

Some Arcane Metrics from the Crypt

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In the 1970s, the fungal nomenclature community entertained the idea that instead of 1821 and 1801 (then stipulated in the ICBN), names of fungi should start with 1753 (Linnaeus's *Species Plantarum*, first edition). Up to that time, searches for names NOT adopted in the "starting point volumes" (Fries's *Systema Mycologicum + Elenchus Fungorum* and Persoon's *Synopsis Methodica Fungorum*) dealt with the earliest post-starting point introduction or adoption of the name. Such searches were considered cumbersome, tedious, unsatisfying and potentially inaccurate.

Conversely, if the "starting point" was pushed back to Linnaeus, some half-century (or more) of literature became revealed as possible/probable sources for names. To show the state of the system then in use, Petersen (1975, 1976a, b, 1977a) attempted to trace the fungal names appearing in 1821 publications to their sources in pre-Friesian literature. The only pre-starting point literature cited was that which led to names appearing in starting date literature. Pre-starting point literature NOT leading to names in starting-point volumes was not cited nor searched. Later, the change of starting point also prompted Pfister et al. (1990) to carefully summarize the mycological literature from 1753 to 1821. The result of the deliberations was the present-day Art. 13 of the Code, with Jan. 1, 1753, as starting point for fungi.

Additionally, several of the pre-Friesian "founding fathers" unabashedly replaced existing names from previous authors with names they preferred. These "replacement names," which now would be considered *nomina superflua*, were observed in the works of J.C. Schaeffer (Petersen, 1976c), Bolton (Petersen, 1977b), Bulliard (Petersen, 1977c), Fries (Petersen, 1983a), and Sowerby (Petersen, 1983b) but surely occurred in other publications.

It must be stated that the Thesaurus of Lindau and Sydow (1909a, b, 1913, 1915, 1917) surely includes some additional pre-Friesian literature, but a careful search of that series was too daunting and was not attempted. The publications by Otto Kuntze (1891, 1893, 1898; Zanoni, 1980), who campaigned for a 1735 starting date for all plants (inclusive of fungi; Linnaeus's first edition of *Systema Naturae*) at the time when the very concept of a starting point was gestating, were not only discounted but suppressed by the botanical community.

In this context, I became curious to know what mycological literature was available to Fries (and less so to Persoon) versus what literature the 1821 mycologists actually used to procure fungal names. Having had some experience with Friesian and pre-Friesian literature (Petersen & Knudsen, 2015) and "data-bases" of fungal names (Petersen & Hawksworth, 2017), I was drawn to the volume by Pfister et al. (1990). In my series on names in 1821 publications, pre-starting point literature included 146

publications, of which about 120 were cited as name-bringing sources by the starting point authors.

The Pfister et al. (1990) bibliography presents a paragon of fastidious searching and citation. Crude metrics indicate pre-Friesian contributions by 296 authors, but many of these authors published more than a single work. A very crude average (but based on a page-by-page examination) of three publications per author (actually ranging from 1-24) reveals the available pre-Friesian literature at approximately 888 publications. Of course, not all these sources were available in libraries, whether institutional and/or personal, in the time of Persoon and Fries, but both these authors overtly drew protracted attention to some of the more comprehensive sources in their introductions, in addition to the abbreviated reference to the authors of each adopted name and its synonyms.

In addition, more arcane and perhaps whimsical conclusions can be harvested from the examination of Pfister et al. (1990). For instance, Johan (with variants of Johann, Johannes, John) is the most common given name. Only one female (Catherina Helena Dörrien) can be identified (but see also Maroske & May, 2018). Alphabetically, B leads the list with 36 authors, then S (with 32), L (24), W (22) and M (20), with most other letters trailing in single digits. Conspicuously absent are I, X and Y. Latin, the language of the elite and of science, leads as the most employed language, but German is also quite common. French, Swedish and English trail. Papers in journals are less numerous (but journals themselves were not yet widespread) than free-standing, independent contributions, perhaps reflective of a profit motive. Rather few pre-Friesian publications were exclusively mycological; most were more comprehensive botanical works including fungi in the tradition of Linnaeus. A crude match of authors in Pfister et al (1990) to entries in Taxonomic Literature II shows that most pre-Friesian authors were associated with institutions, almost always a university.

Not available to the 18- and 19- century mycological authors were data-bases (but occasional indices furnished a list of the names employed; see especially Steudel, 1824 and Kummer, 1871), search engines, Index Fungorum, JStor, Genbank and other “modern” conveniences. For the electronically literate, today’s search for fungus names has been made somewhat less painful. We live in interesting times.

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