

THE SHIFTING STATUS OF CYPERUS ERINACEUS

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In 1884, the late HENRY RIDLEY published in the Transactions of the Linnean Society of London a very important paper on the Cyperaceae of the West Coast of Africa that were lying in the WELWITSCH Herbarium. The paper is important as several new species were described in it, accompanied by very fine drawings.

Among species described, there was a very strange plant that RIDLEY designated as *Schoenus erinaceus*. A few years after, C. B. CLARKE transferred it to the genus *Rhynchospora*. Then, the plant was forgotten for a little while, until 1943, when Dr. KÜKENTHAL transferred it to the genus *Cyperus* for the following reasons:

1. Bracts of the small head are basically neither broaden nor ciliate.
2. The covering scales of the flowers have small nerves, while in *Rhynchospora* no additional nerves besides the keel are prominent.
3. A perigone is not present.
4. The basis of the style is only slightly thickened and is united with the ovary without the separating inside lines which is only present in *Rhynchospora*.

5. The style is 3-parted at the apex. *Rhynchospora* is only 2-parted. In the species of the sub-genus *Haplostylis*, the biparting of the style is only weakly indented. On hand of the examination of more critical material that CLARKE had at his disposal, I have to point out that CLARKE was mistaken in claiming that RIDLEY's draughtsmen had erred the illustration of a 3-parted style.

6. The fruit is triangular as was proven by the more advanced specimen collected later by ANTUNES in Huilla. The plant from the Schede of ANTUNES No. 323 has not been designated as *Rhynchospora*, but as *Cyperus angolensis* BOECK.

The present synonymy will go as follows, including a latin description, more elaborate, that I have been able to write while seeing several specimens of this odd plant, either in Coimbra, Brussels, Kew, or in my own Herbarium where I possess several specimens, thanks to Mr. E. A. ROBINSON, formerly of northern Rhodesia.

Cyperus erinaceus (RIDLEY) KÜKENTHAL, Boissiera 7: 103 (1943). — *Schoenus erinaceus* RIDLEY, Trans. Linn. Soc. ser. 2, Bot. 2: 165 (1884).

Rhynchospora erinacea (RIDLEY) C. B. CLARKE, in DURAND et SCHINZ,

Frl. Afr. 5: 654 (1895); in THISELTON-DYER, Fl. Trop. Afr. 8: 177 (1902); ROBINSON, *Kirkia* 1: 41 (1961); NAPPER, J. E., Afr. Nat. Hist. Soc. 24: 42 (1964).

Rhizoma lignosum stolones duros horizontales squamis duris ovato-lanceolatis costatis brunneis obtectos emittens. Culmus rigidus erectus 60—105 cm. altus inferne obtusangulus superne trigonus glaucus fistulosus multistriatus, parte inferiore foliatus basi bulboso incrassatus. Folia rigida remota culmo breviora 3—4 mm. lata plana minute papillosa apice acuminata, vaginae longae stramineo-brunneae, imae demum in fibras dissolutae. Bractee 2—3, ad 20 cm. longae inaequales patentes demum deflexae. Spiculae numerosae lineari-lanceolatae acuminatae subcompressae 10—11 mm. longae radiantes l-nucigerae in caput, globosum unicum 2—2,5 cm. diam. dense congestae. Rhachilla super basin persistentem articulata, parte superiore cum spicula decidua. Squamae 7—8 distichae a basi accrescentes, inferiores 6—7 vacuae lanceolatae subcutae albo-ferrugineae plurinervosae, summa florem fertilem fovens longissima omnium. Stamina 3, filamenta longa, antherae lineares apice obtusae. Stylus longissimus apice trifidus, basi incrassata. Nux oblonga compresso-trigona 4 mm. longa straminea dense punctulata glabra basin versus attenuata.

ANGOLA. Benguela; Ganda, Chiama 23. v. '63 (AZANCOT DE MENEZES 539 (K). Huila, Quibemba, alt. 1800 m, EXELL & MENDONÇA 2543 (COI). — Huila, near the stream of Monino and Mupanda, IV.1860. WELWITSCH 6788 (BM, COI, typus). — Cababa, Caconda, Benguela, 27-2-1907, GOSSWEILER 4229 (COI). — Nova Lisboa. Perimetro florestal de Sacaala, junto ao roi Curimaala, 1-3-1962, F. MURTA 124 (COI). — Huembo: Chianga, ca. 1700 m, terrenes vermelhes; 50—90 cm de altura, 12-6-1962, TEIXEIRA & SOUSA 6436 (COIC).

ZAMBIA. Abercorn Dist.: Chilongwelo: Path to Inono Source 5000' 21. i. '52 RICHARDS 498 (K). Chilongwelo Shamba 4800' 27. ii. '52 RICHARDS 853 (K). Chilongwelo Bush 4800' 3. iv. '52 RICHARDS 1230 (K). Bank above Lunzua Waterfall 3000' 23. ii. '55 RICHARDS 4650 (K). Kambole 1500 m. 19. ii. '57 RICHARDS 8270 (K). Sunzu Mtn. 1800 m 20. iv. '61 RICHARDS 15066 (K). Kambole 1500 m 29. i. '64 RICHARDS 18888 (K). Mwinilunga Dist.: c. 4 miles S. W. of Matonchi Farm 17. ii. '38 MILNE-REDHEAD 4615 (K). 95 km E. of Mwinilunga 1350 m 15. iv. '60 ROBINSON 3553 (K, MTJB). Mpika Dist.: 90 km S. of Mpika 2. iii. '62 ROBINSON 4960 (K, MTJB). Lundazi Dist.: Nyika foothills 1600 m 13. iii. '61 ROBINSON 4472 (K, MTJB).

TANZANIA. Songea Dist.: c. 17 km W. of Songea 24. ii. '56 MILNE-REDHEAD & TAYLOR 8745 (K). 2 km S. W. of Lipumba 19. v. '56 MILNE-REDHEAD & TAYLOR 10366 (K). Ufipa Dist.: Kalambo Falls 1200 m 26. iii. '60 RICHARDS 12793 (K). Slopes of Kito hill 6500' 3. iv. '60 VESEY-FITZGERALD 2742 (K).

CONGO. Kundelunga 13. iii. '08 KASSNER 2603 (K). Luiswiski 20. iii. '26 ROBYNS 1747 (K). Katanga: 12 km N. W. of Elisabethville 25. iii. '59 GATHY 2626 (K). Elisabethville 14. ii. '62 POELMAN 140 (K). Tumbwe

23. ii. '61 SYMOENS 8248 (K). Station de Keyberg, 8 km S. O. d'Elizabethville, 8-3-1947, A. SCHMITZ 231 (MTJB).

The plant was forgotten for a while but its taxonomical position has on some occasions been challenged. AZANCOT DE MENESES, in his review of the Angola specimens of Cyperaceae, followed KÜKENTHAL and treated it as a *Cyperus*, but Miss NAPPER, in 1964, though treating it as a *Rhynchospora*, hinted that, on account of its 3-style, it should perhaps be treated as a genus of its own. In her key she eliminates that species with the remark that it was an anomalous one in the genus. Mr. ROBINSON also made such remarks.

After having read recently Prof. RAYNAL's paper on the revival of the genus *Actinoschoenus* where a new species from Africa was described, I have no qualms now to transfer *Cyperus erinaceus* to this genus and I propose the following transfer:

Actinoschoenus erinaceus (RIDLEY) RAYMOND, n. comb., see the bibliography above.

This, I think, for the time being, will give more homogeneity to this happily revived genus and, at the same time, I agree that some of the species of this genus included unfortunately in *Fimbristylis* will, for the time being at least, settle the matter and consolidate the genus.

As to its position in one or the other subfamilies, this is still a matter to debate. Though having been handling Cyperaceae from all over the World, since 1940, I still believe that these subfamilies created long ago, constitute very handy frames for handling such a large family.

Natural groups of course, are very hard to make, as one of my friends, an evolutionist himself, told me once, "We weren't there".

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