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(262-263) Two Proposals to Incorporate the Term "Iconotype" in the Code

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**(262-263) Two proposals to incorporate the term “iconotype” in the Code**Paul C. Silva<sup>1</sup>

Art. 9.1 states that the type of a name of a species or infraspecific taxon may be an illustration, without stating the circumstances when such a designation is permissible. Art. 9.3 sets forth these circumstances: if it is impossible to preserve a specimen as the type of a name and if a name is without a type specimen. The first provision entered the *Code* at Cambridge (Harms & al., 1935: Art. 18) while the second was added at Stockholm (Lanjouw & al., 1952: Note 2 to Art. 21). Originally, either a description or a figure could serve as type, but descriptions were proscribed at Berlin in 1987.

The first phycologist to designate an illustration as a type seems to have been Fott (1956: expl. fig. 1 on p. 415), who used the term “Ikonotyp” in connection with his new species, *Euglena physeter*. Fott did not explain the term, but the implication is that it was being applied to a figure that serves as type. A corollary implication is either that Fott considered that *Euglena physeter* is impossible to preserve or that the material on which the figure was based was deliberately or inadvertently lost. It is all but certain that Fott was not aware of earlier uses of the term “iconotype”, such as that by Dallas (1928: 213), who defined it as a drawing or photograph of the type.

At the present time the designation of iconotypes is widespread if not universal among taxonomists of phytoflagellates, desmids, and other microalgae lacking hard structures. For thousands of names the protologue includes the designation of an iconotype. Unfortunately, the term “iconotype” has never been defined officially. Some authors have cited both a type specimen and an iconotype for the same taxon, thus defining the term as a picture of the type rather than as the type per se. In such instances, the designated type specimen should prevail over the iconotype. Other authors cover all bases by designating a type collection, a type culture, and an iconotype. Very often, the source of the iconotype is not specified, so that if more than one collection is cited it may not be possible to deduce a type locality. This shortcoming adversely affects taxonomic research since the use of toptype collections to help establish the application of a particular name is a common and well-founded practice.

(262) *In Art. 9.3, add “(iconotype<sup>1</sup>)” to the end of the sentence, with a footnote:*

“<sup>1</sup> An iconotype is an illustration that serves as a holotype or lectotype. It is not an illustration of a holotype or lectotype.”

(263) *Add a new Rec. 9B:*

“9B.3. When an iconotype is designated as the type of the name of a new taxon, the collection data of the illustrated specimen should be given.”

Art. 9.3 of the *Code* has been widely abused as well as misunderstood. Iconotypes have frequently been designated for names of algae that clearly are amenable to permanent preservation.

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It should be understood that the proposed definition of iconotype includes an illustration that is the sole basis of a specific or infraspecific name. Stearn (1957: 129), following a suggestion by Dandy, applied the term "typotype" to the specimen upon which such an illustration was based. This term erroneously implies that a name based solely on an illustration is to be typified by the specimen illustrated even if the author of the name had never seen the specimen. In such a case, the specimen that was illustrated, while helping to fix the application of the name, would not have any official status. Iconotypes that are designated when specimens are impossible to preserve obviously cannot have typotypes.

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