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# ORTHOGRAPHIC ERRORS AND VARIANTS

F. C. Deighton (C.M.I., Kew)

Eichler (Taxon 12: 15-20. 1963) has made a number of proposals which mycologists should welcome, and has introduced the useful new term "Paronym". The essence of his proposals is that the original spelling (obvious typographic errors presumably excepted) of a generic name must be accepted as the correct spelling unless a later spelling is conserved against it.

As Eichler says, the same regulations cannot cover specific epithets since there is no means for the conservation of one spelling against another. A few examples of typographic and orthographic errors in specific epithets which should be corrected are given in Art. 73 (Code, 1961), but no examples are given of many of the commoner corrections which it has been customary to make to specific and infraspecific epithets of names of fungi. It is well first to list the kind of orthographic corrections or alterations which have customarily been made in mycological literature.

## CORRECTIONS AND ALTERATIONS SPECIFICALLY COVERED BY THE CODE

(a) Correction of gender of an adjectival epithet in order to make it agree grammatically with the gender of the generic name (Arts. 23 and 24).<sup>\*</sup>

Here it may be worth pointing out that while an author may give the specific epithet in the correct masculine or neuter gender to agree with a masculine or neuter generic name, he sometimes publishes at the same time an infraspecific epithet in the feminine gender in the erroneous belief that this should agree with the feminine words "varietas" or "forma".

(b) Correction of a wrong connecting vowel, etc. (see Art. 73, Note 2).

(c) Correction of terminations (see Art. 73, Note 2).

(d) Corrections similar to the example of

<sup>\*</sup> The Editorial Committee should be asked to choose from the many available a better example to replace the last example under Rec. 50F. Not only did Nakai publish the epithet *tricuspe* in the correct gender (*Ribes* is neuter), but the name *Ribes tricuspe* was not apparently published for the first time in Bot. Mag. Tokyo 30: 142. 1916.

*Gluta renghas* L. ("benghas") given in the examples of orthographic errors under Art. 73.

Examples: Lee Ling (Mycologia 41: 263. 1949) gives reasons for regarding *Ustilago tonglinensis* Tracy & Earle (Bull. Torrey bot. Cl. 22: 175. 1895) as an orthographic error for *U. tanglinensis*, the type having been collected from Tanglin, Singapore. — G. H. Cunningham (Trans. roy. Soc. N.Z. 84: 235. 1956) gives reasons for regarding *Corticium habgallae* Berk. & Br. (J. Linn. Soc. Lond. 14: 72. 1893) as an orthographic error for *C. hakgallae*, the type having been collected from Hakgala, Ceylon.

Somewhat similar but more profound corrections have been made by authors where the epithet was derived from the generic name of the host plant which was mis-read from a hand-written label.

Examples: *Septoria carpholobi* Hansford (Proc. Linn. Soc. N.S.W. 79: 138. 1954) was altered by Hansford (Proc. Linn. Soc. N.S.W. 82: 229. 1957) to *S. carpobroti*. — *Meliola symphonematis* Petrak (Sydowia 12 (1958): 565. 1959) was altered by Petrak (Sydowia 15 (1961): 208. 1962) to *M. symphorematis*. In these two examples, the generic names "*Carpholobus*" and "*Symphonema*" do not exist. The examples are quite different from misidentifications of the host plant (e.g. *Puccinia sorghi* Schw. is the correct name for the rust fungus on *Zea*, though the host was misidentified as *Sorghum*, and antedates the name *Puccinia maydis* Béreng.).

Further example: *Helicogloea augustispora* L.S. Olive (Bull. Torrey bot. Cl. 78: 107. 1951) was consistently so spelt by the author (the name is mentioned several times in the text), though he says that this new species is characterized by its "narrower" spores. It is therefore obvious that the epithet ought to be "*angustispora*", but I am not sure whether the provisions of the Code authorise such correction. This example, however, is similar to the two first examples of typographic errors given under Art. 73, and I think the correction is warranted: "*angustispora*" was either a typographic error or a *lapsus calami*.

(e) Correction of spelling of epithets of fungus names derived from the generic name of the host plant, in accordance with Rec. 73H.

(f) Alteration of a descriptive noun in apposition to an adjectival form of epithet.

Saccardo appears to have disliked the descriptive noun in apposition. An epithet with the termination “-icola” apposed to a masculine or neuter generic name was regularly altered to the adjectival form “-icolus” or “-iculum” when cited in the Sylloge Fungorum. Similarly, the epithet “hyalopus” (a noun in apposition) was altered in the Sylloge to “hyalopoda” (the feminine form of the derived adjective *hyalopodus*) when transferred to a feminine genus.

In order to avoid nomenclatural confusion, it is essential in all these cases that the adjectival form shall be considered an orthographic variant of the substantival form (in the nominative) of the epithet, and in fact “heteropus” and “heteropodus” are listed under Art. 75 as examples of epithets treated as orthographic variants.

PROPOSAL 95. Art. 75. The Editorial Committee should be asked to include an addition to para. 2 (first sentence on p. 75) in explanation of the example cited of “heteropus” and “heteropodus”.

#### CORRECTIONS AND ALTERATIONS NOT SPECIFICALLY COVERED BY THE CODE

(g) Correction of ungrammatically formed genitives, when the epithet is obviously meant to be the genitive of the generic name of the host plant.

Some botanists with whom I have discussed this have maintained that because Art. 23 states that “the epithet of a species may be taken from any source whatever, and may even be composed arbitrarily”, an ungrammatically formed genitive is acceptable. This, however, conflicts with Principle V which states that “scientific names of taxonomic groups are treated as Latin regardless of their derivation”.

It must, I think, be insisted that when the epithet is derived from the generic name of the host plant we are dealing with a word (the generic name of the host) which is already Latin. We may coin an adjective from this word (e.g. *combretina* or *combretella* or even *combretana*, from the generic name *Combretum*) in accordance with Latin grammatical usage, but there is only one correct genitive of this example, *combreti*: to coin a new form of genitive would be to create a new language which would not be Latin. (Mention of certain Latin nouns with alternative genitive forms was made by me in Taxon 9: 269. 1958). It must be stressed that a language does not

consist merely of a vocabulary, but is “the expression of ideas by words or articulate sounds” (dictionary definition), and this involves some sort of grammar. It is partly because of the precision of Latin that it has become accepted as an international scientific language. When we say that we “treat names as Latin” we can only mean that they are subject to the rules of Latin grammar.

Saccardo and his collaborators in the Sylloge Fungorum regularly corrected incorrectly formed genitives, though sometimes rather arbitrarily allowing some to pass unaltered. For example, Trotter (in Saccardo, Syll. Fung. 24. 1926) corrected *Meliola connariae* Yates to *M. connari* (p. 279), *M. exocarpi* Yates to *M. exocarpi* (p. 341) and *M. leucosykeae* Yates to *M. leucosykes* (p. 348). He did not, however, correct *M. celtidiae* Yates (p. 347) to *M. celtidis*.

This practice of correcting an epithet consisting of an incorrectly formed genitive, like that of correcting the use of a wrong connecting vowel (Art. 73, Note 2) and of correcting the gender of adjectival epithets, is of long standing and is based on the supposition that such an epithet is not a newly coined word but is a modification of a word which is already a Latin word, and that such modification can only be made in accordance with Latin grammatical usage.

Most errors of this sort are assumed to have been mere *lapsus calami* or made by authors with an inadequate knowledge of Latin.

In recent years, however, there has been at least one deliberate publication of an ungrammatical genitive of the generic name of a host plant as a new specific epithet, presumably based on the supposed authorization of such practice by Art. 23 (“the epithet . . . may even be composed arbitrarily”). Batista (Publ. Inst. Mic. Univ. Recife 56: 185-187. 1959) described two species of *Scolecopeltidium* on *Connarus*. One is *S. connari* (Syd.) Stevens & Manter. The other is a new species with the validly published name *S. connarusii* Batista & H. Lima. Now this new name would undoubtedly be corrected by someone sooner or later to *S. connari*, in accordance with established custom, were there not already a validly published *S. connari*. Personally I consider *S. connarusii* to be an error (though deliberately made) for *S. connari* and therefore a homonym of *S. connari* (Syd.) Stevens & Manter. To think otherwise would be to insist that all incorrectly formed genitives published as specific epithets, and usually corrected at some time or other in the past, are the correct spellings which must be accepted; and furthermore to open the way

for any number of new variants of the genitive of Latin words, which are not in accordance with Latin grammar: e.g. "*connaridis*", "*connarusiusii*".

PROPOSAL 96. Art. 73. Note (new).

Epithets of fungus names derived from the generic name of the host plant must be composed in accordance with accepted Latin usage and grammar, since the name of the host plant is already a Latin word. Incorrectly formed genitives and incorrect stems, for example, should be corrected.

#### THE USE OF NOUNS IN APPOSITION AS SPECIFIC EPITHETS

The wording of the International Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria and Viruses, 1958, is explanatory and does not conflict with general botanical thought:

(p. 38) "Rule 6. Note.

Specific epithets are:

- (1) Adjectives, which must agree grammatically with the generic name.
- (2) Substantives, in the nominative, in apposition with (*sic*) the generic name.
- (3) Substantives in the genitive."

(p. 37) "(2) *Substantives as specific epithets in apposition.*

In general the epithet expresses some characteristic of the generic name with which it is in apposition; it has an adjectival connotation."

There is no doubt that a specific epithet in the form of a noun in apposition has always an adjectival connotation in classical usage. In mycological literature, however, authors have often used the generic name of the host plant, in the nominative, as the epithet of the name of a fungus, without intending any such adjectival connotation and merely instead of using the genitive. (Some examples were given by me in *Taxon* 9: 269. 1958.) I do not think that anyone would regard the nominative and genitive forms of the epithets in such examples as other than orthographic variants, but I maintain that the use of the nominative form in such examples is both confusing and not in accordance with Latin usage, and that in such examples if the epithet is published in the nominative case it should be altered to the genitive.

Thus, the epithet in *Cyphella hebe* G.H. Cunn. (*Trans. roy. Soc. N.Z.* 81: 181. 1953) ought to connote the appearance (i.e., resembling in some way a *Hebe* plant) of the

fungus, though the author undoubtedly intended to indicate that it grew on *Hebe*. The epithet published is an incorrect use of the noun in apposition, and is certainly to be regarded as an orthographic variant of the more correct genitive form "*hebes*".

PROPOSAL 97: Art. 73. Note (new)

A substantive, in the nominative case, used as an epithet in apposition to the generic name should have an adjectival connotation and (as in general with other epithets) should express some characteristic of the plant to which it applies. For example, the generic name of the host plant should not be used in the nominative case (a noun in apposition) as an epithet of the name of a fungus when it is intended to indicate only the host plant of the fungus and not the character of the fungus itself: in such names, the epithet should be altered to the genitive case of which the nominative case form is to be regarded as an orthographic variant.

#### EPITHETS IN THE ABLATIVE

Art. 23, para. 5, uses the words "the specific epithet, when adjectival in form and not used as a substantive". This remark has a similar significance to the words in the Bacteriological Code already quoted, and it may be deduced that the publication of an epithet in the ablative case is not contemplated, though (in the Botanical Code) not necessarily ruled out.

Examples: *Bisporomyces chlamydozporis* Van Beyma (Antonie v. Leeuwenhoek ned. Tijdschr. 6: 277. 1940), *Aphanomyces polysporis* Milovcova (Tr. Inst. Bot. Univ. Charkov 1: 41. 1935) and *Phoma ellipsoideis* Golovin (Central Asian Univ. Studies, N.S., 14 (5): 30. 1950). These are ablative plurals and I think they should be regarded as quite inadmissible and should be corrected to the normal adjectival form *chlamydozporus*, *polysporus* and *ellipsoidea*, respectively. Hughes (Canad. J. Bot. 36: 748. 1958) published the recombination "*Chloridium chlamydozporis* (Van Beyma) Hughes", evidently deciding that the epithet was indeclinable.

These names are unlike the examples *triner-vis* and *trinerivius* given in Art. 75 as examples of adjectival epithets which must be treated as orthographic variants.

Further example: *Pichia quercibus* Phaff & Knapp (Antonie v. Leeuwenhoek ned. Tijdschr. 22: 126. 1956), a yeast isolated from slime flux of *Quercus*. Here the authors intentionally used

the ablative plural case. My personal feeling is that such a name should either be rejected completely, or that the epithet should be corrected to the genitive *quercus* (or *querci*).

PROPOSAL 98: The Editorial Committee should be asked to include in Art. 23 (perhaps as an extension of para. 5) a statement similar to that in the Note to Rule 6 of the International

Code of Nomenclature for Bacteria and Viruses, 1958 (p. 33) which I have cited earlier, in order to ensure that the use of a substantive in the ablative as an epithet is not permissible, and that if such an epithet is published it should be regarded as an incorrect spelling which should be altered to an acceptable form as near as possible to the original spelling.

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## THE ASSIGNMENT OF SPECIES OF FOSSILS TO GENERA

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**Abstract.** It is proposed that the Code of Botanical Nomenclature should include a provision that where a species of fossils is assigned to an extant genus, the diagnosis of that genus should be deliberately emended to include a time-range circumscription, adequately substantiated.

The inclusion of the "special provisions concerning fossil plants" into the body of the Montreal (1961) Code of Botanical Nomenclature was an important advance. These provisions have as yet only been distributed by the editors, and have not really been digested, as is illustrated by the slightly imperfect wording of Art. 3, Note 1 on form-genera. The inclusion of fossil plants has scarcely begun to have the effect it should and will have on the whole Code.

The proposal made below is of course advanced with a systematic and taxonomic purpose, but it appears that the most satisfactory way to achieve this purpose is to improve the Nomenclature Rules in the Code for the guidance of palaeobotanists; it is a "provision for the future" as suggested in the Preamble to the Code.

*The difficulty.* It has been the practice of many palaeobotanists to assign fossil species, which are usually only represented by remains of single organs, to extant genera; and this is done apparently without further thought of the effect of doing so on the generic taxon concerned. The practice, which is both deliberate and incidental, has been widespread in Tertiary studies, and has frequently been applied in the Mesozoic. It has been particularly prevalent in the rapidly increasing volume of work on palynology.

Behind this practice there has been the praiseworthy but now outmoded desire, to avoid at any cost deceiving the geologist over

any morphographic similarities and thus to give the maximum support to his efforts to determine a broad stratigraphic sequence for the last 500 million years by using "the organised fossil remains in the strata". Advances in stratigraphic palaeontology (of animals more than of plants) and in radiometric age determination, have now directed the geological emphasis very largely away from this basic sequence which is now accepted, to relatively fine stratigraphical detail of Stages and Zones; in such finer work it is necessary to attempt to trace evolutionary sequences in the considerable detail which the addition of palynology has now made approachable for palaeobotanists. To do this without confusion it is important to avoid emphasis on the long existence of certain types of plant organ in the fossil record, which presumably indicates relative constancy of certain environmental circumstances, but does not prove either the prolonged existence of complete plants now living, or of plant associations now found. It is no longer of much value to know "that *Nipa* existed for 60 million years and thus has value as a stratigraphic indicator of that magnitude"; what is required is to know where the plant came from, how the known organs of *Nipadites* of the Eocene differed from those of the Recent plant, how its ecological associations and geographical distribution have evolved throughout the period and where best to draw generic limits in time. The way is quite largely barred however by a mass of assumptions implicit in the backward-looking practice of assigning very incomplete fossils of single organs to well understood and studied Recent genera of complete plants.

In addition the average taxonomist concerned with Recent plants, quite understandably pays no attention at all to the fossils dumped in his genus without any change of the diagnosis. The whole procedure is sterile.