

New and Interesting Records of African Plants

by

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AIZOACEAE

A NOTE ON THE IDENTITY OF MESEMBRYANTHEMUM BRACHYPHYLLUM WELW.

In 1873 a paper by Welwitsch on "An undescribed species of *Mesembryanthemum* from the south of Portugal" was published posthumously in *J. Bot.* 11: 289. In an explanatory note the editor, Trimen, said that Welwitsch had been struck by "some remarkable instances of connection between the vegetation of the southern province of Portugal and the Cape of Good Hope, and had selected this new *Mesembryanthemum* (*M. brachyphyllum*) as the most striking example". The paper includes a full description in Latin of the species, together with a tab. and reference to type material.

Berger in his *Mesembrianthemen und Portulacaceen* 292 (1908) included the species in a list of "doubtful and missing species", while Jacobsen in his *Handbook of Succulent Plants* 3: 1268 (1960) mentioned that "it is a very ill-defined species".

Being curious about the identity of this *Mesembryanthemum* growing in Europe, the present author in 1965 wrote to Dr. O. A. Leistner, the Institute's liaison officer at Kew, and asked him to check on the identity of *M. brachyphyllum*. Dr. Leistner replied that the Welwitsch specimen of *M. brachyphyllum* at Kew had been identified by N. E. Brown as *Lampranthus glaucus* (L.) N. E. Br., a Cape species, and that he fully agreed with this determination. It is clear, therefore, that *M. brachyphyllum* must be regarded as a synonym of *L. glaucus*. It is interesting to note that Welwitsch commented that *M. brachyphyllum* was very closely related to *M. glaucum* L. on which *L. glaucus* was based.

It is indeed ironical that the plant from Portugal chosen by Welwitsch to illustrate the similarity between the floras of southern Portugal and the Cape should eventually prove to be a native of the Cape.

The synonymy and literature references can be summarized as follows:—

***Lampranthus glaucus* (L.) N. E. Br.** in *Gard. Chron.* 87: 212 (1930); Bolus in *Fl. Cape Penins.* 385 (1950).

Mesembryanthemum glaucum L., *Sp. Pl.* 486 (1753); Sond. in *Fl. Cape.* 2: 417 (1862). *M. brachyphyllum* Welw. in *J. Bot.* 11: 289, t.136 (1873); Berger, *Mesembrianthemen und Portulacaceen* 292 (1908); Jacobsen, *Handbook of Succulent Plants* 3: 1268 (1960).

It should perhaps be mentioned that *M. brachyphyllum* Pax ex Schltr. & Diels taken up in the *Index Kewensis* is a *nomen nudum* and the species is apparently unrelated to the Welwitsch species. In Schultze's *Aus Namaland und Kalahari*, p. 693 (1907), Schlechter and Diels mention that a Hermann specimen in *Herb. Berlin* was annotated by Pax as *M. brachyphyllum* Pax, but that because this name was antedated by *M. brachyphyllum* Welw., they proposed a new name, *M. paxianum*. No description was provided.