(214-217) Four Proposals Mainly Pertaining to the Use of Autonyms for Subdivisions of Families
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Reviewed work(s):
Source: *Taxon*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Nov., 1992), pp. 778-781
Published by: International Association for Plant Taxonomy (IAPT)
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1222415
Accessed: 06/07/2012 07:34

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(214-217) Four proposals mainly pertaining to the use of autonyms for subdivisions of families

After a chequered and sometimes tormented history, the provisions in the *Code* governing the use of autonyms have now reached a stage of relative stability. They may not yet be ideal from everyone's point of view, yet they are unambiguous and practicable, and even fairly clear. After the major reshuffling in Sydney in 1981, the Berlin Congress left them virtually untouched.

Major problems remain, however, with so-called autonyms in the ranks higher than genus. There, the autonym rules do not and cannot function properly. The reason is that they are tailored for combinations, with epithets directly subordinate to generic or specific names, while names of higher-ranking taxa consist of a single element. Whereas the autonymous nature of an infrageneric name is immediately apparent when one looks at the name itself, this is not so at the ranks of subfamily, tribe and subtribe, where the criterion for autonymy is in the taxonomic context which may or may not be explicitly stated. For example, it may be impossible in a given case to tell whether the use of the tribal name *Cichorieae* is an error (it being a junior synonym of *Lactuceae* Cass. if placed in the *Compositae* or *Asteraceae*) or whether it is mandated by the autonym rule (the tribe being considered to belong to the segregate family *Cichoriaceae*). This may not be judged to be a serious problem, yet it is irritating and well illustrates the anomaly of the situation.

Now that autonyms have become validly published, priorable names it is awkward to have to accept that they can come into being by accident, without any formal requirement or concomitant nomenclaturally relevant action. At the ranks subordinate to genus and species, in order to create a new autonym one must validly publish at least a new combination at the corresponding rank and under the respective generic or specific name. But above generic level, transfer of a named subdivision of a family from one family to another (which is not a nomenclatural act subject to the fulfilment of formal requirements such as the full and direct reference to a basionym) often results, under the present rule, in the valid publication of the corresponding autonym. This may happen in a footnote, in the current text, or perhaps by discussing a given subfamily or tribe in a paper where the relevant family name appears only in the title or among the keywords – who knows where to draw the line?

One further possible complication is homonymy. Although it seldom occurs it may lead to an irresoluble difficulty when it does, with nomenclature apparently ruling taxonomy. Thus the *Code* effectively prevents the recognition of named tribes or subfamilies within the *Caricaceae*, since it rules that the portion of the family including the (type of the) genus *Carica* L. must be named *Cariceae* or *Caricoideae*, respectively (no other name being admissible under Art. 19.3, the penalty for contravention being invalidity under Art. 32.1(b)), but also rules that these names must not be used since they would be illegitimate later homonyms of the validly published *Caricoideae* Lindley and *Cariceae* Agardh, based on *Carex* L.

It has been suggested to me, during past discussions, that an obvious answer was to rule that names of subdivisions of families were binary combinations, the first element of which was to be the name of the family. This seemingly elegant solution is not I fear practicable, since it would render perhaps a majority of the presently used names of subdivisions of families invalid. Even taking for granted that such names were as a rule proposed for taxa explicitly assigned to a family (which is not at present

a requirement for their validity), and even assuming that names at these ranks could be exempted from what Art. 33.1 rules for the lower ranks, a major problem would still remain: if the name of the family itself is not validly published, one could hardly (by analogy to Art. 43) accept that a "subdivisional combination" might be valid. Just think of Cassini's tribal names now widely used in the *Compositae* but which were originally placed in the family "Synanthereae".

Prior to the Sydney Congress, I had proposed for the above reasons that the autonym rules be limited to the ranks below genus, and that the corresponding provisions for the higher ranks be deleted (Greuter in Taxon 30: 190, 198. 1981). This proposal reached a simple but not the required qualified majority on a card vote (204 yes, 194 no; Greuter & Voss, Englera 2: 57. 1982). There was no discussion at Sydney, but opposition presumably reflects concern over the possibility that familiar names might be lost. Indeed, under the Sydney proposal, while the names now qualified to be autonyms could still be used for the same taxa as before provided they had been validly published, they would be liable to be displaced by senior synonyms.

The difficulties thus remain and call for novel answers. The first of the proposals below offers such a new solution and would effect the following: (1) names in the higher ranks that are autonyms under the present rule would not change but would no longer be autonyms; (2) they would have to be validly published just like normal names, but could not be displaced by senior competing synonyms; and (3) the (seldom used) option to cite authors of suprageneric names would be available for all names, including former autonyms. It is hoped that the new Prop. (214), not having the drawbacks of its precursor, may be generally acceptable.

Having consulted the three major post-Sydney synopses of suprageneric names of which I could get hold, I found that Prop. (214) would not be nomenclaturally disruptive for any of them. Nicolson (Taxon 33: 680-690. 1984, for the *Araceae*) and Sanders & Cantino (Taxon 33: 64-72. 1984, for the *Lamiaceae*) give the names of the subfamily, tribe and subtribe including *Arum* and *Lamium*, respectively, in autonym form, correctly omitting the author citation, but without citing the place where and date when they were validly established under the *Code*. On the contrary, Nicolson provides reference to the places in which the autonyms were first used, which would become their places of valid publication under the proposed new provision. Pimenov & Constance (Taxon 34: 493-528. 1985, for the *Umbelliferae*, nom. alt. *Apiaceae*) cite the *Apioideae* and *Apiinae* with author and place of valid publication, as would become correct upon adoption of Prop. (214). There is no mention, in any of the three papers, of the adopted name of the family under which new names of subdivisions of the family were proposed, so that none of the synopses provides ready information on the place of first establishment of autonyms under the present rule (the first author to validate subtribal names in the umbels was Dumortier in 1827 who used the family name "Fructungulia", and the first to name subfamilies was Link in 1829 under "Umbellatae", so that neither validated an autonym in so doing).

(214) Delete Art. 19.4, the second half of Art. 19.3 (starting ", but not followed . . "), *and the last 8 words of Art. 16.1 (starting with the comma).*

Acceptance of this proposal would imply instruction to the Editorial Committee to delete cross references to the above provisions under other articles relevant to the autonym rules, and to provide author citations for the names presently listed as autonyms in Art. 19 Ex. 1-4 (note that the examples would not otherwise be affected).

(215) Delete Art. 19.5.

This proposal is independent of the above considerations and can stand on its own. In fact, it is hardly more than editorial in nature, since Art. 19.5 is completely superfluous (and at the same time rather confusing). Art. 10.4 rules that "The type of the name of a family or of any subdivision of a family is the same as that of the generic name on which it is based". It is therefore mandatory that suprageneric names based on the same generic name have the same type, and it is hard to understand how they could not all belong to the same family! If the provision ever had any sense (which I fail to see) it has lost it since.

(216) At the beginning of Art. 64.1, after "A name", *add* "of a genus or species".

Prop. (214) alone cannot resolve the homonymy problem exemplified by the *Caricoideae/Cariceae* case. This would be taken care of by the present proposal. Its consequences are much less sweeping than one might think at a quick glance. It would not, as one might believe, release names of subdivisions of genera and infraspecific taxa from the homonymy rules, since they are completely covered by Art. 64.4 (which the Editorial Committee might more appropriately shift to a position immediately following Art. 64.1). It would limit the range of operation of the homonymy rules to ranks of genus and below – which is already the case of confusingly similar names covered by Art. 64.3 (so that, even under the present rules, *Rubinae* Focke, based on *Rubus* L., and *Rubiinae*, presently an autonym under *Rubiaceae* and based on *Rubia* L., are both available for use). Since names of subdivisions of families may not be based on illegitimate later homonyms (Art. 19.1 + 18.1), the number of cases in which true homonyms could be used simultaneously is infinitesimal. In fact, the *Caricoideae/Cariceae* example, which is moreover of a theoretical nature at present, is the only one that comes to mind. It is the contention of this proposal that the use of *Caricoideae* both for the pawpaw subfamily and the sedge subfamily would not engender confusion and can be tolerated.

(217) In Art. 41.1-3, first line, add "or subdivision of a family" *after* "name of a family", "or subdivision of a genus" *after* "name of a genus", *and* "or infraspecific taxon" *after* "name of a species", respectively; *in Art. 41.3, replace* ", or *(c)*" *by* ". A name of a species may also be validly published *(c)*".

This triple proposal will bring Art. 41 of the *Code* into line with common sense and current practice. There is no reason why a name of, say, a variety should not be validated by reference to the description of a species or subspecies or forma. Indeed, this is commonly done and has not led to any objection as far as I know. By implication, the present provisions of Art. 41 can be logically interpreted to mean either of two things: (1) that for ranks other than family, genus and species current practice is illegal and only reference to a description of a taxon in the same rank is acceptable, or (2) that outside the principal ranks there is no restriction whatsoever and that a name of a variety may be validated by reference to a description of a tribe, and vice versa. Neither interpretation makes sense.

The reason why this proposal is made in the present context is that it bears on the valid publication of names now regarded as autonyms, once Prop. (214) above be accepted. The proposed clarification (or rather its first part, concerning Art. 41.1) would make it immediately clear that such names can, and normally will have been,

validated by reference to the name of the family, which would then serve as their basionym. The reverse situation may also of course occur, as exemplified by *Icacinaceae* (Bentham) Miers based on the earlier tribal name *Icacineae* Bentham (which under the present rule has an awkward dual nature, being simultaneously a basionym, with authority, and an autonym, without author citation). The proposal stands, however, quite independently of the fate of other proposals of this series.

Acknowledgement

I take pleasure in thanking the Nomenclature Editor, Dan Nicolson, for helpful comments on the manuscript.

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(218-219) Two proposals to avoid the retroactive effect of lectotype designations on the valid publication of names

Three proposals concerned with the retroactive effect of lectotype designations were submitted to the Berlin Congress. The first, Art. 7 Prop. C by Taylor & Brummitt (see Taxon 36: 189-191. 1987), aimed at denying such retroactivity in a general way. After some discussion (Englera 9: 41-42. 1989) it was rejected and later referred to a Special Committee set up by adoption of the second such proposal (Art. 63 Prop. A, see