

# Notes on African plants

## VARIOUS AUTHORS

### LILIACEAE (ASPHODELACEAE)

#### THE TYPE SPECIMEN OF *ALOE SOUTPANSBERGENSIS*

Verdoorn (1961) cited the type specimen of her new species *Aloe soutpansbergensis* in the protologue as Crundall s.n. in PRE 29005. A diligent search, undertaken in the National Herbarium, Pretoria, in connection with our revision of the southern African species of *Aloe*, failed to reveal a specimen with this number.

A specimen, Crundall s.n. in PRE 27035, was found among the sheets of *A. soutpansbergensis*, however. It was collected in 1942, the year in which Verdoorn stated that her species was discovered, and was marked 'Figured for *Flowering Plants of South Africa*'. One would expect this



FIGURE 1.—The earliest specimen of *Aloe soutpansbergensis* Verdoorn. Evidence is presented in this paper for regarding this specimen as the type.



FIGURE 2.—The plate of *Aloe soutpansbergensis* Verdoorn published in the protologue.

annotation on the missing specimen, as the protologue was published in that journal and, of course, included a coloured illustration. Furthermore, the position of the leaves and flowers on the specimen (Figure 1) closely matches the published plate (Figure 2). Is it possible that by some error the specimen on which the plate was based, was registered twice, but the second number was not attached to the specimen?

The PRE register suggests that this was indeed the case, as the same details are recorded under both no. 27035 and 29005. Complicating the issue is another Crundall specimen of the same species from the same place, registered as no. 37735. This, however, was not figured and seems to be somewhat later than the other two.

We believe that the original painting of the plant holds the key to this puzzle. The outer cover bears the expected

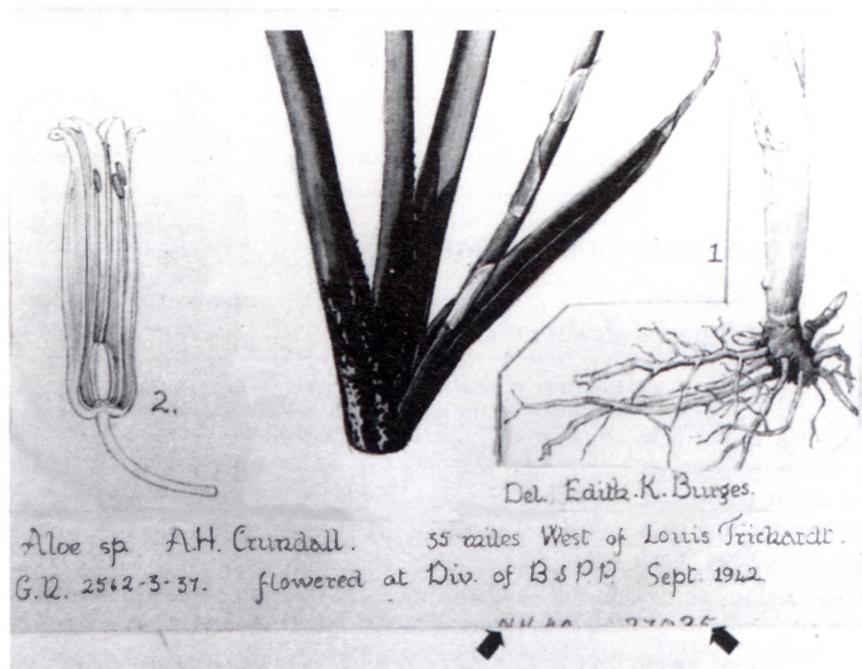


FIGURE 3.—Annotations on the original of Figure 2. The crucial number has been cut through at the bottom (arrowed).

number, 29005 (Figure 4), but at the bottom of the picture itself is a cut-away note which we consider should be interpreted as 'N.H. No. 27035' (Figure 3). Unfortunately, not enough survives of this note for the handwriting to be identified positively.

It seems, therefore, that for some now irretrievable reason, in the almost 20 years between the time the

illustration was made and the plant described, the specimen was entered into the PRE register twice, with one number being marked on the herbarium sheet and the other cited in the protologue. In our opinion, the type specimen of *Aloe soutpansbergensis* Verdoorn is that shown in Figure 1, and its correct citation is:

TYPE.—Transvaal, Zoutpansberg, 1942, A.H. Crundall s.n. in PRE 27035 (= PRE 29005) (PRE, holo!).

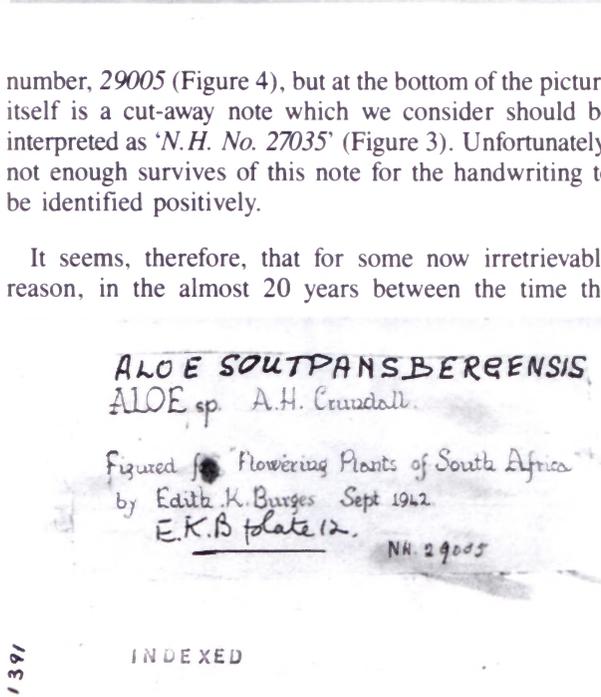
We wish to thank Drs O.A. Leistner and D.J.B. Killick for discussing this problem with us, Mrs E. Potgieter for access to the relevant volume of the PRE register, Miss G.S. Condy for access to the original painting, and Mrs A. Romanowski for preparing the photographs for this note.

#### REFERENCE

VERDOORN, I.C. 1961. *Aloe soutpansbergensis*. *The Flowering Plants of Africa* 35: t. 1391.

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FIGURE 4.—Label on the outer cover of the original of Figure 2.