

ON XYLARIA SPATHULATA BERK. & BR.

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In the Malayan region an interesting ascomycete occurs, which in general appearance resembles a species of *Xylaria*. It was described from Java by Penzig & Saccardo as *Xylaria polysticha* (3) and again some years later as *Xylaria xanthophaea* (4). This may be explained by the fact, that the first name was given to old, discoloured material, whereas the second name refers to fresh well developed specimens exhibiting the typical brown colour.

During my long stay in Indonesia I had ample opportunity to collect and study this species, which grows especially in the mountainous regions. One of the most striking characters is the consistency of the stromata, which are conspicuously fleshy and not hard as in *Xylaria*. Penzig & Saccardo in describing the fungus state in the diagnosis of *Xylaria polysticha* that it is "carnoso-coriacea" and in that of *Xylaria xanthophaea* (described from the fresh material) they use the expression "carnosulo-molli". The perithecia are arranged in the stroma in several layers and the asci and spores are extremely small. The ascospores are typical almond-shaped and have a minute germ-pore at the pointed end. All these features clearly indicate, that this fungus is not a species of *Xylaria* and not even a member of the Xylariaceae. In this family the consistency of the stromata is tough and the ascospores are provided with a long, lateral germ-slit. This led me (1) to establish the family Sarcostromellaceae with the genus *Sarcostromella* to accomodate such fungi.

Recently Dennis (2) mentioned an older name for the Java species, viz. *Xylaria spathulata* Berk. & Br., based on material collected in Ceylon.

Through the kindness of the Director of the Herbarium, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, I was able to study the type of this species and found it completely identical with *Xylaria polysticha*.

Dennis, furthermore, thinks that the new genus is superfluous and that the fungus can be placed in *Peridoxylon* Shear. However, it does not at all fit this genus, which was based by Shear on a Xylariaceous fungus, formerly described as a species of *Hyphoxylon*, having the perithecia disposed in several layers in a fleshy to coriaceous stroma-tissue. Between the asci occur filiform paraphyses which are lacking in *Sarcostromella*. But the most prominent character of *Peridoxylon* consists of what Shear called the peridium. This is a layer covering the immature stromata and gradually flaking away in the mature fruitbodies. Such a layer is never formed in *Sarcostromella*. Therefore I prefer to maintain the family Sarcostromellaceae with the single genus *Sarcostromella*. However, the name of the type species has to be changed; the full synonymy now is as follows:

Sarcostromella spathulata (Berk. & Br.) Boedijn, *comb. nov.*

Xylaria spathulata Berk. & Br. in J. Linn. Soc. (Bot.) **14**: 118. 1873. — *Sarcoxylon spathulata* (Berk. & Br.) Petch in Ann. R. bot. Gdns Peradeniya **8**: 145. 1924. — *Peridoxylon spathulata* (Berk. & Br.) Dennis in Bull. Jard. bot. Bruxelles **31**: 150. 1961.

Xylaria polysticha Penzig & Sacc. in Malpighia **11**: 500. 1897. — *Sarcostromella polysticha* (Penzig & Sacc.) Boedijn in Persoonia **1**: 16. 1959.

Xylaria xanthophaea Penzig & Sacc. in Malpighia **15**: 226. 1902.

REFERENCES

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- (2) DENNIS, R. W. G. (1961). Xylarioideae and Thamnomycetoideae of Congo. In Bull. Jard. bot. Bruxelles **31**: 149-150.
- (3) PENZIG, O. & P. A. SACCARDO (1897). Diagnoses fungorum novorum in insula Java collectorum. Series secunda. In *Malpighia* **11**: 500-501.
- (4) — (1902). Ibid. Series tertia. In *Malpighia* **15**: 226.