

THE IDENTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF *CEROPEGIA ZEYHERI*

From the time of its first description by Schlechter in 1905 a certain degree of uncertainty has attached to this species. The type material was collected at the Cape by Zeyher about 1830. Schlechter records the locality of origin as "Karoo Gebusch am Groot Rivier (Vaal River) (Zeyher.—Blühend im April-Mei.)"

When N. E. Brown monographed the genus *Ceropegia* for the Flora Capensis 4,1: 818 (1908), he commented that "Dr Schlechter has supposed the Groot Rivier to be synonymous with Vaal River, and has stated that the habitat is in the Transvaal, but this I believe to be an error". Brown, in turn, assumed that the Groot Rivier referred to the Gamtoos River of the Cape, which originates in the Karoo and runs into the sea to the north-east of Jeffrey's Bay. This was the recognized Groot Rivier of the early days of exploration. Brown cited no other specimen than the Zeyher specimen under his distribution records.

In 1913 Brown received a specimen in spirit from S. Schonland in Grahamstown, collected by Mrs. T. V. Paterson near Redhouse on the banks of the Zwartkops River in the district of Uitenhage. Brown described the specimen under the new name of *Ceropegia patersoniae*, distinguishing it from Schlechter's description of *C. zeyheri* by the solitary much longer flowers and the glabrous corolla tube. Schlechter had described the cymes as 2-3-flowered and the corolla-tube puberulous outside.

When H. Huber monographed the genus in Mem. Soc. Brot. 12 (1957) he was faced with the situation that Schlechter's holotype, presumably in the Berlin-Dahlem Herbarium had been destroyed in the 1939-45 war. Huber designated the syntype in the Geneva Herbarium as the type (i.e. lectotype) and, following Brown, recorded the locality as Groot Rivier (Cape). Huber went further: he placed *C. patersoniae* Brown in synonymy under *C. zeyheri* and modified the description by describing the cymes as 1-3-flowered and the outer surface of the corolla as puberulous, rarely glabrous.

Not wishing to disregard Brown's decision to give specific rank to *C. patersoniae*, the lectotype of *C. zeyheri* was borrowed from the Geneva Herbarium in October 1976 by kind permission of the Director (Fig. 9). It must be remembered that Schlechter had described from a shrivelled dry specimen and may not have observed it with the greatest of care. The lectotype now has a single flower and a single bud from separate, nearby internodes and two separate flowers in a capsule. The corolla-tube is glabrous outside and the lobes puberulous outside near the base and on the inner surface of the lobes above, visible from the outside.

One can carry the investigation further: the lectotype of *C. zeyheri* in Geneva has a separate small label on the top left hand side on which the figures 2.9 appear. The publication Linnaea 19: 584 (1847) explains that the 2 refers to the locality of collection and 9 the month. This gives the locality "Uitenhaag, Zwartkopsrivier, Thal und angrenzende Hügel van Villa Paul Mare bis Uitenhaag, 50-500 ft". This seems to clinch the question of locality and synonymy at the same time for the lectotype.

There is still another outstanding query, however. Within the past 20 years several collections of *C. zeyheri* have been received in the fresh state and plants have flowered under cultivation. On first opening, the corolla-lobes have had a small aggregate of clavate vibratile hairs from the inner surface above the short external pubescence, illustrated in Flow. Pl. Afr. 33 t. 1296 (1959). In more mature flowers the clavate hairs are readily caducous and leave no trace. It is conjectured that this was the case with the type material of both *C. zeyheri* and *C. patersoniae* before they were examined by their respective authors.

With eyes for variation, R. & E. Bayliss collected specimens in the Somerset East District which exhibit an appreciable range in robustness and twining. This variability may be related to the availability of climbing support and other environmental factors. The basic structure of the flowers is fairly uniform.

A summary of the present position is as follows:

***Ceropegia zeyheri* Schltr.** in Bot. Jahrb. 38: 48 (1905); N. E. Br. in Fl. Cap. 4,1: 818 (1908); Huber in Mem. Soc. Brot. 12: 139 (1957).

*Ceropegia patersoniae* N. E. Br. in Kew. Bull. 1913: 303 (1913). R. A. Dyer in Flow. Pl. Afr. 33, t. 1296 (1959).

CAPE.—3322 (Oudtshoorn), Schoemanshoek, Oddie fide Huber, l.c.; 3325 (Port Elizabeth); near Uitenhage, karoid scrub, Zeyher; Paterson 210; McEwan PRE50202; 50204; 50205; van Breda 894; Bayliss 1080. 3225 (Somerset East), Commadagga, R. & E. Bayliss 1933; 2475; 3073; 6188; 6190.

The search for distribution records in the Gamtoos River valley, Oudtshoorn District, and further west in the Cape continues.

R. A. DYER

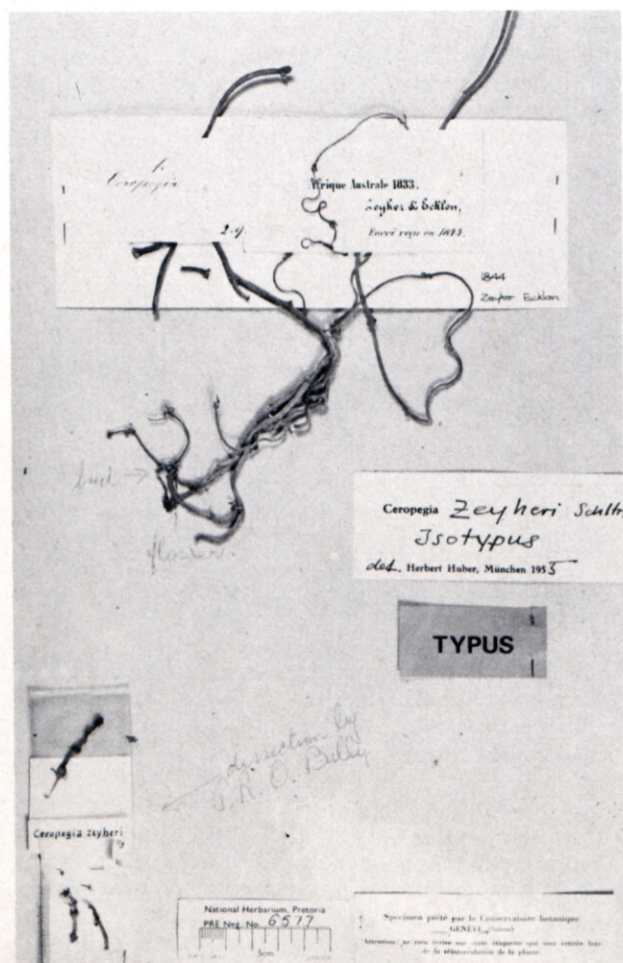


FIG. 9.—Photograph of lectotype of *Ceropegia zeyheri* in Conservatoire Botanique, Geneva, by kind permission of the Director.