Bothalia 12, 3: 441–453 (1978).

Notes on African plants

VARIOUS AUTHORS

AMBLYSTEGIACEAE

THE TAXONOMIC POSITION OF *AMBLYSTEGIUM AFRO-FLUITANS* (MUSCI)

Two specimens were distributed by Rehmann (1875–1877) as *Hypnum fluitans* Hedw. (Nos 399 & 400, from Kadziberg, O.F.S.) in his exsiccata *Musci austro-africani*. Several years later, with the distribution of specimen 668, Rehmann renamed the earlier specimens on the following label: 668 *Amblystegium riparium* L. var. *rivulare*. *Hypnum fluitans* Rehm. exsicc. n. 399, 400 (non L.).

Apparently unaware of Rehmann's later collection, Müller (1899) published the name *Drepanocladus afro-fluitans*, based on *Rehmann* 399 and 400. Müller's name was subsequently cited for southern Africa by Brotherus (1909; 1924) in both editions of Engler and Prantl, *Die Natürlichen Pflanzenfamilien*.

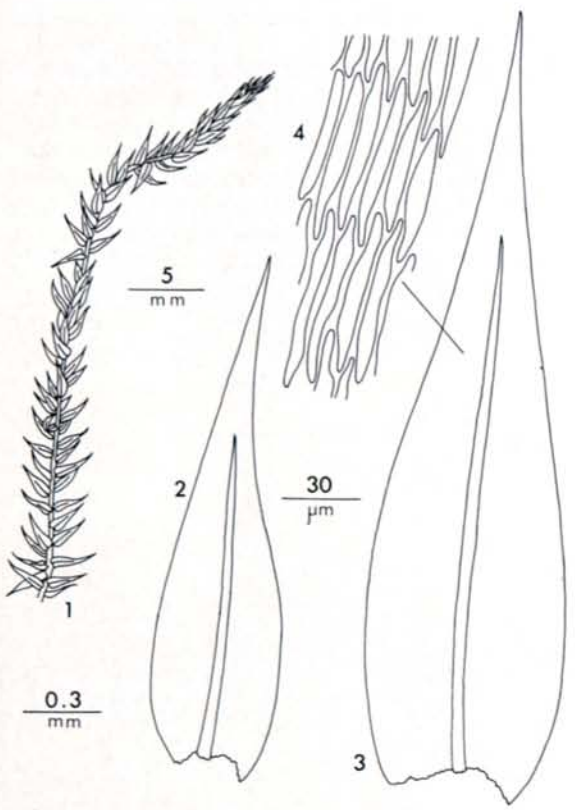


FIG. 1.—*Leptodictyum riparium* 1, stem; 2, leaf; 3, leaf; 4, upper median leaf cells. (1, 2—*Rehmann* 399; 3, 4—*Rehmann* 400, PRE).

At approximately the same time, Dixon and Gepp (1923) noted Rehmann's annotation and agreed with his decision to place all three specimens under *A. riparium*. Sim (1926) shared this view and in an attempt to clarify the situation stated, "Brotherus (Pfl., xi, 344) places *D. sparsus* C.M. and *D. afro-fluitans* (C.M.) (sic!) as South African representatives of his group *Drepanocladus* ....., but to my mind the shorter wider cells of the latter remove it to *Amblystegium*".

In 1959, the authors of Index Muscorum (Van der Wijk *et al.*, 1: 23, 1959) recognized the combination *A. afro-fluitans* (C. Müll.) Sim. After an examination of the specimens (*Rehmann* 399, 400, *Drepanocladus afro-fluitans*, isosyntypes, PRE) and a re-examination of the literature, it appears that Sim never intended to make this combination, but merely meant to place the name in the synonymy of *A. riparium* (Hedw.) B.S.G. As no other species of the genus are treated in his text, Sim's reference to *Amblystegium*, in my opinion, should be taken as a reference to *A. riparium*. The fact that he cites all the Rehmann specimens under this species (1926, p. 414) clearly indicates his intent. The parentheses around "C.M." in Sim's statement (1926, p. 416) are seen as a typographical error, while reference to *A. afro-fluitans* in the index (p. 452) and failure to include *D. afro-fluitans* as a synonym under *A. riparium* are viewed as oversights.

As Rehmann's specimens are now considered to represent *Leptodictyum riparium* (Hedw.) Warnst. (Fig. 1), *Amblystegium afro-fluitans* (C. Müll.) Sim and *Drepanocladus afro-fluitans* C. Müll. are put into the synonymy of that species.

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