Special section on Araceae

Introduction

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The five papers in the Araceae special section of this issue of Webbia are noteworthy for authorships which embrace Araceae research stretching back from the present day to the mid-1970s.

Michael Grayum, began work on the Araceae began during a 16 months posting as a resident researcher at Finca La Selva, Costa Rica, between 1978–1980 when he became fascinated by one of the most diverse and taxonomically challenging plant families at the site. An informal checklist of La Selva aroids was published in 1982 (Grayum 1982). After leaving La Selva Mike enrolled as a graduate student University of Massachusetts (Amherst) undertaking a survey of Araceae pollen using scanning-electron microscopy, complemented by an extensive literature review and pioneering the use of cladistic techniques to work out a phylogenetic classification. The resulting 1984 Ph.D. dissertation (Palynology and phylogeny of the Araceae) suggested changes to the prevailing classification of family, most notably, the removal of the genus Acorus (Grayum 1987). The radical new phylogenetic classification was presented at the second international workshop on aroid systematics at Harvard Forest in 1984 and published by in 1990 (Grayum 1990) and followed by a comprehensive survey of pollen morphology (Grayum 1992).

Between 1986 and 1990, while resident in Costa Rica, Grayum undertook botanical exploration in that country, as well as Mexico, Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Jamaica, and Dominica, focusing on Philodendron subgen. Pteromischum with a view to produce a regional revision of that taxon which he had identified as being particularly intractable during residence at La Selva). The revision of Philodendron subgen. Pteromischum was published in 1996 (Grayum 1996). In 2003 based principally on field studies in Costa Rica over a 20-year period (1978–1998), the treatment of Araceae for the Manual de Plantas de Costa Rica (initiated in 1986) was published (Grayum 2003). Since 2003, Grayum has been one of the editors for Manual project, although continuing to undertake field word in Costa Rica and Panamá.

Alistair Hay has been working on the Araceae, particularly in the Malayan region, for more than forty years. He is now retired from the Royal
Peter Boyce has been working on aroids since the early 1980s, initially focussing on the genera of the Mediterranean basin, producing monographs on *Arum* (Boyce 1996), and *Biarum* (Boyce 2008), and since 1987 the aroids of the tropical Asia, in particular SE Asia, concentrating especially on the extraordinarily rich flora of Borneo. Aside from co-authoring *The Genera of Araceae* (Mayo et al. 1997), and floristic accounts for China (Li et al. 2010) and Thailand (Boyce et al. 2012) the main outputs for tropical Asia concern the genera *Epipremnum* (Boyce 1998), *Rhaphidophora* (Boyce 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2001a, 2001b), and *Pothos* (Boyce 2000c; Boyce and Hay 2000), and over 100 papers on the tribes Homalomenae and Schismatoglottideae, including a major reworking of generic boundaries (Low et al. 2018). In recent years he and his co-authors have incorporated Hay’s reinterpretation of reproductive structures as standard.

Wong Sin Yeng began work on Araceae in 2005, publishing her first taxonomic paper the following year. Wong’s taxonomic and phylogenetic outputs have concentrated primarily on the Homalomenae and Schismatoglottideae (Wong et al. 2010, 2013; Low et al. 2018), although her primary foci are the occurrence, morphological adaptations, categories, and evolution of rheophytism in the these tribes (Wong 2013; Boyce and Wong 2019), and the pollination biology for aroids (Hoe et al. 2016, 2018; Low et al. 2016; Chai and Wong 2019), *Tacca* (Chua et al. 2020), and *Scaphochlamys* (Ooi and Wong 2020).

Marco Cedeño-Fonseca recently obtained his Master’s degree from the University of Costa Rica with a thesis on the taxonomy of Monstera (Araceae) in Costa Rica, and is now extending his work to a revision of the genus in Central America with Orlando O. Ortiz and Tom Croat. He has carried out field work not only in Costa Rica but also in Mexico, Panamá and Colombia, and has done work in the herbaria of the Missouri Botanical Garden and New York Botanical garden and other centres in Mexico and the USA where he has also lectured on Monstera taxonomy. Aside from his work on *Monstera* he has published papers on *Anthurium* (Cedeño-Fonseca et al 2019; Hay and Cedeño-Fonseca 2019) and *Dracontium* (Hay and Cedeño-Fonseca 2018).


