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Author(s): C. X. Furtado

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# SUPERFLUOUS NAMES AND LATER HOMONYMS

C. X. Furtado (Singapore)

One of the most singular rules in the Nomenclatural Code (1956) is the one that deals with the superfluous names (Art. 64-1) first approved at the Cambridge Botanical Congress (1930) and subsequently confirmed at Amsterdam (1935). A consideration of this rule in 1939 led me to deduce the following:

"Moreover no advantage is gained by denying priorability to such unambiguous specific names as are capable of rendering their later homonyms impriorable; on the contrary such a denial not only does not maintain the principle of economy in epithets but also creates a class of unusable names which are both valid and unambiguous.... it is absolutely essential that the rules concerning validity, priorability and priority (or legitimacy) should not be confused so as to render their application difficult.... There is no proper reason why certain offences against the priority rules should be singled out for penalization and others escape it." (Gard. Bull. 11: 3. 1939). I suggested therefore the deletion of this rule from the Code.

## *Typification Simplifies the Problem*

Later in 1949 the plea for the deletion of the rule was again affirmed for reasons of clarity and precision in the Code; for, since the rule of priority is applied only to the priorable names or epithets in order to find the correct name or epithet in a given circumstance, it would be a weakness in the Code, or in the jurisprudence on which it is based, I maintained, if the priority rule was allowed to be invoked also in determining the priorability of names or epithets. In that paper some examples were also discussed to show how the application of the rule of superfluous names overlooked many old practices in citing synonyms, or led to the rejection of good, long current names in order to create new ones. (Op. cit. 12: 327-329. 1949).

*Ficus erecta* Gedner (1786) was given there as an instance of an apparently superfluous name because *F. pumila* L. was quoted in its synonymy; but the author's description and the fact that in another page of the same publication he retained *F. pumila* L. as a good species, show that some such phrase as "pro parte", "sensu auctorum" or

"quoad specimina in herbariis determinata" is understood after the synonym *F. pumila* L. Attention was also drawn there to the cases like that of *Cerastostylis eriarioides* Hk.f. (1891) which, though published in contravention to the priority right of *Eriu pygmaea* Hk.f. (1890), has to be retained because *pygmaea* Hk.f. cannot now be legitimately adopted under *Cerastostylis* because of *C. pygmaea* Gagn. (1932). Cases of this class where the new name created and the older synonym cited are typonymous or exactly synonymous are not as many as the ones where the two names are not synonymous; but nevertheless they are many. In some cases the author of the new name gives reasons why he does not employ the oldest priorable epithet. Thus *Embelia javanica* A. DC. (1844), was created for *Ardisia scandens* Bl. (1826) with the following note: "Nomen mutavi quia omnes scandentes." But since *E. scandens* (Bl.) cannot now be instated as the correct name because of *E. scandens* (Lour.) Mez (1902), *E. javanica* A. DC. should continue as the correct name of the species. In all such cases, the rule of priority works satisfactorily if the rule of superfluous names is eliminated from the Code.

It must not be overlooked also that there was formerly the custom of citing a dubious or unidentifiable name in the synonymy to indicate the author's suspicions as to the identity of the older synonym, even when both the description and existing types were insufficient to allow one to make an accurate determination. It was this practice that later led some authors to make many new combinations based on Loureiro's, Blanco's and other species and reject many well-typified names of subsequent authors, an activity resented by many botanists. Thus, *Gnetum indicum* (Lour.) Merr. (1917) was based on *Abutua indica* Lour. (1790) as the correct name for *G. latifolium* Bl. (1834) and *G. funiculare* Brong. (1834). However Markgraf (Bull. Jard. Bot. Buitz. 10: 466 & 490. 1930) has shown that both the specimens of Loureiro and the Rumphian plate of *Gnemon funiculare* Rumph. (1747) cited by Loureiro under his species are not accurately identifiable taxa, and that there are reasons to believe that both these are two distinct species. On geographical grounds Markgraf suggests that *Abutua indica* Lour. might be

identical with his newly described species, *G. montanum* Mgf. (1930). Had he indicated his suspicions merely by citing the name in the synonymy as was the practice formerly with many botanists, *G. montanum* would have been considered a superfluous name, even though the identity of *Abutua indica* Lour. is not clear.

Ross (Taxon 7(9): 265. 1958) has put forward a plea to render inoperative the rule of superfluous names in the case of new combinations like *Chloris radiata* (L.) Sw. (1788) instated with a description, accompanied by a citation of its basynym *Agrostis radiata* L. (1759) and an older priorable synonym *Andropogon fasciculatum* L. (1753). The status should be judged, Ross states, by their typification. If the two synonyms are conspecific, then the epithet *fasciculatum* L. (1753) would take precedence. If not, then *Ch. radiatus* (L.) Sw. should not be rejected as a superfluous name but retained for its type (basynym) *A. radiata* L. and let the rule of priority take effect as if the rule of superfluous names did not exist in the Code. But there is no valid reason why a new combination, a new name based on an older synonym, and a new species based on the description and citation of synonyms should be given different treatments as to their legitimacy or priorability. On the contrary the present pleas for a different treatment show that the rule of superfluous names is rather an anomaly in the Code. In fact the recent tendency to reject well-known names seems to strengthen the cause of those who plead for the conservation of specific names.

Van Steenis, also favours the continuation of the old procedure by ignoring the rule of superfluous names. Thus in *Flora Malesiana* (5: 554. 1958) van Steenis persists in retaining *Moringa oleifera* Lamk. (1785) even though the author of the binomial had quoted under it an older priorable synonym *Balanus myrepsica* Gars. (1764) = *M. myrepsica* (Gars.) Thell., because the description of Lamarck was "entirely based" on specimens the author had seen and "does not contain any characters of *Moringa myrepsica* (Gars.) Thell."

#### The Rule of "Later Homonym"

In a recent paper Fosberg (Taxon 8: 65. 1959) seems to consider as illogical the objections for name changes under the strict application of the rule of superfluous names, and so he instates *Serianthes dilmyi* Fosb.

for *Serianthes grandiflora* Benth. But Fosberg overlooks the fact that under the rules it is possible to defend that, though *S. grandiflora* Benth. (1844) including *Acacia myriadenia* Bert. is illegitimate being a superfluous name, *S. grandiflora* Benth. (1846) minus *S. myriadenia* (Bert.) Benth. (1846) is the legitimate correct name for the taxon and not a later homonym of *S. grandiflora* Benth. (1844), and that therefore *S. dilmyi* Fosb. is superfluous! This may seem a novel procedure, but pleas to redefine the term "later homonym" more precisely and to prevent such procedures were overruled by the 1950 Congress (cf. Furtado in Gard. Bull. 11: 26-27. 1939 & 12: 337-338. 1949). Under the existing definition of the homonymy Sprague and Green (Kew Bull.: 78-80. 1938) deduced that, while *Pseudotsuga taxifolia* (Lamb.) Britton (1889) was illegitimate, *Ps. taxifolia* (Lamb. ex Poir.) Rehder (1938) was the correct name for the Douglas Fir, because the holotypes of both these names were identical. (Art. 64-2 defines a later homonym as a name that duplicates a previous valid name of a taxon of the same rank but "based on a different type.") Similarly Hubbard (Kew Bull.: 319. 1936) invoked the rule in Art. 64-1 to reject *Loudetia* Hochst. ex Braun (1841) as superfluous name for the older *Tristachya*, but admitted *Loudetia* Hochst. ex Steud. (1854) as the correct name for the genus and "not a later homonym, since it is based on the same type as the illegitimately applied name *Loudetia* A. Br." (cf. for discussion on these and other cases see Furtado in Fedde, Reper. 44: 256-264. 1938).

#### Circumscription and Typification

Confusion of typification with circumscription to which Fosberg refers in his discussion seems to me much deeper than is generally suspected and calls for some clarification in the Code itself. Perhaps the following consideration might help to convey my meaning.

Strictly speaking a name cannot be separated from the type. Even a description based on new specimens loses its identity and becomes intimately fused with the older one if the new description is given under an older validly published name. As a result of this fusion, the type of the older description is also the type of the new circumscription; there is no means of expressing nomenclaturally a distinction between these two descriptions, since the new description did

not create a new taxon. There is, however, a possibility of expressing nomenclaturally the misidentified specimens, but nomenclatural expressions indicating a misinterpretation or misidentification has no status as a description of a taxon. Thus if under *Ardisia scandens* Bl. two specimens were used as syntypes, one from Java and the other from Sumatra, one could not split the components into two taxa thus: *Embelia javanica* A. DC. (basinym = *A. scandens* Bl. quoad specimen typicum *javanicum*) and *E. sumatrana* Doe (basinym = *A. scandens* Bl. quoad specimen non-lectotypicum, *sumatrense*).

This principle should hold good also in cases where the description, though based originally on only one type specimen, was subsequently altered to include one or more elements that have now to be separated taxonomically and nomenclaturally from the original taxon. One may separate the specimens that have been misidentified with the original taxon, but new descriptions will be needed to as many specimens dissociated from the old taxon to be made individually the holotypes of the new taxa or names. However this ruling, if applied retrospectively, will render several names invalid at least on the dates on which they are accepted as validly published. Hence an explicit rule is needed to safeguard the past procedures as well as to proscribe validation in future of new taxa by referring to misapplications (cf. also Furtado in Gard. Bull. 9: 258-260, 1937).

It is under this principle that Fosberg (Taxon 8: 53, 1959) regards *Brugmansia candida* Pers. (1805) as having been validated by a reference to a misinterpretation of *Datura arborea* L. *sensu* Ruiz et Pavon (1799) and deduces that Persoon's binomial "probably should not be regarded as superfluous since Persoon definitely ascribed his synonym to R. & P. without mention of Linnaeus". This conclusion of Fosberg shows that the rule of superfluous names is not as clear as he claimed it to be in the paper quoted above. To me the case of *B. candida* Pers. differs in no material way from *Serianthes grandiflora* Benth. (1844) and *Moringa oleifera* Lamk. (1785). Persoon gave not only new generic and specific descriptions but also quoted the Linnean binomial *Datura arborea* in the synonymy and also quoted the plate and the description of Ruiz and Pavon given under *D. arborea* L. In older books the

author's name is often omitted after the taxon's name or the latter is erroneously attributed to the person who had first given it in the pre-starting literature or in herbarium; and sometimes the reference quoted under a taxon is the latest monograph or book where its best description is available. In Persoon's citation there is no means to judge that he had used the expression to mean *Datura arborea* L. *sensu* Ruiz et Pav., non *sensu* typica. The fact that Persoon failed to account elsewhere *D. arborea* L. *sensu* typicum also favours my contention. Further had Persoon adopted the binomial *Brugmansia arborea* in place of *B. peruviana* without making any change in the diagnosis and citations given under the latter, it is certain that botanists would have regarded the binomial a new combination based on *Datura arborea* L. and not a new species with *D. arborea* L. *sensu* R. & P., non *sensu* Linneano, as its synonym.

Even in this case, if Art. 64-1 is ignored, the typification helps to clarify the circumscription of the taxon and simplifies the application of the rule of priority. If a nomenclatural entity may be typified on one of the elements to the exclusion of the other syntype and if *Chloris radiata* (L.) Sw. is to be typified on its basinym to the exclusion of even older synonyms and be freed from being incriminated under the rule of superfluous names, why not *Serianthes grandiflora* Benth. and *Moringa oleifera* Lamk. be similarly typified and allowed each to eliminate from its circumscription the synonym that prevents it from being used as the correct name of the typified taxon? There appears to be no valid reasons why unequal procedures should be followed, and the question of priority should be allowed to be involved when the problem is decided normally under the rules of typification and circumscription.

### Conclusions

From the foregoing it is obvious that the rule of superfluous names is not sound in the first instance on the basis of the jurisprudence because the rule of priority meant to be applied only to the names and epithets that are priorable is invoked, in this case, in determining the priorability of the names and epithets. Secondly the rule calls for exceptions as is shown in the pleas put forward by Ross. Further it ignores the fact

that older botanists quoted synonyms also to indicate misdeterminations and misapplications in literature and herbaria as well as to express their suspicions as to the identity of an older unidentifiable taxon, that is, cases in which more precise expressions are adopted at present. Further most interpreters of the rule of superfluous names (except perhaps the original sponsors of the rule) have ignored the rule of the later homonyms

which would make names like *Serianthes dilmyi* Fosb. (1959) superfluous for *S. grandiflora* Benth. (1846) non Benth. (1844). In view of this it appears that the rule of superfluous names (Art. 64-1) should be deleted, that of the later homonyms amended, and that the status of the superfluous names be decided under the rules of typification and other rules normally applied in such circumstances.

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## THE APPLICATION OF THE GENERIC NAME *POLYSTACHYA* HOOK.

(Orchidaceae)

V. S. Summerhayes and A. A. Bullock (Kew)

The determination of the correct name of the type species of the generic name *Polystachya* Hook. (1824) involves certain taxonomic as well as nomenclatural considerations, in spite of the fact that Hooker described the genus as monotypic. It also underlines the fact that the type of a generic name is a species and that the name given to it by the author of the generic name may be inadmissible under the International Code.\*

The type of *Polystachya* Hook. is the species represented in Hook. Exot. Fl. 2: t. 103 (1824), and as pointed out by Rickett and Stafleu (Taxon 8: 258, 1959) the name *P. luteola* applied to it is illegitimate because Hooker cited *Epidendrum minutum* Aublet (1775) and *Cranichis luteola* Sw. (1806) as synonyms. The same authors also pointed out that *Polystachya* may be removed from the list of *nomina generica conservanda* because the opposing name *Dendrorchis* Thouars (1809) [*Dendrorchis* Thouars (1822)] was not validly published. They also stated that the illegitimate *P. luteola* (Sw.) Hook. may be replaced by the later *P. luteola* Wight (1852) under the provisions of Art. 72, note, of the Code. This was because at the later date a combination under *Polystachya* from *Epidendrum minutum* could not be made on account of the existence of *P. minuta* A. Rich. et Galeotti (1845), which applies to a different species.\*\*

It is the purpose of this note to show that the above interpretation of the Code is faulty, and to determine the correct name of the type species of *Polystachya*. Art. 72 gives instruction as to the procedure to be followed when a name is found to be illegitimate under the preceding Articles (63-71), and the note quoted by Rickett and Stafleu reads as follows: "When a new *epithet* is required, an author may, if he wishes, adopt an *epithet* previously given to the taxon in an illegitimate name, if there is no obstacle to its employment in the *new position or sense*; the epithet in the *resultant combination* is treated as new". The italics have been inserted to emphasize what we consider to be the significant words in the note; it is inescapable, in our opinion, that the epithet must be transferred in order to provide a "new position" and a "resultant combination", or that the new name must apply to a different species in order to give a "new sense".

These two points may now be considered in turn. In regard to "new position", in this particular instance *P. luteola* Wight gives no new position for the epithet; it is in fact merely a misquotation of *P. luteola* (Sw.) Hook. and the "resultant combination" remains illegitimate. The question of "new sense" is more complicated. The view that the name is used in a new sense depends primarily on the assumption that Wight's plant is the same as the plant described by Hooker, but not the same as either the Guianan plant of Aublet (1775) or the Jamaican plant of Swartz (1800, 1806).

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\* Here and elsewhere in this note the 1956 (Paris) edition of the Code is referred to.

\*\* A similar interpretation of Art. 72, note, is suggested by Rickett and Stafleu (*l.c.* 259), in Note 1 under *Eulophia* R. Br. (*nom. cons.*).