Two proposals to amend the Code concerning type designation

Yun-Fei Deng

Key Laboratory of Plant Resources Conservation and Sustainable Utilization, South China Botanical Garden, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Guangzhou, 510650, People’s Republic of China; yfdeng@scbg.ac.cn

DOI http://dx.doi.org/10.12705/653.28

Isotypes of a name usually consist of several duplicates that were cited or not cited by the author(s) of the name. Both cited and uncited isotypes are original material, and they can be candidates in lectotype designation when the holotype is lost or destroyed. Art. 9.12 of the Melbourne Code (McNeill & al. in Regnum Veg. 154. 2012) states the precedence of different kinds of types and other original material that must be followed in lectotype designation. It does not distinguish between a cited isotype and an uncited isotype, and it implies that a syntype (which is necessarily cited; Art. 9.5) has equal precedence to an isosyntype (duplicate of a syntype, which is necessarily uncited, otherwise it would be a syntype). In practice, a cited isotype or a syntype has usually been seen by the author(s) of a name, whereas an uncited isotype or an isosyntype may not have been seen by the author(s) of a name. Recommendation 9A.1 recommends that lectotypification should only be carried out with an understanding of the author’s method of working. Therefore, I think that a cited isotype or a syntype should have precedence over an uncited isotype or an isosyntype in lectotype designation, i.e. in Art. 9.12. Because Art. 9.12
is retroactive, it seems that such a change to the Code would make an unknown number of existing lectotypifications ineffective. However, selecting an isotype as the lectotype is only carried out when the holotype has been lost or destroyed, and such cases are relatively rare. As far as I know, few authors have selected an isosyntype as the lectotype when syntype exists, and I believe that such cases are relatively rare too. On the other hand, I think that it should not be encouraged to select a lectotype from material possibly not seen by the author(s) of a name. I therefore propose the following amendments to Art. 9.12.

(246) Reword Art. 9.12 as follows:

“9.12. In lectotype designation, the following precedence applies: an cited isotype or a syntype must be chosen if such exists; otherwise an uncited isotype or an isosyntype (duplicate of a syntype) must be chosen if such exists; otherwise a paratype must be chosen if such exists; otherwise the lectotype must be chosen from among the uncited specimens and cited and uncited illustrations that comprise the remaining original material, if such exist.”

(247) Add a new Example following Art. 8.2:

“Ex. Ibis. The holotype of Asparagus kansusensis F. T. Wang & Tang ex S. C. Chen (1978), Hao 416 (PE00034519), is part of a gathering of a single species made at one time. It consists of a staminate branch and a pistillate branch, i.e. parts of two organisms (the species is dioecious), mounted on a single herbarium sheet.”

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Nicholas Turland (B) for his valuable comments on the proposals and refining the manuscript. This work was supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (grant nos. 31270247, 31470302).