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***Hieracium*: towards a Central European checklist Needs, aims, possibilities**

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In recent years scientific 'Hieraciology' has gained support from a number of workers and institutions, and the notoriously difficult genus seems to envisage new life after a deep faint over decades.

This may stimulate other botanists to commence studies in spite of frustration caused by the difficulties to attain reliable determinations. Apart from naturally given difficulties presented by apomixis often (?) combined with sexuality as well as hybridisation, it is the 'burden' of ZAHN's monumental monograph, which is heavy enough to discourage not only users from getting into a more intimate touch with the numerous hawkweeds of Central Europe.

It is, however, time to try to overcome this unfortunate situation. What we need is an *agreed taxonomical concept* for the genus, which allows to integrate any scientific insight (as poor as it may be) with taxonomic practice. This latter work has two ends: (re-)defining taxa and determining specimens; and it needs focusing at different levels, adapted to different aims and uses.

A *reliable hierarchical system* (even if defective) is necessary for any serious taxonomic work, and it should be followed by any worker, or amended where insufficient – provisions often neglected in our times of fragmented knowledge and research. Otherwise, there will be no integration of new perception and describing taxa will degenerate to individual stamp printing.

Any user should have access to such a system (by definitions, descriptions, keys) at different levels according to his aims, may they be scientific (by the specialist as well as the generalist) or determined by applied practice.

A projection of such a (provisional) system may be a *check-list* if this is not just an alphabetical list of names but includes the frame of hierarchical grouping; it may stimulate further work pointing to omissions, errors, etc., and adding new information.

Such a checklist should make it possible to combine present knowledge with ZAHN's (and his predecessors) heritage. The most important point of the latter seems to me his and (NAEGELI-) PETER's effort of grouping the elementary taxa (whatever taxonomic rank they may be given) into comprehensible, usable and meaningful units. Apart from precise definitions of the former (this may constitute 'an unachieved synthesis'), it is particularly the improvement and re-definition of the latter (may they be called 'Arten', 'Zwischenarten', 'groups' or whatever), which should be an important focus of our taxonomic attention. These taxa will constitute the supporting bones of the skeleton that will have to bear the flesh in form of available und applicable information, and may carry this information for future researchers as well as for other people not intimately connected with the *Hieracia*.

Of course the formal difficulties also linked to ranks, up-to-date nomenclature, etc. will have to be managed with these efforts, but may play a secondary role.