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The Correct Name of *Asteriscus hierichunticus* (*Asteraceae-Inuleae*), a 'False Rose of Jericho'

By

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Key words: *Asteriscus hierichunticus*, *Asteraceae*, *Compositae*; *Anastatica hierochuntica*, *Brassicaceae*, *Cruciferae*. – Ethnobotany, False and True Rose of Jericho. – Nomenclature.

Summary

TEPPNER H. 1995. The correct name of *Asteriscus hierichunticus* (*Asteraceae-Inuleae*), a 'False Rose of Jericho'. – *Phyton* (Horn, Austria) 35 (1): 79–82. – English with German summary.

The correct name for one of the 'False Roses of Jericho' is *Asteriscus hierichunticus* (MICHON) WIKLUND, *Nordic J. Bot.* 5: 307 (1985). The correct basionym is *Saulcya hierichuntica* MICHON, *Solution nouv. Quest. Lieux saints* p. 100 (1852). The 'True Rose of Jericho' as a symbol for the resurrection is *Anastatica hierochuntica* L. (*Brassicaceae*); two sources for this proposition, an Aegyptian mummy from the 4th century A.D. and the book of CORDUS 1534 are discussed.

Zusammenfassung

TEPPNER H. 1995. Der korrekte Name von *Asteriscus hierichunticus* (*Asteraceae-Inuleae*), einer Falschen Rose von Jericho. – *Phyton* (Horn, Austria) 35 (1): 79–82. – Englisch mit deutscher Zusammenfassung.

Der korrekte Name für eine der Falschen Rosen von Jericho lautet *Asteriscus hierichunticus* (MICHON) WIKLUND, *Nordic J. Bot.* 5: 307 (1985). Das korrekte Basionym dazu ist *Saulcya hierichuntica* MICHON, *Solution nouv. Quest. Lieux saints* p. 100 (1852). Die Echte Rose von Jericho als Symbol der Auferstehung ist *Anastatica hierochuntia* L. (*Brassicaceae*); zwei Quellen für diese Aussage, eine ägyptische Mumie aus dem 4. Jh. n. Chr. und ein Buch von CORDUS 1534 werden diskutiert.

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During the studies on '*Asteriscus hierochunticus* (MICHON) WIKLUND' (TEPPNER 1993) it turned out that this name can't be completely correct for various reasons.

1) WIKLUND 1985:307 quotes MICHON 1854 but according to the title-page and the Catalogue général (Vol. 114: 731; 1933) of the French National Library in Paris the book was published in 1853. And I haven't got any contrary evidences.

2) The orthography in the combination of WIKLUND is doubtful because STEINBRINCK & SCHINZ 1908: 497 quoted it from SAULCY 1853: 82 as '*Saulcya hierichuntica*'.

3) The combination *Asteriscus pygmaeus* (DC.) COSSON & DURIEU wasn't first applied in COSSON 1855: 284 but was validly published already 1853 in a printed scheda in the exsiccata Pl. d'Algérie edited by Benedict BALANSA (* Narbonne 1825, † Hanoi 1891; see BARNHART 1965: 110).

It appears that the two possible names at the species level were indeed published in the same year (1853)! I almost resigned because I didn't see any chance to clarify the priority according to the documents I had at hand. Then by the use of LAURENT DE SAINT-AIGNAN 1877:361 and the Catalogue général (114:730; 1933) of the French National Library in Paris I was able to detect a book of MICHON which was already published in 1852; it has not been considered by botanists up till now. Due to the courtesy of the libraries and colleagues it was possible to receive all necessary basic references. Based on these evidences the synonymy has to be put like this:

Asteriscus hierichunticus (MICHON) WIKLUND, Nordic J. Bot. 5:307 (1985).

Basionym: *Saulcya hierichuntica* MICHON, Solution nouvelle Question Lieux saints, p. 100 (1852).

Asteriscus aquaticus (L.) LESS. var. *pygmaeus* DC. Prodr. 7:287 (1838).

Asteriscus pygmaeus (DC.) COSSON & DURIEU in BALANSA, Pl. d'Algérie 793 (1853).

Odontospermum pygmaeum (DC.) HOFFMANN in ENGLER & PRANTL, natürl. Pflanzenfam. 4(5):209 (1890).

The lectotype for both basionyms was choosen by WIKLUND 1985:307.

Regarding the orthography it remains to remark that the title of MICHON's excursus about the Rose of Jéricho (p. 97-107) on p. 97 reads as follows 'Notice sur la véritable Rose de Jéricho (*Saulcya hérichuntica*.)' It is evident from the text and from the other works of MICHON that '*hérichuntica*' is only a French version of the name in the title; the epitheton in the scientific name is '*hierichuntica*' in all passages.

MICHON 1852, 1853 and SAULCY 1853 were of the opinion – contrary to all views so far – that not *Anastatica hierochuntica* L. (*Brassicaceae*) but *Asteriscus hierichunticus* should be the 'True Rose of Jericho'; this interpretation can be found even in modern botanical literature, but it is clearly

wrong (compare the very involved discussion of SCHINZ in STEINBRINCK & SCHINZ 1908: 495-500 as well as the sources mentioned in TEPPNER 1993).

The oldest evidence of *Anastatica* as a symbol of the resurrection was supplied by an early Christian Aegyptian mummy from the fourth century A.D. who was holding a plant of *Anastatica* in her hands (GAYET 1902: 48-49); because of the determination of the plant material of those excavations by a botanist (BONNET 1902:315, 318-319; see also GERMER 1985:50) there is no doubt possible about the correctness. Unfortunately GAYET named his mummy 'Thaïs of Antinoë' which led to confusions with the historical Thaïs [an Athenian hetaira who was living under the followers of Alexander the Great; she became the mistress (or wife) of Ptolemy I; fourth century B.C. (ELLIS 1994: 4, 8, 9, 15, 84, 87)].

The oldest reference in a printed book is found in the Botanologicon of CORDUS 1534, in which 'Hierichuntis rosa' is discussed of some length. Among others one can read on page 19: 'MEG[OBACCHVS]. Hierichuntida rosam? COR[DUS]. Sic appellat, unde sumpto nomine ignoro. Hanc cucullati hic hypocritae superstitiosae plebeculae quotannis, ipsa scilicet Christiani natalis nocte, quasi sacrum spectaculum, adeoque miraculum nuper exhibuerunt. Quod tum ea sponte sua se aperire & ramulos suos exporrigere crederetur, cum tamen id semper faciat, quando madefit ...'

[MEGOBACCHUS: Rose of Jericho ? CORDUS: So it is named, the origin of the name I don't know. Showmen in monk's habits demonstrated this in the last time to the superstitious and low people, surely especially in the night of the birth of Christus, as a religious spectacle, well indeed as a miracle. One should probably believe about it that it will open and stretch out her branchlets at that time on its own, while it will still do it everytime, if it is wettened.]

'... ramulos suos exporrigere ...' points doubtless to *Anastatica hierichuntica*.

For the biography of Euricius CORDUS, a very important man in the Renaissance period, see e.g. SALOMON 1962.

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