

In search of relevant protologue for *Bombax ceiba* L.

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Abstract

The present paper deals with the correct identity and typification of American **element** of *Bombax ceiba* L.. A protologue for lectotype is designated based on the original drawing of this species which had been used by Linnaeus in his second edition of *Species Plantarum*.

Keywords: *Bombax ceiba* L., American, Lectotype, protologue

Linnaeus named *Bombax ceiba* in 1753 in his book “*Species Plantarum*” (1: 511. 1753) and he included its synonyms from both New as well as Old World and quoted its distribution as “India Utraque”.

Recently, we designated the lectotype for “Moul – elavou” from *Hortus Malabaricus* of Van Rheede. (3: 61. t. 52, 1682) which Linnaeus has cited in his *Species Plantarum* (511. 1753) (Lectotype: Roxburgh’s herbarium sheet number K000357884 deposited at K) and this plant is correctly identified as *Salmalia rubra* (Buch.- Ham.) S. Dutta & P. Harvey (in Almeida M.R. , “*Book on Konkani names of Plants*” 339. 2007), the basionym for this being Buchanan Hamilton’s *Gossampinus rubra* Buch.–Ham. (Trans Linn. Soc., London 15: 128. 1827).

In this paper we are trying to typify the American element of *Bombax ceiba* L.

The genus *Bombax* L. is typified on *B. ceiba* L. The specific epithet ‘*ceiba*’ is of American origin (SAY-buh). Therefore, Andrew Robyns and his successors were not only incorrect in accepting the Moul- elavou as type protologue for *Bombax ceiba* L. but they were in clear violation in following the origin of the name *B. ceiba* L. In our conclusion, *Bombax ceiba* L. is the name to be applied for the American material for which we have now gathered the following evidence.

There is one original coloured plate deposited at British Museum drawn by Lady Ann Manson. This plate bears an inscription of Latin name “*B. ceiba* Linn. Spec. 939”. (Dept: Prints and Drawings, Registration No. 1897.0505. 123).

The curator’s comment on this plate (which is attached to it) states that it is an exotic plant commonly known today as Simul or Silk Cotton Tree. This was introduced from South America during late seventeenth Century.

Art. 7.4 & 37.4 (Vienna code 2006) states that the type of a name of a new species or infraspecific taxon may be an illustration prior to January 01, 2007, on or after which date the type must be a specimen.

Our understanding from Literature survey is that *B. ceiba* has palmately compound leaves with crenate margin (Pluk. 172) and flowers with red petals which are united at the base, stamens in two rows , polyadelphous (Willdenow 731. 1800).

We believe from our search through the herbarium and personal communication with Dr. K. N. Gandhi (Harvard University) that there is no original specimen designated by the original author (Linnaeus) as type for the American element of *B. ceiba* L. Hence a new lectotype can be designated for this species.

We find that there are three herbarium specimens (No.- 000558138, 000558139 & 000558140) deposited at Natural History museum, London, which are cited from *Hortus Cliffortianus*. Specimen number 000558138 & 000558140 are represented by single leaf and the specimen number 000558139 is a seedling (Fig. 1). But the leaf morphology of this specimen (Palmately compound leaf with crenate margin) resembles the description of this species mentioned in the literature (Hort. Cliff. 75). However, this is only a seedling. One cannot rely totally on it for correct identification of a species.



Fig. 1: Hort. Cliff. 75, Specimen no. 000558139)

More searches for the original available herbarium specimen is necessary to designate a proper lectotype of this species.

Art. 9.2 states that a lectotype is a specimen or illustration designated from the original material as the nomenclatural type, in conformity with article 9.9 & 9.10, if no Holotype was indicated at the time of publication, or it is missing or it is found belongs to more than one taxa.

We designate the original plate (British Museum, Dept: Prints and Drawings, Registration No. 1897.0505. 123) which is used by Linnaeus himself for his *Species Plantarum*, ed. 2 (959. 1763) as the only relevant protologue for type for the American element of *Bombax ceiba* L. (Fig. 2).

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Fig. 2: The Only relevant protologue for the type of *Bombax ceiba* L.

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