Jean-Baptiste Bory de Saint-Vincent (1778 – 1846)

Jean-Baptiste Geneviève Marcellin Bory de Saint-Vincent was born on 6 July 1778 in Agen, South-west France, where his father Geraud Bory was a tobacco entrepreneur. His mother Madeleine Journu was the daughter of a Bordeaux shipping magnate with a long family interest in natural history. As a child Bory collected plants and insects, and through his uncle Auguste Journu he met and corresponded with other naturalists. He was educated at Agen and Bordeaux, and after his father became a fugitive of the French Revolution, his uncle Bernard Journu-Auber became his surrogate father and natural history mentor. His education was interrupted in 1793 when the Terror struck; he took refuge in the Landes, where he studied insects and started a herbarium. In 1794, after the release of surviving imprisoned family members, he resumed his studies and submitted his first scientific publications (on two marine organisms) to the Bordeaux Academy.

In 1799 he joined the French army and was posted to Belle Île off the Brittany coast. In September 1800 at Rennes, the region's capital, he married Anne-Charlotte Delacroix de lá Thebaudais, with whom he had two daughters: Augustine, born in 1801, and Clotilde in 1803. His wife died in 1823, after their separation. Through an influential friend, Bernard Lacépède, a professor at the Museum of Natural History in Paris, Bory was appointed naturalist on the 1800–1804 French Pacific expedition under Nicolas Baudin. In a near mutiny, fifty officers and scientists, including Bory, left the expedition at the Île de France (Mauritius). Bory explored there and in nearby Réunion, collecting natural history specimens and observing the active volcano Piton de la Fournaise ("Peak of the Furnace").

Back in France in July 1802, he rejoined the army as a cartographer and continued his scholarly pursuits, publishing in 1803 a successful two-volume work on his travels. In about 1815 he married comedy artiste Maria Gros, and their daughters Cassilda and Athanagild were born in 1818 and 1823. Bory switched his allegiance according to prevailing political situations and in 1816, after Napoleon's defeat at the Battle of Waterloo, he was banished from France. He lived mostly in hiding, but still collected plants and rocks until 1820 when, pardoned and penniless, he returned to Paris. He worked diligently as a botanist for the next few years and made major contributions to the seventeen-volume *Dictionnaire Classique d'Histoire Naturelle* (1822–1831).

Imprisoned for debt in 1825, he continued to work on the algae, lichens, lycopods and ferns brought back to France by Jules Dumont d'Urville, second in command to Duperrey on the *Coquille's* 1822–1824 voyage around the world. From them he named the seaweed genera *Durvillaea* and *Lessonia*, both found in New Zealand waters. After his daughter's fiancée bailed him out of prison in 1828 he led scientific expeditions to Greece and Algeria, and published his observations. In 1834 he was elected to the Academy of Sciences. He worked hard, lived life to the full and died suddenly in Paris on 22 December 1846.

Machaerina sinclairii, a broad-leaved sedge native to New Zealand (and found also in Malaysia), was described by Hooker in 1853 as *Vincentia anceps*, using the genus name first used by Professor Wenceslaus Boyer of Mauritius in honour of Bory de Saint-Vincent. Later taxonomists included *Vincentia* and other genera previously treated as distinct in *Machaerina,* a genus described by Vahl in 1806.

Machaerina sinclairii

Machaerina (Greek *machàira* 'a dagger', alluding to the shape of the leaves) is a genus of 51 accepted sedge species occurring in tropical America and the Pacific. *Machaerina sinclairii* (formerly *Vincentia anceps)* has fans of broad shiny green pendant leaves up to a metre long. Showy rusty brown flower heads are borne on long stems above the leaf clumps in summer, much of the colour coming from the filaments of the stamens, which elongate and persist after flowering. It is mainly lowland, in the North Island only, in open or shady damp places, often on cliffs with constant water seepage.