

THE IDENTITY OF *SCLERIA DILLONII* BOECK.

(Cyperaceae)

by

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In the Flora of Tropical Africa C. B. Clarke (6) pointed out that in the collection of "*Scleria foliosa* Hochst., Abyssinia, prope Chire, Dillon & Petit" specimens of true *S. foliosa* Hochst. ex A. Rich. (4) are mixed with some of *S. schimperiana* Boeck. (1) and that "it would be very difficult to sort them without looking at the nut". He referred *S. dillonii* Boeck. (2) to the synonymy of *S. foliosa*, and herein he was followed by all subsequent authors including Nelmes (3) and Robinson (5).

However, already Boeckeler was aware of the fact that the Chire collection is a mixture, and on "*S. foliosa* Hb. Dillon et Petit. — an etiam Richardi? — pro parte (c. *S. foliosa* Hochst. intermixta)" he based his *S. dillonii*, different from *S. foliosa* mainly by its globose or depressed-globose, smooth nuts.

In the Leiden Herbarium there is a sheet of *S. foliosa* (Herb. Lugd. Bat. 902.94—267, ex herb. Hasskarl) which is part of the Chire collection and was annotated by Boeckeler as follows: "*Scleria foliosa* Hochst. — Dillon et Petit pro parte. — Boeckl. Linnaea 38. 455. 21. Schon durch Form u. Beschaffenheit der Oberfläche der Karyopse unterscheidet sich *S. foliosa* sattsam von der neuen Art". By this new species ("neuen Art") is obviously meant *S. dillonii*, for the other part of the Dillon & Petit collection in the Rijksherbarium (Herb. Lugd. Bat. 902.94—266) was also annotated by Boeckeler and that as follows: "*Scleria Dillonii* n. sp. — *S. foliosa* Herb. Dillon et Petit (an etiam A. Rich., pro parte?), non Hochst.". The specimen perfectly matches the original description of *S. dillonii*: "caryopsi(s) magna . . . globosa v. depresso-globosa . . . laevissima pernitida . . ." and is evidently the type of this species. In *S. foliosa* the nut is quite different, to wit ovoid, irregularly verrucose-lacunose, and with two deep pits in each sinus of the disk-lobes.

In my opinion the type of *S. dillonii* is a depauperate specimen of *S. schimperiana*, and *S. dillonii* should therefore be referred to the synonymy of *S. schimperiana*.

References

1. BOECKELER, O., Linnaea 38: 466. 1874.
2. —, Flora 61: 38. 1878.
3. NELMES, E., Kew Bulletin 102. 1956.
4. RICHARD, A., Tentamen Florae Abyssinicae 2: 509. 1851.
5. ROBINSON, E. A., Kirkia 2: 177. 1961.
6. THISELTON-DYER, W. T., Flora of Tropical Africa 8^a: 503. 1902.