

Publication of the combination *Spergularia diandra* (Caryophyllaceae): discovery of an earlier indelible autographic label

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The name *Spergularia diandra*, representing a plant native to the Mediterranean region of Europe and Africa eastward to central Asia and introduced sparingly to North America, was validly published via an autographic label distributed in 1851, predating other commonly seen citations of this combination.

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While working on the treatment of *Spergularia* (Caryophyllaceae) for the *Flora of China* (Dequan & Rabeler, 2001), I discovered that the following citations were commonly used for *Spergularia diandra*:

Spergularia diandra (Guss.) Boiss., *Fl. Orient* 1: 733 (1867).

Spergularia diandra (Guss.) Heldreich & Sartori in Heldr., *Herb. Graec. Norm.*, n° 492 (1855).

The Boissier citation is a published volume while the other citation is an indelible autograph some twelve years earlier. In order to determine the correct citation for *Spergularia diandra*, the following questions must be addressed: was the label of *Herbarium Graecum Normale 492* indeed autographic and were there any other collections by Heldreich with indelible autographic labels that predate 492?

Publication via indelible autograph is detailed in Article 30 of the *ICBN* (Greuter & al., 2000). It is defined as “handwritten material reproduced by some mechanical or graphic process” (Art. 30.2) and is effectively published prior to 1 January 1953 (Art. 30.1). One problem with dealing with an autographic collection is establishing the date of distribution; publication is effective “only by distribution of printed matter” (*ICBN*, Art. 29.1, Greuter & al., 2000). When I asked S. Snogerup about the Heldreich collections, he noted the problem as he replied: “I have preferred not to regard Heldreich’s distributions as possible to date and forming valid publication of names or combinations”.

An inspection of *Herbarium Graecum Normale 492* (K) confirmed the label was autographic, answering the first question. While that specimen was collected in 1855, the date of distribution of that 1855 collection is not given. I have also seen three other specimens distributed under *HGN492* (CAS, WU(2)) which were collected later: in 1862, 1877, and 1879.

A search for earlier Heldreich collections was conducted and only a few were located, most with handwrit-

ten labels that were not mechanically reproduced. Included among them was one 1848 collection of *No. 1728* (G-BOISS) that was mentioned on the *HGN 492* label; it also was “just” handwritten. R. K. Brummitt located a specimen of *Bourgeau 1318* (K), an April 1851 collection from Spain citing the name as “*SPERGULARIA DIANDRA* Heldr. exsicc.”; the label was printed and probably was distributed in 1852, prior to *HGN492* even being collected; the specimen was stamped “*Herbarium Benthamianum 1854*”.

Subsequently, an 1848 Heldreich collection that was judged to be autographic was located. Collected in Athens in March of 1848, and distributed as “D. Heldreich pl. Atticae”, three identical examples were located (FI(2), L). The name is written as “*Spergularia diandra* Heldr. mss.”, with “*Alsine* ----- Guss.” appearing directly beneath. Gussone published *Alsine diandra* (Guss.) Guss. (*Fl. Sic. Syn* 1: 501. 1842) complete with a description, but cited his earlier name *Arenaria diandra* Guss. (*Fl. Sic. Prodr.* 1: 515. 1829) in synonymy. Thus *Alsine diandra* is really a combination and not the basionym of *Spergularia diandra*.

Heldreich’s erroneous citation of the basionym does not invalidate the proposed combination; Art. 33.4 states that such an “error in citation of the basionym” does not invalidate the publication of a new combination. It can be treated as an “error to be corrected” under Art. 33.6 and 33.6 (c) where “an intended new combination would otherwise be validly published as a ... nomen novum”.

In this case, I have been able to establish the distribution of at least one of the sheets. Along the bottom of the label on one of the two FI sheets is a note not in Heldreich’s hand: “Da Heldreich, in Magg 1851” (“From Heldreich, in May 1851”). G. Padovani (FI) noted that this “indicates the date of receipt in the Herbarium Universitatis Florentinae”.

This label also meets the requirements for valid publication outlined in Art. 32 (Greuter & al., 2000): it is

effectively published (Arts. 29–31), is of correct form (Arts. 16–27), is accompanied by “a reference to previously and effectively published description or diagnosis” [*Alsine diandra* (Gussone) Gussone], and complies with the provisions of applicable portions of Arts. 33–45. Since the combination is made prior to 1953, the requirement of citing the place of valid publication of the basionym is not applicable (Art. 33.3). Art. 33.2 also states that a presumed new combination (certainly Heldreich’s intention both here and on subsequent labels) without a reference to a basionym is validly published as a combination if it would be otherwise validly published as a new name.

The following citation reflects the earliest autographic collection I have seen:

Spergularia diandra (Gussone) Heldreich, in schedis autogr. Pl. Atticae. a. 1848, s.n. [1851 sec. FI in sched.].

Arenaria diandra Gussone, Fl. Sicul. Prodr. 1: 515. 1827.

This format follows the form suggested by Greuter (1968) for such citations, giving both the date of the collection (1848) and the date it was, at least in one case, distributed (1851).

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