Phlomis Russeliana

BY

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Most species belonging to *Phlomis* subsection *Dendrophlomis* (*P. fruticosa* L., the Jerusalem Sage, is the best known) are shrubby plants and are not quite hardy in Britain except in those parts where a mild winter is the general rule, or in unusually sheltered situations. *Phlomis Russeliana* is, however, a perennial herb ; a hemicryptophyte which dies down to ground level during the winter months. It is the northernmost species of *Dendrophlomis*, coming from the high lands of northern Asia Minor, and is completely hardy in the British Isles. In habit of growth it serves to link *Dendrophlomis* with *Oxyphlomis*.

Phlomis Russeliana is a handsome plant with thick whorls of yellow flowers ; its leaves are somewhat harsh on the upper surface but have a dense covering of soft stellate hairs below. Under the name *P. lunarifolia* Sibth. et Sm. var. *Russeliana* Sims it was illustrated in Curtis's Botanical Magazine as long ago as 1825 (tab. 2542). Even at that time Sims doubted if this plant could really be placed under *P. lunarifolia*, since that species had been described as having ovate bracts whereas in *P. Russeliana* he observed they were linear. Sims must be given credit for noticing a difference which has since proved of sufficient importance to divide the whole subsection *Dendrophlomis* into two series, *Angustibracteatae* and *Latibracteatae* ; *P. Russeliana* is placed in the former series, *P. lunarifolia* in the latter (see Vierhapper in Osterreich Botanische Zeitschrift, 1915, 213, 225 *).

The true *P. lunarifolia* (which is a native of Cyprus), seems never to have been in cultivation in this country. The plant illustrated under this name in Curtis's Botanical Magazine (tab. 7699) is *P. grandiflora* H. S. Thompson (see Annals of Botany, xix, 441 : 1905).

The name *P. lunarifolia* var. *Russeliana* Sims originally comprised two distinct elements. First, there was the plant actually described and illustrated in the Botanical Magazine : secondly, there was a synonym quoted, *P. Russeliana* Lagasca MSS, an unpublished name based on the *Phlomis orientalis angusto et longiore folio flore luteo* of Russell's Natural History of Aleppo (ed. 1, 47, tab. 8 : 1756 ;=*P. Herba-venti Linn. fortasse var. floribus luteis* of ed. 2, ii, 269, tab. 16 : 1794). It was in the same sense that Bentham raised the variety to specific rank (Bentham, Labiatae, 269 : 1833).

It has since become apparent, however, that the two components belong to different species, and Vierhapper has restricted the name *P. Russeliana* (Sims) Benth. to the plant actually figured and described in the Botanical Magazine. In doing this he was perfectly justified, although it results in the apparent anomaly that the plant which now bears Russell's name was entirely unknown to him. Nevertheless a few details of Russell's life may not be out of place.

* In studying Vierhapper's work the conclusion has been reached that two of the species proposed by him are untenable. *P. bailanica* Vierh. cannot be separated from *P. longifolia* Boiss. & Bl., while *P. amanica* Vierh. appears to be no more than a seasonal form (with fruits and new young leaves) of *P. chrysophylla* Boiss.

Alexander Russell was born in the early part of the eighteenth century (1715 ?). At Edinburgh University he was one of the founders of the Students Medical Society (1734), and was a colleague of John Fothergill, who became a famous physician and whose interest in botany is commemorated in the genus *Fothergilla*. In 1740 Russell went as medico to the English trading community at Aleppo and remained there until 1753. During these thirteen years he acquired a good knowledge of Arabic and collected a rich store of notes on the local natural history, human, animal and vegetable. He is credited with introducing *Arbutus Andrachne* to British gardens. His particular study, however, was of the epidemics of plague which occurred during his sojourn, and when he left Aleppo he spent two years on the journey back to London, stopping on the way at Naples and Leghorn, in order to supplement his knowledge of the fearful disease.*

Russell was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1756, and his Natural History of Aleppo was published in the same year. The original intention had been to write only an account of the plague, and the remainder was rather hurriedly put together from his copious notes. His brother, Patrick Russell, who had succeeded him at Aleppo, felt that this haste had permitted scant justice to be done to the materials available and, Alexander having died in 1768, he published an enlarged and revised edition of the Natural History in 1794.

From the botanical point of view the interest of the second edition is that Patrick Russell persuaded Banks and Solander to try to collate the multi-verbal plant names of the first edition with Linnaean binomials.†

Their identification of *Phlomis orientalis angusto et longiore folio flore luteo* as a yellow-flowered variety of the pink *P. herba-venti* Linn. was one of their less successful efforts. Russell's plant had not been named at that time, but is undoubtedly conspecific with that which Poiret later described, from a specimen cultivated at Paris, as *P. viscosa*.

It is as *P. viscosa* that *P. Russeliana* has often been cultivated and the reason will be clear from the foregoing remarks. Russell's plant is *P. viscosa*. It is not, however, *P. Russeliana* which is typified by the Botanical Magazine illustration (tab. 2542) published as *P. lunarifolia* var. *Russeliana*, and is the herbaceous plant of northern Asia Minor, as already pointed out. True *P. viscosa* is a subshrub found in Syria and northern Palestine: it is not in cultivation in this country and would certainly not be hardy.

The spelling of the specific names in this note has caused some difficulty. Sims wrote "*Russeliana*," and clearly did so deliberately, for the word occurs four times in his article: Russell's name also occurs several times, always correctly spelt. Bentham wrote "*Russelliana*" without comment. Latinization of English proper names leaves considerable scope for personal fancy. If Sims thought the best latin form for Russell was Russelius he cannot be condemned as incorrect.

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* See *Dr. John Fothergill and his Friends*, by Dr. Hingston Fox, London, 1919. For further information on Alexander Russell and his brother Patrick Russell see *Fellows of the Royal Society in North Africa and the Levant*, 1662–1800, by R. P. Stearns in Notes & Records of the Royal Society of London, xi, 75–90 (1954).

† See *Neglected Syrian Plants of Banks and Solander*, by A. Eig in Journal of Botany, LXXV, 185 (1937).

Sibthorp & Smith wrote "*lunarifolia*" and this was retained by Sims, but most recent authors, including Stapf in Index Londinensis, have "*lunariifolia*." The course now to be followed in forming a Latin word for Lunaria-leaved is fairly clearly laid down, at least for botanical practitioners (see International Code of Botanical Nomenclature, Art. 81 & Rec. 81 H: Utrecht, 1952). The root of the word is *Lunari-* and the second *i* is added as a connecting vowel. On the other hand contraction of "*lunariifolia*" to "*lunarifolia*" was probably the normal practice of many classical scholars at the time the name was proposed; it cannot be regarded as an error.

In the circumstances the original forms of these names, *lunarifolia* and *Russeliana*, are retained.

PHLOMIS RUSSELIANA (Sims) Benth. Labiatae, 269 (1833); Vierhapper in Osterr. Bot. Zeitschr. 1915, 218.

Syn.: *P. lunarifolia* Sibth. & Sm. var. *Russeliana* Sims in Curtis, Bot. Mag. tab. 2542 (1825).

P. viscosa auctt.; Chittenden in R.H.S. Dict. Gard. iii, 1550 (1951) —non Poiret in Lam. Encycl. Méth. v, 271 (1804).

Asia Minor. In Olympo Bithynio, 1844, Noe (K). Bithynia, Brussa, in dumosis inferioris montis Olympi (Keschisch dagh), 300 m., 27 May 1899, Bornmuller 5468 (K, E). Ala dagh (C. 32° E, 40° 41′ N), Wiedemann 393 (K). Paphlagonia, Wald, nordl. Safranboli, (32° 45′ E, 41° 10′ N), 1500 m., 18 July 1933, Kotte 1209 (K). Vilayet Kastambuli, Tossia (32° E, 41° N), Karadere—Devrendi, in herbidis 9 July 1892, Sintenis 4564 (K). Amasia (36° E, 40° 45′ N), Ak dag, 22 July 1892, Manisadjan 150 (K). Amasia in umbrosis silvaticis regionis montanae Abadsihe dagh, 1400 m., 16 July 1889, Bornmuller 657 (K).