

SHORT COMMUNICATION

Rubus opacus Focke ex Bertram (Rosaceae) – nomenclature and typification

A. van de Beek ¹

Key words

Rubus
Rubus opacus
Rubus bertramii

Abstract – Because the publication of *Rubus opacus* Focke in 1875 is invalid, the correct name must be *R. opacus* Focke ex Bertram, published in 1876. Consequently, a type had to be designated for the latter name.

Samenvatting – De publicatie van *Rubus opacus* Focke in 1875 bleek ongeldig omdat een voldoende diagnose ontbreekt. De latere publicatie door Bertram van deze naam in 1876 is wel geldig en het bleek dat deze naam hetzelfde taxon betreft als de *R. opacus* van Focke. Omdat Bertrams publicatie een andere publicatie betreft, moet een nieuw type worden aangewezen.

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Focke published *Rubus opacus* in Alpers' flora of Stade (Alpers 1875: 25). The only information he gives in the protologue (next to a few localities where it was found) is: "Mittelform zwischen *R. plicatus* und *R. affinis*" (Focke 1875). Bertram (1876: 74) used Focke's name again with explicit reference to Focke and provided it with a diagnosis. However, the specimens that Bertram collected, all from Braunschweig (now in Lower Saxony, Germany), and conserved in BREM, belong to a different taxon than Focke's plants. The plants from Braunschweig were described as *R. bertramii* by Braun (1877, nr. 21) and Focke (1877) drew the conclusion that *R. opacus* sensu Bertram was a different taxon from his own *R. opacus*. Recent authors (van de Beek 1974, Weber 1986) tried to save the name *Rubus opacus* Focke by accepting Focke's phrase as a diagnosis. However, this is not tenable in light of ICN art. 38.2, cf. Ex. 4 (Turland et al. 2018). The conclusion seemed inevitable: *Rubus opacus* Focke ex Bertram is an older synonym of *R. bertramii*. The consequence, however, would be that the name of a widely distributed species should be used for an also widely distributed closely related species, which would cause much confusion. Many options for escaping from this consequence were investigated, but without results.

Finally, the solution to this problem turned out to be very simple. All authors focused on Bertram's own material and did not take precise notice of his short description. This diagnosis can only refer to *Rubus opacus* sensu Focke and not to *R. bertramii*. It runs as follows: "Mittelform zwischen *R. plicatus* und *affinis* mit zus. gesetzter Rispe, aufrechten Kr.b., langen Stb.gefassen, und gestielten Seitenblättchen" [intermediate ('middle form') between *R. plicatus* and *affinis*, with compound inflorescence, upward directed petals, long stamens, and petiolulated lateral leaflets]. Though petiolulated lower leaflets can be found with *R. bertramii* as well, they are certainly not so conspicuous (as in *R. opacus* sensu Focke) that they should be mentioned in a short diagnosis. Upward curved petals can only refer to *R. opacus* sensu Focke. Hence, Bertram must either have seen plants belonging to *R. opacus* sensu Focke or he must have got his diagnosis from Focke, who distributed specimens to friends (Focke 1874). Consequently, the type of *R. opacus* Focke ex Bertram must be selected from specimens belonging to Focke's (1875) taxon.

The designation of a lectotype of *Rubus opacus* Focke (1875) by van de Beek (1974), which was narrowed by van de Beek (2014),

¹ Petenbos 8, 3904 BN Veenendaal, the Netherlands;
e-mail for correspondence: beekavd@xs4all.nl

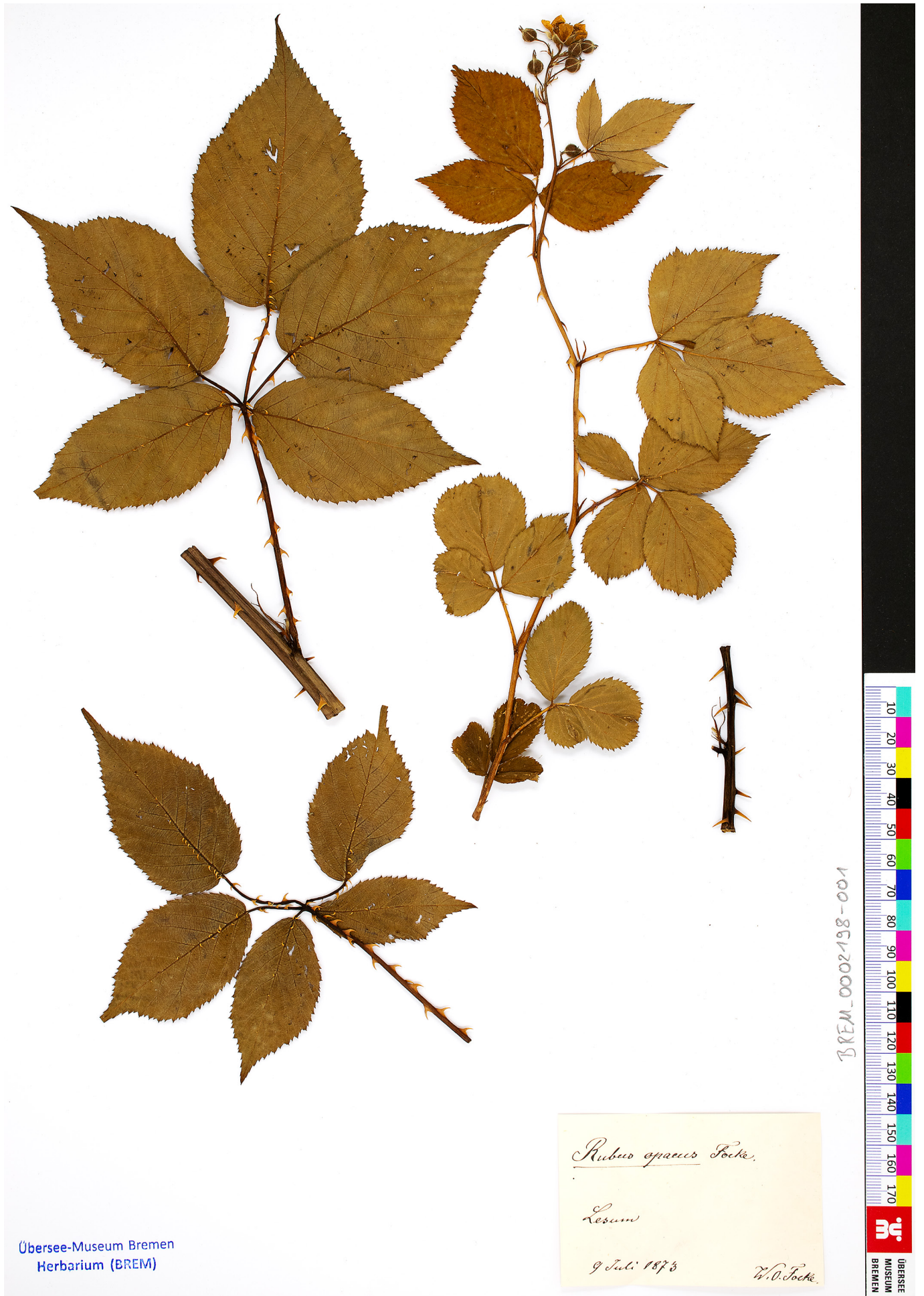


Fig. 1. Neotype of *Rubus opacus* Focke ex Bertram, sheet 1 (BREM [BREM_0002198-001]). Photo: Übersee-Museum Bremen.

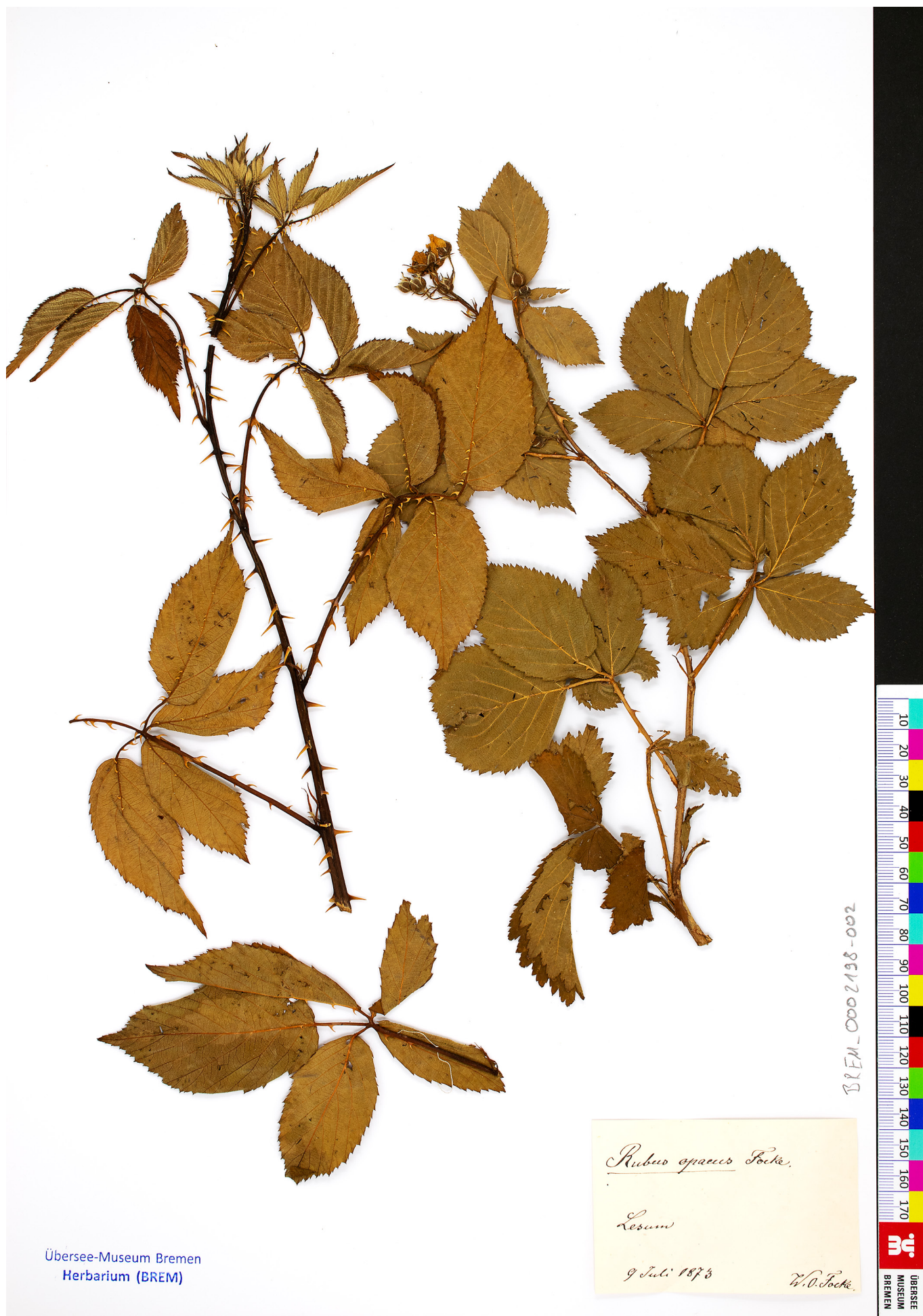


Fig. 2. Neotype of *Rubus opacus* Focke ex Bertram, sheet 2 (BREM [BREM_0002198-002]). Photo: Übersee-Museum Bremen.

is invalid, because the publication itself is invalid, and, consequently, it cannot have a type.

Since no specimen of *Rubus opacus* Focke ex Bertram which was signed by Bertram is available – all his specimens with *R. opacus* written on their label that were found in BREM belong to *R. bertramii* and are consequently in conflict with the protologue –, the type of *R. opacus* Focke ex Bertram must be selected from the specimens corresponding with the protologue that were collected by Focke. It is not advisable to designate the previously (invalidly) selected specimen, i.e. the lectotype of *Rubus opacus* Focke, as the type of *R. opacus* Focke ex Bertram. This specimen is a leaf only, because the parts on the sheets were collected on different dates, which is contrary to ICN art. 8.2, footnote (Turland et al. 2018). Now that a new, and valid, type is required, it is better to choose a complete gathering with leaves and inflorescences. This must be a neotype, of course, because it is not certain that this specimen was seen by Bertram.

Rubus opacus Focke ex Bertram (1876: 74).

Neotype (designated here): “*Rubus opacus* Focke / Lesum / 9 Juli 1873 W.O. Focke” (BREM [BREM_0002198-001] and [BREM_0002198-002]). — Fig. 1 & 2.

Extensive background information and discussions on the nomenclature and typification of this species is provided by van de Beek & Bijlsma (2023).

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