

1 Clayville, N.Y., Jan. 10 - 1901

Dear Mr. Davenport,

In a letter just rec'd from Cate he says: "Underwood has just written that he has seen Cavanilles' original description of Lectaria, since writing his Genera of Ferns, and that it antedates Aspidium by fully two years. This is entirely independent of any principle of generic types, since he made Lectaria monotypic. x x This was published in 1799 in Annales de l'histoire Naturelle (Mer. de Decembre de 1799) p. 118."

This does not accord with Lectaria as given in Under's Genera. There the date of Lectaria is given as 1801, & the first species is Polypodium phymatodes, followed by P. trifoliatum & others such as P. filix-mas, & P. filix-foemina. That is certainly not monotypic. But suppose that W. is right - & that Lectaria was pub'd the middle of Dec. 1799, with only one species given, & that Polypod. trifoliatum. What can you do? You say that Dr. Christ maintains Aspidium. Do you think that he knew of Lectaria & if so, does he say anything about it?



*Aspidium* seems to have been first pub<sup>d</sup> by Swartz in Schrader's Journal, 1800, Do you think that is the very first mention of the genus in print? At ~~least~~<sup>most</sup> it is only a few months previous to *Lectaria*, not two years. In Swartz' Synopsis, 1806, he gives as synonyms *Polypod.*, *Polystichum*, *Athyrium*, *Lectaria* & *Nephrodium*.

showing that Sw. knew of Cavanilles' genus at that time. Then comes the question, what was Cav's characterization of the genus? Was it anything like Adanson's *Dryopteris*? Description one thing & type another? If Und. is right, the only way that I can see to maintain *Aspidium* is to throw precedence to the winds & stand on the century old use of *Aspid.*

Yes, there is another method, viz. to adopt the 50 years limit of the Germans. Did anybody adopt the use of *Lectaria* within 50 years after its original publication?

I thought it best to let you know of this at once, so that you might act understandingly. At most, it would affect only two species in our flora, viz. *trifoliatum* & *juglandifolium*, for I do not imagine that you intend to adopt Und's *auriculatum*. It would be just as sensible to divide up *trifoliatum* because of the small, heart shaped fronds, which nevertheless bear fruit; & make 2 or 3 species of that.

Sincerely Yours

P. W. Gilberk



Gilbert, Benjamin Davis. 1901. "Gilbert, Benjamin D. Jan. 10, 1901." *George Edward Davenport correspondence*

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