



Further studies in *Memecylon* sect. *Afzeliana* (Melastomataceae–Olisbeoideae): the type of *M. liberiae* and its taxonomic implications

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Abstract

Under the principle of priority, *Memecylon liberiae* is the correct name for the West African species previously known as *M. aylmeri*. A lectotype is designated for *M. liberiae* from the original material rediscovered in the Berlin herbarium. Use of the neotype designated by Jacques-Félix must therefore be abandoned. A new species *M. emancipatum* is proposed to replace *M. liberiae* sensu Jacques-Félix. A revised identification key is provided for the West African species of *Memecylon* sensu stricto.

Introduction

The fire that engulfed the Berlin herbarium following the aerial bombardment on March 1–2, 1943, destroyed thousands of type specimens (Merrill 1943, Hiepko 1987). Here it is reported that the original material of *Memecylon liberiae* Gilg ex Engler (1921: 768) has survived, as evidenced by two sheets (*Dinklage* 2733, fl., & 2417, fr.) each bearing in Gilg's handwriting the name “*Memecylon liberiae* Gilg n. sp.” High-resolution images of these specimens can be viewed at <http://ww2.bgbm.org/herbarium/default.cfm>, or alternatively at <http://plants.jstor.org/>.

The ovate-ellipsoid fruits of *Dinklage* 2417 agree with Engler's diagnosis, and further indicate that *M. liberiae* belongs to *Memecylon* Linnaeus (1753: 349) sect. *Afzeliana* Jacques-Félix (1978a: 423), a monophyletic group of 20 species in western and central Africa (Stone *et al.* 2008, Stone 2014). The oblong, apparently uninervate leaves and short-pedunculate inflorescences of the *Dinklage* specimens also match Engler's description. From a critical examination of the original material, it is clear to me that the name *M. liberiae* applies to the same species subsequently described as *M. aylmeri* Hutchinson & Dalziel (1928: 223). Given this circumscription, the rule of priority (McNeill *et al.* 2012: Art. 11.4) indicates that the former name is correct, and the latter is proposed as a taxonomic synonym.

With the re-discovery of Gilg's original material of *M. liberiae*, the neotypification proposed by Jacques-Félix (1979: 424) must be abandoned (see McNeill *et al.* 2012: Art. 9.19). The specimen chosen by Jacques-Félix as the new type (*Adam* 30289, P[00512064], which can be viewed at <http://dsipho.mnhn.fr/sonnerat/apiJOIN/JF/JF20060328/P00512064.jpg>, or alternatively at <http://plants.jstor.org/>) furthermore does not agree with the protologue in some important particulars. The name *M. liberiae* first appeared in a key to the species of *Memecylon* sect. *Polyanthema* Engler (1921: 768). When the leads of the key are condensed, the following diagnosis for *M. liberiae* is obtained: “Blätter 1-nervig (die beiden Seitennerven nicht sichtbar). Transversalnerven nicht sichtbar. Blüten in Trugdolden in den Achseln der Laubblätter. Blätter länglich, unten spitz, oben in kurze oder lange Spitze ausgezogen. Blütenstand sehr kurz. Beeren eiförmig: *M. liberiae* Gilg, in Liberia bei Monrovia in dichtem Regenwald.” [Leaf-blades 1-nerved (the two lateral nerves not visible). Transverse veins not visible. Flowers in cymes in the axils of the leaves. Leaf-blades oblong, acute above the petiole, the apex produced into a short or long acumen. Inflorescence very short. Berries ovoid: *M. liberiae* Gilg, in Liberia near Monrovia in dense rain forest.]

The leaves of *Adam* 30289 are contrary to Engler's diagnosis in having a venation pattern that is reminiscent of *M. englerianum* Cogniaux (1891: 1194), with transverse veins conspicuous (even prominent on the lower surface), oriented at a narrowly oblique angle relative to the mid-nerve, and spaced ca. 10 mm relative to one another. Near the leaf margins the transverse veins are confluent with the equally conspicuous lateral nerves, which form a series of

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