



A note on the type of the name *Rhizobotrya alpina* (Brassicaceae)

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This study is related to the project “The Italian loci classici census”, ongoing since 2010 (Domina *et al.* 2012, Peruzzi *et al.* 2015). During the analysis of systematic and nomenclatural aspects of the species involved, some difficulties related to the identification of type localities have been pointed out. Our contribution has the aim to clarify the nomenclatural history of *Rhizobotrya alpina* Tausch (1836: 34).

History of the name

In ancient literature, systematics and nomenclature of *Rhizobotrya alpina* (Tausch 1836: 34) was a strongly debated topic. In 1833 Francesco Secondo Beggiano (1806–1883), a young physician assistant of Botany at the University of Padua, sent some specimens collected during a field trip on the Vette di Feltre (a place currently located within the National Park of Dolomiti Bellunesi) to Antonio Bertoloni (1775–1868), with a letter asking for “...che si compiacca di determinarmi quella *Draba* che già tempo unitamente ad altre pianticelle ebbi l'onore di gradirle...” (“...please identify the *Draba* I already sent you some time ago...”). The answer of Bertoloni will come only 11 years later, published in *Flora Italica* (Bertoloni 1844).

In the meantime, Tausch (1836) formally described *Rhizobotrya alpina*, with a diagnosis based on a plant (“einen caespes eines sehr kleinen Pflanzchens”) received from Franz Wilhelm Sieber (1789–1844), intermingled with exsiccata of *Draba stellata* Jacq., a species endemic to Austria. Because this tiny plant had compressed fruits, Tausch first included it in his Herbarium as a new species of *Cochlearia* Linnaeus (1753: 647), as he pointed out in the protologue “...für eine neue *Cochlearia* hielt...” (Tausch 1836).

The binomial *Cochlearia brevicaulis* Facchini was published only in 1843 in “Synopsis Florae Germanicae et Helveticae” (Koch 1843), by citing *Rhizobotrya alpina* as a synonym. Hence it is a nomenclaturally superfluous name (Art. 52 of ICN; McNeill *et al.* 2012). A couple of years before, Koch suggested a closer affinity to *Cochlearia* than to *Kerneria* Medicus (1792: 71) (Koch 1841), a third genus under which some early author classified this species (see beyond). Finally, Bertoloni (1844) published a complete and detailed description of this taxon, based on the collections of Beggiano and Facchini. He preferred the name *Cochlearia brevicaulis*, respect with *Rhizobotrya alpina*, because the description of the latter name was not satisfactory for him and partly erroneous (“*Tauschianas hallucinationes*”). Only 11 years later Facchini (1855) published again his own description, in a last tentative to establish a priority for his binomial (“*Restitutionem prioris nominis relinquimus iis...*”).

The most part of past systematists included this species within the genus *Cochlearia* (Schlechtendal & Hallier 1883, Fiori & Paoletti 1896, Fiori 1924), while Prantl (1891), Hegi (1919) and Dalla Torre & Harms (1900–1907) referred it to *Kerneria*, and Dalla Torre & Sarnthein (1909) to the monotypic *Rhizobotrya*. Later Chiarugi (1933) analysed karyology, phytogeography and systematic features of this taxon, in order to clarify the relationships among *Kerneria* and *Rhizobotrya*, validating the autonomy of *Rhizobotrya*, due to its geographic and systematic isolation.

The type of the name

In the protologue, Tausch (1836) referred generically to “Alpe des Kaiserstaates Oestereichs” (“Austrian Alps”) as the locus classicus for *Rhizobotrya alpina*, based on Sieber’s collections (see Introduction). An anonymous editorial footnote to the same paper, given the importance of the discovery (i.e. a new genus), is advising to contact directly Sieber for further details on collection localities. Actually, the unique original herbarium sheet found in the Herbarium Universitatis Carolinae