CEROPEGIA MAFEKINGENSIS, A NEW COMBINATION

In Flora Capensis 4,1:854 (1908) N. E. Brown described the species *Brachystelma mafekingense*. He based it on a small branch preserved in formalin received from Dr S. Schonland at the Albany Museum, Grahamstown. Dr Schonland, later Professor of Botany, Rhodes University, had received a plant from Mr Graham Green at Mafeking in November 1906 and had divided it between the Albany Museum

collection and the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew. A scrap of material of less than 2 cm high has remained in a capsule for nearly 70 years in the Albany Museum with no record of its distribution other than near Mafeking in the north-western Cape on the border of Botswana.

My work on the genus *Brachystelma* has been disjointed, because it has been a sporadic time filler between many other projects. Nevertheless, from time to time in recent years I have been specially curious to know what relationship *B. mafekingense* has to other species, since from Brown's description it seemed to be an odd man out.

Without this problem in mind, however, the Dinter material of *Brachystelma* in the South African Museum Herbarium, was borrowed from the National Botanic Gardens, Kirstenbosch in 1969. Two dwarf specimens puzzled me particularly at the time, *Dinter* 2701 and an unnumbered one. *Dinter* 2701 from near Grootfontein in South-West Africa had first been named in manuscript by Dinter as *Ceropegia* sp. which he later changed to *Blepharanthera nigra*. The second specimen although manifestly the same species, bears the name *Blepharostelma avasmontanum* Dinter. This was from the Auasberge south of Windhoek. A note on the sheets indicated that P. G. Greenway had examined the specimens in 1924 and had not been able to name them nor was E. P. Phillips prepared to do so when he studied them 1940. Because of my own indecision in classifying them in 1969, no mention of them was made in my article, including Dinter's other specimens, in Bothalia 10,2:373 (1971).

Belatedly in 1974, I became aware of the publication of a species under the name *Ceropegia patriciae* W. Rauh and G. Buchloh in Kakteen und andere Sukkulenten (1964). This species was based on a solitary specimen collected near Hammanskraal some 40 kilometres north of Pretoria on a joint expedition by Dr Rauh and Dave and Patricia Hardy. In spite of the 1600 km odd gap in the distribution records, I had no hesitation in identifying *Dinter* 2701 and its companion as specifically equal to *Ceropegia patriciae*. The recorded distribution of *C. patriciae* from northern and central South-West Africa via the north-eastern Cape to the northern Transvaal is by no means unique. Species such as *Brachystelma dinteri* Schltr.have a very similar recorded distribution pattern.

In 1975 all the material of *Brachystelma* was borrowed from the Albany Museum, Grahamstown. It did not take long to establish that *B. mafekingense* N.E. Br. is conspecific with *Ceropegia patriciae* Rauh & Buchloh, with the former specific epithet taking priority. The question arose into which of the two genera the species should be classified. Both *Brachystelma* and *Ceropegia* embrace a wide range of corolla and corona forms and the relative lengths of the corolla-tube and -lobes are the main distinguishing features. The distinction between the genera is not always clear-cut such as in the present case but, in my opinion, the weight of evidence is in favour of *Ceropegia*, with *C. pygmaea* Schinz being the nearest, yet distant, known relative. This makes it necessary to validate the new combination *Ceropegia mafekingensis*, which is done below. Among the material of the genus *Brachystelma* borrowed in 1975 from the Bolus Herbarium were two specimens collected by Dr F. Z. van der Merwe, Nos 46 and 92. They were sent to the Bolus Herbarium in 1942 from a bushy plain near Zeerust only about 50 km from the type locality of *B. mafekingense*, which they were found to match very closely.

Ceropegia mafekingensis (*N.E. Br.*) *R. A. Dyer* comb. nov. Type: Cape, near Mafeking, *Green* sub GRA 1683 (K, holo.; GRA!).

Brachystelma mafekingense N.E. Br. in Fl. Cap. 4,1: 854 (1908).

Ceropegia patriciae Rauh & Buchloh in Kakteen und andere Sukkulenten 8:151 (1964). Type: Transvaal, near Hammanskraal, *Rauh* 12369 (HEID). *C.* sp. Dinter ms. (No. 2701).

Blepharanthera nigra Dinter ms. (No. 2701).

Blepharostelma avasmontanum Dinter ms. (specimen without number).

Tuber ±8 cm diam., more or less depressed, 0–7 cm below ground, producing one or more annual stems. *Stems* branching from near base and appearing tufted, 1,5–5 cm high, puberulous. *Leaves* tapering into a short petiole or rounded at the base, oblong-lanceolate, spreading, 7–30 mm long, up to 7 mm broad, with margins half folded upwards, ± undulate, puberulous below, glabrous above. *Flowers* in 10–20-flowered umbellate cymes, the last terminal; pedicels 3–8 mm long, puberulous. *Sepals* narrowly lanceolate, 2–4 mm long. *Corolla* 10–12 mm long, divided to more than ½ way; tube 4–6 mm long, 3–3,5 mm diam., obtusely 5-angled, slightly narrowed to the mouth, outside minutely puberulous or papillate on the upper part, maculate with dark purple, glabrous within, yellow and purple punctate; lobes 6–7 mm long, free at tips, connivent at first, becoming slightly spreading, obovate-oblong, ±2 mm broad, auriculate at base, inflexed, acute at apex, margins replicate, minutely puberulous outside, glabrous, verrucose, and blackish on inner surface. *Corona* campanulate at base; outer lobes forming 5 pockets with the outer margin extending into lobules behind the base of the inner corona-lobes; inner corona-lobes arising from within the base of the outer corona, linear, obtuse, 2 mm long, incumbent-erect, much overtopping the staminal column with obtuse connivent tips minutely papillate. *Pollinia* globose-pyriform, ±0,25 mm long, with translucent beaked upper margin, with short, delicate caudicles and small carrier.

CAPE.—2525 (Mafeking): near Mafeking, Nov. 1906, *Green sub GRA 1683* (GRA).

TRANSVAAL.—2526 (Zeerust): bushy plain near Zeerust, *Van der Merwe 46; 92* (BOL). 2528 (Pretoria): Hammanskraal, *Rauh 12369* (HEID).

S.W.A.—1918 (Grootfontein): near Grootfontein *Dinter 2701* (SAM); 2217 (Windhoek) Auasberge, *Dinter* s.n. (SAM).

Two statements in Brown's original description helped to confuse my concept of the species. Firstly, the statement that the flowers were in a terminal, 10–12-flowered umbel and secondly, that the stems were "richly branched from near the base 4–7 cm above the tuber (Schonland)". The flowers are falsely terminal and the 4–7 cm length refers to the depth of the tuber below ground level. The height of the stem above ground of the type was only 1,5–2 cm. Rauh and Buchloh state that the stem may be up to 5 cm long in *C patriciae*, but in the single specimen they cite the tuber was more or less at ground level.

In conclusion, for the historical record, Miss M. Gunn was able to supply the following information about Mr Graham Green, who collected the type material of *C. mafekingensis*. Mr Green was appointed as a clerk in the Cape Colonial Service in 1887. Most of his appointments were in the eastern Cape, including Grahamstown. He was promoted to the post of magistrate of Mafeking in 1903, whence in 1906 he despatched the type material to the Albany Museum in Grahamstown.

I wish to express my appreciation of the loan of the material, which made this investigation possible.

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