(133–151) Proposals to clarify certain cases of authorship of names

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DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.12705/651.24

When sorting out the nomenclature of Sorbus (Rosaceae) for the forthcoming volume of Atlas Florae Europaeae, we faced significant difficulties in determining authorships of plant names that resulted from ambiguous or inadequate wording of certain articles and the absence of relevant provisions in some other cases. This contribution aims to provide technical corrections and complementing notes and examples to existing rules.

(133) Amend Art. 36.1 as follows (new text in bold):

“36.1. A name is not validly published: (a) when it is not accepted by the author of the name (see Art. 46) in the original publication (Art. 46.6); (b) when it is merely proposed in anticipation of the future acceptance of the taxon concerned, or of a particular circumscription, position, or rank of the taxon (so-called provisional name); (c) when it is merely cited as a synonym; or (d) by the mere mention of the subordinate taxa included in the taxon concerned. Art. 36.1(a) does not apply to names published with a question mark or other indication of taxonomic doubt, yet accepted by their author.”

This addition reflects the fact that it is the author of the nomenclatural novelty that is implied by this rule. By this clarification and references it would be easier to consider the effect of Art. 46 when determining whether a name was validly published or not, because acceptance of a name, to be considered under Art. 36.1, depends directly on the authorship of the name which is determined under Art. 46. The intimate connection of these Articles is sometimes overlooked, and the direct reference might be useful here.

(134) Add a new Note under Art. 46.1 as follows:

“Note 0. An author citation, typically placed next to a name, may function as attribution (Art. 46.2 and 46.5) or ascertainment (Art. 46.3) of a name to a certain author (or authors), or may serve as an indirect reference to the basionym or replaced synonym (Art. 38.14 and Art. 46.4). In certain cases an author citation may appear as an error (Art. 46.3 and 46.4).”

Stated authorship of a name may have a variety of meanings under the Code. As guidance to the users, we propose to articulate these options explicitly in an introductory note. The new Art. 46.3 Note 4 is the subject of Prop. 139 below.

(135) Amend the second sentence of Art. 46.2 and revise Ex. 7 as follows (deleted text in strikethrough, new text in bold):

“A new combination, name at new rank, or replacement name is attributed to the author(s) to whom it was ascribed when, in the publication in which it appears, it is explicitly stated that the same author(s) contributed in some a relevant way to that publication.”

“Ex. 7. Green (1985) ascribed the new combination Neotysonia phyllostegia to Wilson and elsewhere in the same publication acknowledged his assistance for “nomenclatural advice”. The name is therefore cited as N. phyllostegia (F. Muell.) Paul. G. Wilson.”

In this context the word “some” is too ambiguous and cannot be used in practice. The word “relevant” is more specific and narrows the meaning by the requirement that a contribution of another author should be expressed in a way that is applicable to the case.

To reflect this change, Ex. 7 is slightly reworded to become more specific in arguments.

(136) Delete Ex. 6 under Art. 46.2.

This example is not unambiguous. There is a full stop between the family name and the text next to it in the quoted reference, “Elaeocarpaceae. Juss., Ann. Mus. 11, p. 233”, and this may mean that the family name is technically unassigned and the name of Jussieu is part of the full bibliographic reference provided by Candolle. We suggest deleting this example and treating the name as not ascribed and therefore cited as Elaeocarpaceae Juss. ex DC. or Elaeocarpaceae DC., not Elaeocarpaceae “Juss.”

(137) Amend Art. 46.4 with Ex. 24 as follows (deleted text in strikethrough, new text in bold), move amended Ex. 19, and add three new Examples:

“46.4. When the epithet of a validly published name or its final epithet is taken up from and attributed credited to the author of a different binary designation or one at a different rank that has not been validly published, only the author of the validly published name may be cited.”

“Ex. 24. When publishing Andropogon drummondii, Steudel (1854) attributed credited the name to “Nees. (mpt. sub: Sorghum.)”. This reference to the unpublished binary designation “Sorghum drummondii Nees” is not ascription of A. drummondii to Nees, and the name is cited as A. drummondii Steud., not A. drummondii “Nees ex Steud.”

“Ex. [19]. Following their description of Hosackia [unranked] Drepanolobus, Torrey & Gray (Fl. N. Amer. 1: 324. 1838) attributed credited the name as “Drepanolobus, Nutt.” This reference to Nuttall’s unpublished generic designation is not ascription of Hosackia [unranked] Drepanolobus to Nuttall, but it is considered a formal error because Torrey and Gray (on p. 322) stated that they disagreed with Nuttall’s view that Drepanolobus formed a distinct genus. The name is cited as Hosackia [unranked] Drepanolobus Torr. & A. Gray.”

“Ex. 24bis. Reichenbach (1828) based the new generic name Anoplon on the description of “Orobanche tribus Anoplon”, which was not validly published by Wallroth (Orobanches Gen. Diask.: 25 & 66. 1825) under Art. 376. The resulting name should be cited as Anoplon Rchb., not Anoplon “Wallr. ex Rchb.”

“Ex. 24ter. Tzvelev (in Novosti Sist. Vyssh. Rast. 31: 73. 1998) validly published Batracium subsect. Pelata, which he credited to “V. Krezcz. ex Tzvel.” In this name he used the final epithet from
“Batrachium ser. Peltata V. Krecz.” (in Komarov, Fl. SSSR 7: 349. 1937), a designation that has not been validly published because it was not accompanied with a description or diagnosis in Latin. As the ranks of the validly published name and the original designation were different, the new name cannot be attributed to Kreczetovicz.”

“Ex. 24quater. Don (in Sweet, Hort. Brit., ed. 3: 636. 1839) validly published subtribe Pleurothalidinae G. Don (as “Pleurothaleae”) with a reference to “Section I. Pleurothallae” of Lindley (Gen. Sp. Orchid. Pl.: 3. 1830), whose rank was denoted by a misplaced term (contrary to Art. 37.6). Since Lindley and Don used different rank-denoting terms, Lindley’s name cannot be cited in the authorship.”

We propose to change “attributed” to “credited” in Art. 46.4 and Ex. 19 and 24 in order to avoid conflict with Art. 46.2, which suggests that attribution is the authorship of a name that is treated as correct under the rules. A note on formal error in Ex. 19 is deleted as unnecessary. The present Ex. 19 is not really fitting Art. 46.3 but is rather dealing with epithets taken up from invalidly published designations. It belongs to Art. 46.4 and should be moved to that place.

The effect of Prop. 092 (Nakada & Nagamasu in Taxon 64: 1066. 2015) is incorporated into this text, expanding the effect of that proposal also to the ranks of genus and above. This change completely removes the unnecessary restriction in the present wording of Art. 46.4, to regulate the authorship of not only combinations but also uninnomials (generic and possibly suprageneric names).

One new example is borrowed from the analysis of the nomenclature of some Orobancheaeae by Nicolson (in Taxon 24: 651–657. 1975) who used this practice long before it was explicitly formulated in the rules. The other new example represents a situation where the invalidly published designation whose epithet was taken up is the same combination but at a rank different from that of the validly published name. The third new example represents a case of suprageneric names.

(138) Amend Art. 46.3 as follows (deleted text in strikethrough, new text in bold):

“46.3. For the purposes of Art. 46, ascription is the direct association of the name of a person or persons with a new name or description or diagnosis of a taxon. An author citation appearing in a list of synonyms does not constitute ascription of the accepted name, nor does a mere reference to a basionym or a replaced synonym (regardless of bibliographic accuracy) or a mere reference to a basionym or a replaced synonym reference also or a formal error (see also Art. 46.4).”

See the explanation under Prop. 139 below. The concept of formal errors was invented for Ex. 19, which is more explicitly covered by Art. 46.4 now (Prop. 137), and is replaced by a reference here.

(139) Add a new Note with two new Examples after Art. 46.3:

“Note 3bis. An author citation may simultaneously serve as ascription and as an indirect reference to the basionym or replaced synonym when the provisions of Art. 46.2 (second sentence) apply and a potential basionym or replaced synonym exists.”

“Ex. 23bis. The name Hieracium pratense f. dimorphum “Norrl.” was published in the article authored by Vainio in Meddeleland. Soc. Fauna Fl. Finn. 3: 65. 1878) without a description or diagnosis of the taxon. Since Vainio stated that Norrlin provided Hieracium names for his study and the basionym H. dimorphum Norrl. (in Not. Sällsk. Fauna Fl. Finn. Förh. 11: 132. 1870) exists, the new combination is therefore attributed to Norrlin and is cited as H. pratense f. dimorphum (Norrl.) Norrl.”

“Ex. 23ter. When Prodan (Fl. Román. 1: 553. 1923) published Sorbus danubialis “Jáv.”, he stated in the introduction to this work that he used an unpublished manuscript written by Jávorka but made no statement that Jávorka provided new plant names. Since Sorbus cretica f. danubialis Jáv. (in Bot. Közlem. 14: 104. 1915) is a potential basionym applying to the same taxon, the indication of “Jáv.” is to be treated as an indirect reference to a basionym, not also as ascription, and the name is therefore cited as S. danubialis (Jáv.) Prodan.”

This auxiliary clarification, together with the word “mere” added to Art. 46.3 (Prop. 138 above), resolves situations when a name is ascribed to an author who is acknowledged for having contributed to the protologue and at the same time an applicable basionym or replaced synonym by the same author exists. If a reference to the basionym or replaced synonym is indirect, it cannot be distinguished from ascription when Art. 46.2 (second sentence) is applicable. In such cases, the strict wording of Art. 46.3 (“nor does reference to a basionym or a replaced synonym”) appears to be contradictory to the conditions of Art. 46.2 (second sentence) because it precludes treating an indirect basionym or replaced synonym reference also as an ascription in those cases when parenthetical authors have not been used.

(140) Amend Art. 46.3 as follows (deleted text in strikethrough, new text in bold, the effect of Prop. 138 in square brackets), and add a new Example:

“46.3. For the purposes of Art. 46, ascription is the direct association of the name of a person or persons with a new name or description or diagnosis of a taxon. An author citation appearing in a list of synonyms does not constitute ascription of the accepted name, nor does if it [merely] serves as reference to a basionym or a replaced synonym (regardless of bibliographic accuracy) or reference to a homonym; or a formal error (see also Art. 46.4).”

“Ex. 1bis. Willdenow (Sp. Pl. 3: 1845. 1803) ascribed the name Artemisia siversiana Ehrh. ex Wild., commemorating Johann Sievers, to Ehrlhart by citing “Artemisia siversiana. Ehrh.” in synonymy.”

The deleted provision is redundant if the unpublished designation, which appeared in synonymy of a new name, is different from the new name (Art. 46.4). If the unpublished designation is the same as the new name, this provision is difficult to apply because in many older books authorship and place of original publication are not indicated directly next to the plant name but under the same name in synonymy. Not accepting such author citations as ascription is contrary to common practice.

(141) Move the second sentence of Ex. 13 under Art. 46.3 into a new Example under Art. 46.8, rewritten as follows:

“Ex. 38bis. Malpighia emarginata Moc. & Sessé ex DC. (Prodr. l. 578. 1824) was published as “M. emarginata (fl. mex. ic. ined.)’. Elsewhere in the same publication Candolle (l.c.: 70) referred to the same unpublished work as “Sessé et Moç. fl. mex. ic. ined.” which constitutes the direct association (Art. 46.3) of the names of Sessé and Moçibo also with the new name M. emarginata, following internal evidence in the publication of Candolle as a whole (Art. 46.8).”

Since a publication as a whole should be examined in order to establish the correct author citation (Art. 46.8), we propose to change the current Ex. 13 because of the other evidence found on other pages of the same publication. The revised example may be better placed under Art. 46.8, to which it is most closely relevant.
(142) Amend Art. 46.4 as follows (new text in bold, the effect of Prop. 137 in square brackets) and add a new Example:

“46.4. When [the epithet of] a validly published name [or its final epithet] is taken up from and [attributed credited to] the author of a different [binary] designation [or one at a different rank] that has not been validly published (orthographic corrections being disregarded), only the author of the validly published name may be cited.”

“Ex. 24quiniques. Pietrosia levitomentosa Nyár. was validly published by Sennikov (in Komarova l: 78, 1999) who took up and corrected the designation “P. levitomentosa” (Nyárády in Rev. Biol. (Bucharest) 8: 252. 1963) that was not validly published. This correction of the original spelling does not make the validly published name different from the original designation, and the new name should be attributed to Nyárády to whom the name and validating description were ascribed by Sennikov.”

It would be good to cover also the cases when designations not validly published were validated with minor alterations in spelling. In analogy with the provisions of Art. 61.1, insignificant difference in variants may be allowed and the original authorship may therefore be retained.

The example illustrating the effect of this provision is borrowed from Euro+Med PlantBase (http://ww2.bgbm.org/EuroPlusMed/PTaxonDetail.asp?NameId=7530715&PTRefFk=7000000).

(143) Amend Ex. 9 under Art. 46.2 as follows (new text in bold, deleted text in strikethrough) and move it under Art. 46.6:

“Ex. [9]. The name and original description of Verrucaria aethiobola Wahlenb. (in Acharius, Methodus, Suppl.: 17. 1803) was published in a single paragraph attributed to whose authorship was stated as “Wahlenb. Msc.” Since Wahlenberg is the author of the text of that paragraph, the name is therefore cited as V. aethiobola Wahlenb., not “Wahlenb. ex Ach.” nor “Wahlenb. in Ach.” (unless a full bibliographic citation is given), regardless of the other description of the same taxon provided at the same time by Acharius.”

This change is proposed to make it clear that the authorship in this Example is determined by the authorship of the relevant text rather than by ascription, because the name itself was not directly ascribed in that publication neither to Wahlenberg nor to Acharius. We believe that this Example is more relevant to Art. 46.6, to which it should be moved.

(144) Move the amended Ex. 12 (new text in bold, deleted text in strikethrough) from Art. 46.3 to Art. 46.6:

“Ex. [12]. The name Atropa sideroxyloides was published in Roemer & Schultes (Syst. Veg. 4: 686. 1819), with the name and diagnosis in a single paragraph followed by “Relih. Wild. MS.” As this represents direct indication of Willdenow with as the author of the text including both the name and the diagnosis, the name is cited as A. sideroxyloides Willd., not A. sideroxyloides “Roem. & Schult.” nor A. sideroxyloides “Willd. ex Roem. & Schult.””

This example should be better treated as a text of one author published in the work of the other author. Besides, the name was not explicitly ascribed to anybody in the text (the authorship of the new name is inferred from the authorship of the publication).

(145) Add a new Example under Art. 46.5:


The “ex” citation is sometimes misused when a previously used designation was subsequently validly published by the same author. Nevertheless, Art. 46.5 is quite explicit that “ex” citations are applicable only if the ascribed authorship is different from the authorship of the protologue. A new Example is proposed to bring attention to such cases.

(146) Amend Art. 46.8 (new text in bold) and move the revised Ex. 16 under it:

“46.8. In determining the correct author citation, only internal evidence in the publication as a whole (as defined in Art. 37.5) where the name was validly published is to be accepted, including ascription of the name, direct or indirect references to effectively published works, statements in the introduction, title, or acknowledgements, and typographical or stylistic distinctions in the text (but see Art. 46.9).”


This provision is practically self-evident because, for Art. 46.3 to apply, the meaning of a stated authorship of a name is to be found by evaluation of external sources that are referred to in the protologue. It may be ascription if it is not a reference to a basionym or replaced synonym (except for the rare cases when it may cover both options), and in order to determine that a possible basionym or replaced synonym is already validly published one should consult external sources. Nevertheless, adding this mention is desirable because of the strict wording of Art. 46.8 ("only internal evidence … is to be accepted").

The use of internal vs. external evidence has much been debated also in the context of Art. 46. Using unpublished sources as manuscripts and notes in collections would have been too impractical to resolve minor questions of correct ascription, whereas the use of published external sources is needed to distinguish between ascription and indirect reference. This means that in any case someone is already required to consult available published sources in order to be sure that a stated authorship is not a reference to the basionym or replaced synonym. As no extra work or any new condition is implied here, we propose to formalize this practice in the wording of this amended paragraph.

The current Ex. 16, reworded as proposed, is probably more at home under this revised paragraph. Wilson’s statement “if ever generically separated we propose the name of Dickelodontium” (l.c.) does not unequivocally associate (Art. 46.2) the designation Dickelodontium with any other author; as evident from the narrative style in other comments of this work, Wilson consistently employed this first-person plural as pluralis modestiae, typically of scientific
writing of his time, rather than in indication of the number of persons involved. Considering this argument, the designation may be treated as unascribed and Art. 46 Note 3 applies to determine its ascription (alternatively, it may be treated as ascribed to Wilson himself).

(147) Amend Art. 46.10 as follows (new text in bold):
“46.10. Authors publishing nomenclatural novelties and wishing other persons’ names followed by “ex” to precede theirs in authorship citation may adopt the “ex” citation in the protologue. The “ex” citation has no standing, even if it appears in the protologue, when Art. 46.2 or Art. 46.4 apply.”

This limitation is needed because of the effect of Art. 46.2 or 46.4. The example relevant to Art. 46.2 (Ex. 21) is already in the Code.

(148) Add a new entry to Glossary:
“attribution. Citation of the authorship of a name that is determined by the provisions of Art. 46.”

Ascription may be the authorship as stated in the protologue, whereas attribution is the authorship as accepted under the rules. This is in accord with the wording of most of the Articles and Examples, with a few occasional exceptions as dealt with in the present contribution.

(149) Amend Ex. 2 under Art. 6.3 Note 2 as follows (deleted text in strikethrough, new text in bold):
“Ex. 2. In publishing “Canarium pimela Leenh. nom. nov.”, Leenhouts (in Blumea 9: 406. 1959) re-used the illegitimate C. pimela K. D. Koenig (1805), attributing it to himself and basing it on the same type. He thereby created a later isonym without nomenclatural status.”

(150) Amend Rec. 23A.3(i) as follows (deleted text in strikethrough, new text in bold):
“Not adopt epithets from unpublished names found in correspondence, travellers’ notes, herbarium labels, or similar sources, attributing crediting them to their authors, unless these authors have approved publication (see Rec. 50G).”

In both cases the wording is not intended for attribution as determined by Art. 46.2 and 46.5.

(151) Add a new Note after Art. 48.1, with a new Example:
“Note 2bis. An incorrect attribution of a name, including implications that a potential basionym or replaced synonym exists, without explicit exclusion of the type of that name does not constitute valid publication of a later homonym.”

“Ex. 3bis. Ruta perforata M. Bieb. (1800) and Haplophyllum perforatum Kar. & Kir. (1841) are treated as heterotypic names referable to the same species. When citing “H. perforatum (M. Bieb.) Kar. & Kir.”, Vvedensky (1949) is not considered to have created a later homonym, H. perforatum “(M. Bieb.) Vved. non Kar. & Kir.” because he did not explicitly exclude the type of Haplophyllum perforatum Kar. & Kir.”

Linczevski (in Novosti Sist. Vyssh. Rast. [5]: 159–163. 1968) interpreted that Vvedensky (in Shishkin & Bobrov, Fl. SSSR 14: 226. 1949), by citing “Haplophyllum perforatum (M. Bieb.) Kar. & Kir.”, created a later homonym, H. perforatum “(M. Bieb.) Vved. (1949) non Kar. & Kir.” This is an unnecessary and inconvenient complication of nomenclature, because in every such case the “later homonyms”, necessarily illegitimate, will be only useless additions to synonymy.

Acknowledgements
This text has resulted from activities within the project Atlas Florae Europaeae (Botanical Museum, Finnish Museum of Natural History, University of Helsinki). We are grateful to Arto Kurtto (Helsinki) for his continued support and encouragement. Teuvo Ahti (Helsinki) is thanked for the example of Cortinarius balteatotomentosus. Critical comments and suggestions of Nicholas Turland (Berlin) and John Wiersema (Beltsville) greatly improved the text.