

(2578) Proposal to conserve *Variolaria* Pers. against *Lepra* and *Variolaria* Bull. (lichenized ascomycetes)

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DOI <https://doi.org/10.12705/671.16>

- (2578) *Variolaria* Pers. in Ann. Bot. (Usteri) 7: 23. 1794, nom. cons. prop.
 Typus: *V. discoidea* Pers.
- (=) *Lepra* Scop., Intr. Hist. Nat.: 61. Jan–Apr 1777 (typ. des.: Lanjouw & al. in Regnum Veg. 8: 212. 1956), nom. rej. prop.
- (H) *Variolaria* Bull., Hist. Champ. France: 181. 1791 : Fr., Syst. Mycol. 3, index: 198. 1832, nom. rej. prop.
 Typus: non designatus.

Molecular studies have shown that the large and difficult lichen genus *Pertusaria* DC., nom. cons., needed to be divided into several genera (Lumbsch & Smith in Lichenologist 33: 161–170. 2001). This has led to nomenclatural perturbations which are in need of clarification. A group of species, often informally referred to by the old generic name *Variolaria* published by Persoon (in Ann. Bot. (Usteri) 7: 23. 1794), represents a distinct genus for which Persoon's name would be the perfect choice since it has often been adopted in the past, e.g., by Zahlbruckner (in Cat. Lich. Univ. 9: 580–581. 1934) who listed 50 specific names, as well as numerous varieties, under this generic name. However, it was discovered that there is an older homonym, *Variolaria* Bull. (Hist. Champ. France: 181. 1791), that renders Persoon's name illegitimate. For that reason Kondratyuk & al. (in Stud. Bot. Hung. 46: 103. 2015) coined a new generic name, *Marfloraea*, which was unfortunate since Bulliard's name is not in use because no one knows what it represents. Fries (Syst. Mycol. 3, index: 198. 1832) listed it and hence sanctioned it, but included the eight

original species in five different genera of microfungi for which he adopted other names. Index Fungorum (<http://www.indexfungorum.org/names/NamesRecord.asp?RecordID=22387>) lists it as a dubious name, being only recognised as fungal but otherwise “incertae sedis”. After Fries no one seems to have mentioned Bulliard's name, in contrast to Persoon's, which has been in use, at least at the subgeneric level (see, e.g., Erichsen in Rabenh. Krypt.-Fl., ed. 2, 9 (5,1): 341, 523. 1936), ever since it was described. This is a clear case for conservation of the younger name.

However, Hafellner & Türk (in Stapfia 104: 89–90. 2016) have managed to find another older name for this genus, *Lepra* Scop. (Intr. Hist. Nat.: 61. 1777), and have taken this up and were followed by Lendemer & Harris (in Bryologist 120: 183–190. 2017). This is also unfortunate since *Lepra* has been used for many different leprose lichens, mostly those now in the genus *Lepraria* Ach., nom. cons. (40 listed in Zahlbruckner, l.c.: 328). It would be most unfortunate to revive this name since it was first used by Wiggers (Prim. Fl. Holsat.: 95–97. 1780) for lichens now mainly referred to *Lepraria* and not at all related to those in *Pertusaria* s.l.

Since there is a well-known old name for this genus, it appears best to retain that name and to reject the two older ones. One of them has never been typified and has not been in use for nearly 200 years, whereas the older one has been used for lichens of various genera and it is therefore best to avoid its use so as to prevent more confusion in a critical group.