ICTV and the Virology Division News

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Introduction

A recent critique of some aspects of the affairs of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV) \cite{3} suggests that the link between ICTV and the papers that appear in Virology Division News (VDN) concerning virus taxonomy is unclear. This note is intended to clarify this link and also to illustrate how it has operated in the last several years.

Background

The constitution of ICTV stipulates that a primary purpose of ICTV is to communicate the results of its deliberations to virologists at large \cite{5}. Whilst this has been, and is, done by preparation of Reports, for example Murphy et al. \cite{6} and van Regenmortel et al. \cite{9}, there are intervals between Reports when decisions are made and issues are raised that cannot wait for their resolution until the next taxonomic report is published. \textit{Archives of Virology} is the official journal of the Virology Division of the International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS) and ICTV is a committee of the Virology Division of IUMS. Thus ICTV is entitled to use the pages of \textit{Archives of Virology} that are designated for use as “Virology Division News”.

Contents of VDN

In practice, most of the material in VDN is ICTV business and to reflect this one of the ICTV Secretaries acts as the editor of these pages of \textit{Archives of Virology}. Articles report the outcomes of meetings of the Executive Committee of ICTV and of the triennial Plenary Meetings, as well as updates to the Statutes of ICTV and the International Code of Virus Taxonomy and Nomenclature (see Table 1). The Executive Committee recently resolved to increase its efforts to provide virologists with the background to the decisions taken by ICTV. Articles in VDN are the most suitable means of fulfilling this intention; there have been such articles in previous editions (see Table 1) and more are planned.

Dialogue between ICTV and the virology community

VDN has carried papers that have been designed to provoke discussion prior to a decision being taken. It has also carried papers that have contained critical comment on what ICTV
has done. The recent series of papers that have arisen as reaction to changes in the Rules concerning orthographic conventions [1–4, 7, 8] are a clear illustration of this role. Decisions as to how long to sustain a “debate” of this type, and indeed whether or not a particular paper needs an invited response, are taken by the editor.

To illustrate the scope of articles in VDN, Table 1 presents titles of VDN articles from the last 10 years that have been related to taxonomic matters.

**Origins of articles**

Articles have come mainly from within ICTV as they are written by Study Group Chairs or Executive Committee members mainly in order to inform virologists of ICTV decisions.

| Table 1. Publications in *Virology Division News* on taxonomic matters |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| **Viruses of vertebrates**                                    |
| 117, 137–140 The order *Mononegavirales*. (CR Pringle)       |
| 123, 425–449 The family *Herpesviridae*: an update. (B Roizman et al.) |
| 128, 395–396 Genus *Torovirus* assigned to the *Coronaviridae*. (D Cavanagh and MC Horzinek) |
| 129, 363–366 Human herpesvirus-6 strain groups: a nomenclature. (D Ablashi et al.) |
| 134, 216–217 Pestivirus diversity. (MC Horzinek)             |
| 135, 227–237 Revision of the taxonomy of the *Coronavirus*, *Torovirus* and *Arterivirus* genera. (D Cavanagh) |
| 142, 629–633 *Nidovirales*: a new order comprising *Coronaviridae* and *Arteriviridae*. (D Cavanagh) |
| 142, 2321–2326 The order *Mononegavirales* – current status. (CR Pringle) |
| 143, 2433–2503 A proposal for a new (third) genus within the family *Adenoviridae*. (M Benko and B Harrach) |
| 143, 2493–2503 Classification, nomenclature, and database development of hepatitis C virus (HCV) and related viruses: proposals for standardisation. (B Robertson et al.) |
| 144, 835–840 Progress and Controversy in Bornavirus Research: A Meeting Report. (M Schwemmle) |
| **Viruses of plants**                                         |
| 118, 139–141 *Potyviridae*, a proposed family of plant viruses. (OW Barnett) |
| 120, 151–164 A list of proposed standard acronyms for plant viruses and viroids. (R Hull et al.) |
| 131, 483–488 Proposed classification of the bipartite-genomed raspberry bushy dwarf idaeovirus, with tripartite-genomed viruses in the family *Bromoviridae*. (A Ziegler et al.) |
| 132, 221–224 Geminivirus nomenclature: the need to set taxonomic standards. (DE Rochester et al.) |
| 133, 496–498 New families and genera of plant viruses. (MA Mayo and GP Martelli) |
| 134, 451–455 *Trichovirus*, a new genus of plant viruses. (GP Martelli et al.) |
| 139, 231–235 Taxonomy and classification of legume-infesting potyviruses. A proposal from the *Potyviridae* Study Group of the Plant Virus Subcommittee of ICTV. |
| 140, 393–413 Updated ICTV list of names and abbreviations of viruses, viroids, and satellites infecting plants. (CM Fauquet and GP Martelli) |
| 141, 205–206 The potyvirus sequence database: a project of the Potyvirus Working Group of the Plant Virus Subcommittee of ICTV. (P Berger and E Rybicki) |
| 142, 435–439 Proposed reclassification of furoviruses. (LTorrance and MA Mayo) |
| 142, 1285–1287 Proposals for changes in luteovirus taxonomy and nomenclature. (CJ D’Arcy and M Mayo) |
| 142, 1929–1932 *Vitivirus*, a new genus of plant viruses. (GP Martelli et al.) |
| 142, 1933–1936 *Oleavirus*, a new genus in the family *Bromoviridae*. (GP Martelli and F Grieco) |
| 142, 2553–2562 A proposal for naming geminiviruses. (M Padidam et al.) |
| 143, 421–424 A proposal for naming geminiviruses: a reply by the *Geminiviridae* Study Group Chair. (EP Rybicki) |
| 143, 623–629 A proposed scheme for viroid classification and nomenclature. (R Flores et al.) |
| 143, 1245–1249 *Foveavirus*, a new plant virus genus. (GP Martelli and W Jelkmann) |
| 144, 1659–1666 Developments in plant virus taxonomy since publication of the 6th ICTV Report. (MA Mayo) |

*Continued*
Table 1 (continued)

**Viruses of prokaryotes**

| Page | Reference |
|------|-----------|
| 140, 1871–1884 | Relationships of tailed phages: a survey of protein sequence identity. (H-W Ackermann et al.) |
| 143, 1852–1853 | Bacteriophage PM2: Nomenclature revision. (S Merino et al.) |
| 143, 2051–2062 | Taxonomy of bacterial viruses: Establishment of tailed virus genera and the Order Caudovirales. (J Maniloff and H-W Ackermann) |

**Rules and Statutes**

| Page | Reference |
|------|-----------|
| 118, 299–302 | Statutes of the Virology Division of the International Union of Microbiological Societies. |
| 122, 219–222 | Statutes of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses. |
| 141, 1595–1599 | Statutes of the Virology Division of the International Union of Microbiological Societies (as at January 1996). |
| 143, 1035–1040 | The Statutes of the International Committee on Virus Taxonomy (ICTV). |

**Guidance and general information**

| Page | Reference |
|------|-----------|
| 120, 313–314 | The concept of virus species. (MHV van Regenmortel et al.) |
| 126, 351–353 | The ICTVdB project and other initiatives. (CR Pringle) |
| 134, 213–215 | Modifications to the rules for virus nomenclature. (MA Mayo and FA Murphy) |
| 140, 1337–1341 | A listing of virus families and genera with some discriminatory features. (MA Mayo) |
| 141, 2479–2484 | Recent revisions of the rules of virus classification and nomenclature. (MA Mayo) |
| 141, 392–399 | Towards a universal virus database ~ progress in the ICTVDB. (C Buechen-Osmond and M Dallwitz) |
| 142, 1505–1518 | Guidelines to the demarcation of virus species. (M van Regenmortel et al.) |
| 142, 2115–2120 | Revised guidelines for the preparation of family descriptions for the Seventh Report of the International Committee on Virus Taxonomy (ICTV) due to be published in mid-1999. (CM Fauquet and CR Pringle) |
| 142, 1734–1739 | Further progress in ICTVdB, a universal virus database. (C Buechen-Osmond) |
| 143, 1645–1654 | A revised version of the International Code of Virus Classification and Nomenclature. (MA Mayo and MC Horzinek) |
| 144, 1041–1042 | How to write the names of virus species. (MHV Van Regenmortel) |
| 144, 1249–1273 | Abbreviations for plant virus names – 1999. (CM Fauquet and MA Mayo) |
| 144, 2265–2271 | Abbreviations for invertebrate virus species names. (CM Fauquet and CR Pringle) |
| 144, 1865–1880 | Abbreviations for vertebrate virus species names (CM Fauquet and CR Pringle) |
| 145, 197–203 | Abbreviations for bacterial and fungal virus species names. (CM Fauquet and CR Pringle) |
| 145, 1497–1504 | The current composition of ICTV. (MA Mayo and CM Fauquet) |

**Discussion papers**

| Page | Reference |
|------|-----------|
| 140, 1515–1520 | Identification and classification of viruses that have not been propagated. (J Maniloff) |
| 140, 2093–2099 | Sequence analysis and a unifying system of virus taxonomy: consensus via consent. (CH Calisher et al.) |
| 144, 631–636 | Letter to the Editor: The naming of viruses; a call to order. (L Bos) |
| 144, 209–214 | Classification of reverse transcribing elements: A discussion document. (R Hull) |
| 144, 1463–1466 | Editorial – Virus Nomenclature. (CR Pringle) |
| 145, 427–428 | Constructing and writing the names of virus species – an editorial note. (MA Mayo) |
| 145, 429–432 | Structure and typography of virus names. (L Bos) |
| 145, 433–441 | On the relative merits of italics, Latin and binomial nomenclature in virus taxonomy. (MHV van Regenmortel) |
| 145, 1505–1507 | Virus nomenclature descending into chaos. (AJ Gibbs) |

**Reports**

| Page | Reference |
|------|-----------|
| 119, 303–304 | The 20th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the International Committee on Virus Taxonomy. (CR Pringle) |
| 126, 351–353 | The 21st meeting of the Executive Committee of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses. (CR Pringle) |

Continued
### Table 1 (continued)

| Page | Title |
|------|-------|
| 133, 491–495 | Virus taxonomy update. (CR Pringle) |
| 136, 323–325 | Account of the first ICTV Virus Data Sub-Committee workshop on database descriptors, Doorn, January 30th – February 1st, 1994. (MC Horzinek) |
| 138, 406 | A new Study Group of the ICTV. (CH Calisher) |
| 139, 445–448 | Proceedings of the ICTV Executive Committee meeting, Madison 6–8 July, 1994. (CR Pringle) |
| 140, 391–392 | On target: “Virus Taxonomy. Classification and Nomenclature of Viruses – 6th Report of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses” will be published in March 1995 by Springer Verlag, Wien New York. (FA Murphy) |
| 140, 2100–2103 | International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV): activity report. (CR Pringle) |
| 141, 2251–2256 | Virus Taxonomy 1996 – A bulletin from the Xth International Congress of Virology in Jerusalem. (CR Pringle) |
| 142, 1727–1733 | Virus Taxonomy 1997 – Proceedings of the 26th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the ICTV, Strasbourg, France, 10–11th May, 1997. (CR Pringle) |
| 142, 1734–1739 | Further Progress in ICTVdB, a Universal Virus Database. (C Buechen-Osmond) |
| 143, 203–210 | The universal system of virus taxonomy of the International Committee on Virus Taxonomy (ICTV), including new proposals ratified since publication of the Sixth ICTV Report in 1995. (CR Pringle) |
| 143, 1449–1459 | Virus taxonomy – San Diego 1998. (CR Pringle) |
| 144, 421–429 | Virus taxonomy – 1999. (CR Pringle) |
| 144, 2065–2070 | Virus taxonomy at the XIth International Congress of Virology, Sydney, Australia, 1999. (CR Pringle) |

However, this is not exclusively so. Articles may be submitted by anyone at any time to the Editor. These will be considered, possibly with solicited opinions from experts within ICTV. It is important to emphasize that this process does not preclude articles critical of ICTV, as for example those recently by Bos [1, 2] and Gibbs [3]. The key requirement is that what is discussed be relevant to the work of ICTV.

### References

1. Bos L (1999) The naming of viruses: an urgent call to order. Arch Virol 144: 631–636
2. Bos L (2000) Structure and typography of virus names. Arch Virol 145: 429–432
3. Gibbs AJ (2000) Virus nomenclature descending into chaos. Arch Virol 145: 1505–1507
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5. Mayo MA, Pringle CR (1998) Virus taxonomy – 1997. J Gen Virol 79: 649–657
6. Murphy FA, Fauquet CM, Bishop DHL, Ghabrial SA, Jarvis AW, Martelli GP, Mayo MA, Summers MD (eds) (1995) Virus Taxonomy. Classification and Nomenclature of Viruses. Sixth Report of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses. Springer, Wien New York (Arch Virol [Suppl] 10)
7. Pringle CR (1999) Editorial – virus nomenclature. Arch Virol 144: 1463–1466
8. Van Regenmortel MHV (2000) On the relative merits of italics, Latin and binomial nomenclature in virus taxonomy. Arch Virol 145: 433–441
9. Van Regenmortel MHV, Fauquet CM, Bishop DHL, Carstens E, Estes M, Lemon S, Maniloff J, Mayo MA, McGeoch D, Pringle CR, Wickner RB (eds) (2000) Virus Taxonomy. Seventh Report of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses. Academic Press, New York, San Diego

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