the results of their searches continually threaten that stability of nomenclature which is urged in the guiding Arts 4 and 5 of the Rules, which strongly stress practical and formal aims as a basic principle of nomenclature.

In formal and informal discussions of matters of nomenclature it often appears that some botanists desire to "do justice" and "be fair" to our predecessors in nomenclatural questions. However, this is unjustified from the spirit of the Rules; nomenclature ought to be unemotional.

This view is supported by the Rules (1stly) by accepting starting dates chosen for practical reasons only, outlawing all earlier authors; (2ndly) by rejecting many generic names which were legitimate, and validly published; (3rdly) by adding new rules, or cancelling existing ones with retrospective effect which make names of former authors which were correct under the former rules incorrect under the later rules; (4thly) by ante-dating works a posteriori such as is done in Art. 20 (Linnaeus, Gen. Pl., and vol. 2 Sp. Pl.); (5thly) by accepting the first validly published description provided with a legitimate name irrelevant of its phyto graphic value.

We assume that a rejection of works which have hitherto been neglected nomenclaturally, and from which not a single name or epithet has been adopted by others than the author himself, conveniently disposes of that part of literature which is actually - from the standpoint of present nomenclature - extinct, and should remain so for the practical aim of stability in accordance with Art. 4 of the section 'Guiding Principles'.

We propose to insert in section 3 a new rule, no 20a, as follows:

Art. 20a Works which up till 1951 have not been used for purposes of priority are regarded as nomenclaturally inadmissible.

and a reference in article 60:

Art. 60 (6). If the names and epithets are published in nomenclaturally inadmissible works.
(see Art. 36a).

Literature cited:

- (1) cf. MERRILL, E.D.,: An overlooked Flora Indica (Journ.Arn. Arb. 29, (1948) 186-192).
- (2) cf. FEDDE, Repert. 58, 1944, 1-37.

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