Transliteration of Greek Words for Use in Nomenclature in Botany. Proposal No. 5 Submitted to the Paris Congress
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A large proportion of the names of taxa of higher plants are derived from Greek words, as are also many specific and other epithets. Under the rules of the Botanical Code these are transliterated and treated as Latin words.

There is no rule or recommendation in the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature which defines the exact procedure for the transliteration of Greek words into Latin. Yet it is true that throughout the history of modern botany there has been the tacit assumption that classic precedent as established by the Latins should be followed. Linnaeus in the Critica Botanica (in the translation by Sir Arthur Hort) states:

"Moreover, in every age, it has been the recognized practice amongst all Botanists, and even among the most eloquent Romans in ancient times, by Pliny and others, to write Greek names in Roman letters. When Greek names are transliterated into Latin, the equivalents used by the Romans from all time must be adopted in representing the Greek letters."

Linnaeus himself at least twice outlined the "classic" rules for such transliterations and gave examples of good form. However, an examination of the names of taxa and of the epithets proposed in botany shows that in practice there exists a degree of variation in transliteration that has led to confusion and misunderstanding. In general the variations and non-conformities may be attributed to three causes at least.

(1) The number of letters in the alphabet is not the same in Latin as in Greek. The Greek has four consonants not found in Latin. The Latins used one letter for long o and short o and one for long e and short e. The Greeks used two letters for each. Strict transliteration of Greek diphthongs into the Latin does not always yield a Latin diphthong. There are other problems as well.

(2) In a few cases the Latins themselves recognized two alternative transliterations.

(3) There is manifest in some cases a tendency on the part of authors to be influenced by the techniques of transliteration of the Greek into modern languages. These often do not conform to classic Latin usage.

There are many nomenclatural difficulties that arise from faulty or confused transliteration. One results when two different Latin transliterations of the same Greek word are introduced into the literature of botany as names or epithets applied to the same organism, or are proposed for names applied to different taxa. The determination of the gender of generic names may be made obscure by poor transliteration.

Neither of the lists of examples of classical transcriptions published by Linnaeus was complete. No specific directions are included in the "International Code of Botanical Nomenclature" as adopted by the Seventh International Botanical Congress: indeed Article 7 specifies only that scientific names of taxa when taken from a language other than Latin are to be treated as though they were Latin, and Recommendation 82A suggests the appropriate transliteration of the spiritus asper.

In order to obviate unnecessary confusion in the coining of new names and epithets, it is proposed that Recommendation 82A be replaced, and that a suitable Appendix be approved outlining the more important classical rules for Greek-Latin transliteration.

The Proposals follow:

1. It is proposed that Recommendation 82A be rescinded. This recommendation reads: "When a new name is derived from a Greek word containing the spiritus asper (rough breathing), this should be transcribed as the letter h."

2. It is proposed that a new Recommendation 82A be approved, reading as follows: "When a new name of a taxonomic group or a new epithet for use in botany is to be derived from the Greek, the transliteration (transcription) to Latin form should conform to classic usage. To assist authors of such new names and epithets in interpreting good usage it is recommended that the directives of Appendix . . . . be used as guides."

3. It is proposed that the following "Draft Proposal" for an Appendix to the "International Code of Botanical Nomenclature" be studied by the appropriate Committees of the International Association for Plant Taxonomy, and when suitably amended, be approved for inclusion as the Appendix to which reference is made in the new Recommendation 82A as given above.
Greek A, α (alpha) Latin A, a

ἀκάνθος — acanthus

The Greek α is the first letter of two diphthongs

αι = ae ἀγιλόψ = aegilops

Rarely and less correctly it is transliterated αι — ai as in

αῖρα — aira. There is no Latin diphthong ai.

Occasionally the Greek sequence αι — ai occurs, as in

Μαινθέν — Maianthemum, in which αι is not a diphthong

Occasionally αι — ae has been incorrectly transliterated as

e, as αίμα — haema with Hematoxylen for Haematoxylen

αυ — αυ αδάλαξ — aulax

ά — ha ἀδρός — habrus

αι — has αίμα — haema

Greek B, β (beta) Latin B, b

βάλανος — balanus

Greek Γ, γ (gamma) Latin G, g

γγ — γε

When the Greek γ precedes γ, κ, η, or χ, it is transliterated as n.

γγ — ng as in ἀγγέλον — angium

γχ — nc as in ἀγκυστόν — ancistrum

γξ — nx as in σφίγξ — sphinx

γχ — nch as in ἀγχοννα — anchusa

Greek A, δ (delta) Latin D, d

δάφνη — daphne

Greek E, ε (epsilon) Latin E, e

ευν — erium

The Greek ε is the first letter of two Greek diphthongs.

ει — i θείον — thium

More rarely ε — e ζειόν — zea

ευ — eu ευ — eu

ι — he ἐλιχύρος — helichrysum

Greek Z, ζ (zeta) Latin Z, z

ζύγον — zygum

Greek H, η (eta) Latin E, ē

ηο — eri

Greek nouns ending in η are feminine. When transliterated they

were placed in the first Latin declension, usually the ending -e

was used, sometimes -a.

δάφνη — daphnē

χαίτη — chaeta

ἡ — he ἡλιος — helius

Greek Θ, θ (theta) Latin Th, th

θάμνος — thammus

Greek I, ι (iota) Latin I, i

ιον — ium

ι — hi ἱππός — hippus

Greek Κ, κ (kappa) Latin C, c

κάλαμος — calamus

The Greek κ is sometimes incorrectly transliterated as k.

κινήτος — cinetus

Greek Λ, λ (lambda) Latin L, l

λευκός — leucus

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Greek $M, \mu$ (mu) Latin $M, m$

Greek $N, \nu$ (nu) Latin $N, n$

Greek $E, \xi$ (xi) Latin $X, x$

Greek $O, \omicron$ (omicron) Latin $O, o$

$\delta$, $\omicron$ — omphalus
In Greek, $\delta$ is the last letter of two diphthongs.

$\omicron$ — oe $\delta$ — oenus
$\omicron$ — u $\omicron$ — pus

In the Greek, final $-ov$ usually indicates a neuter noun or adjective. When such words were transliterated they were placed in the second Latin declension, usually with the ending $-um$, occasionally $-on$.

Greek $P, \rho$ (rho) Latin $R, r$

Greek $T, \tau$ (tau) Latin $T, t$

Greek $Y, \upsilon$ (upsilon) Latin $Y, y$

Greek $\Phi, \phi$ (phi) Latin $Ph, ph$

In a few Latin transliterations there is an alternative $\phi$ — $f$
as $\phi$ — $f$

The Greek $\upsilon$ is the second letter of three diphthongs.

$\upsilon$ — $uv$ $\upsilon$ — $uv$ $\upsilon$ — $uv$

In composition, when the second component begins with $\upsilon$ and the preceding component ends in a vowel, the $\upsilon$ is doubled, and the second retains the spiritus asper, $\upsilon$ — $rrh$, as in

$\upsilon$ — $uv$ $\upsilon$ — $uv$

$\upsilon$ — $uv$ $\upsilon$ — $uv$

$\upsilon$ — $uv$ $\upsilon$ — $uv$

$\upsilon$ — $uv$ $\upsilon$ — $uv$

$\upsilon$ — $uv$ $\upsilon$ — $uv$

$\upsilon$ — $uv$ $\upsilon$ — $uv$

$\upsilon$ — $uv$ $\upsilon$ — $uv$

$\upsilon$ — $uv$ $\upsilon$ — $uv$

$\upsilon$ — $uv$ $\upsilon$ — $uv$

$\upsilon$ — $uv$ $\upsilon$ — $uv$

$\upsilon$ — $uv$ $\upsilon$ — $uv$
**Family Names**

*Proposal no. 6 submitted to the Paris Congress*

by

**ANTONIO PONCE DE LEÓN Y AYMÉ and MARIA TERESA ALVAREZ (La Habana)**

Ampliación del Art. 28 del Código Internacional de Nomenclatura Botánica.

Considerando que el Código Internacional de Nomenclatura Botánica debe dar las normas precisas para la formación de los nombres que se establezcan de acuerdo con las reglas:

Considerando que, no obstante el precepto general establecido para dar nombres a las familias, debido a contingencias inherentes al lenguaje, se hace necesaria cierta flexibilidad, dentro de la norma general formulada, lo que debe estar previsto para que las denominaciones de estos importantes taxas conserven la uniformidad requerida.

Vistas las irregularidades que se observan en la estructura de muchos de estos nombres, inclusive en los recomendados como *Nomina conservanda* en la última edición del Código.

Y dada la conveniencia de ir sustituyendo los nombres no integrados de acuerdo con las normas del Código que aún se usan por aquellos que estén formados siguiendo sus reglas formulamos la siguiente:

**Proposición**

Que sea ampliado y modificado el Art. 28 del Código (Sección 4, subsección 3), el cual deberá quedar redactado de la manera siguiente:

**Art. 28**

El nombre de una familia es un adjetivo en plural, usado como sustantivo, formado del nombre del género tipo de la familia con la terminación *aceae*.

A este efecto, se considerará, en general, como parte radical en el nombre genérico utilizado, toda la porción anterior a la última vocal de su sílaba final.

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**Proposal**

Amplification of Art. 28 of the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature.

- WHEREAS, the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature should be the accepted standard for forming names:

WHEREAS, it is important that general classifications remain within the framework of accepted botanical terms and that provision be made to insure uniformity, nevertheless, because of inherent language difficulties, a certain flexibility with regard to family names should be allowed.

WHEREAS, certain irregularities in the structure of many botanical names exist, even in those recommended as *Nomina conservanda* in the last edition of the Code.

AND WHEREAS, it is advisable to consider the adoption of terms which have become correct through usage, although they are not in strict accordance with procedures set up in the Code: WE, THEREFORE, submit the following (recommendation) (resolution):

**Art. 28**

The family name is to be an adjective in the plural form, ending in *aceae*, used as a noun, and is to be formed from the name of the type genus.

In general, the root of the generic name used is to be considered as that portion of the word preceding the final vowel.