

Notes on African plants

VARIOUS AUTHORS

PTERIDOPHYTA

A NEW COMBINATION AND NEW RECORDS FOR THE FLORA OF MALAWI

This note updates the checklist of the Pteridophyta of Malawi (Burrows & Burrows 1993) by recording some recent collections.

HYMENOPHYLLACEAE

***Crepidomanes mannii* (Hook.) J.P.Roux, comb. nov.**

Trichomanes mannii Hook. in Hook. & Baker, *Synopsis filicum*: 75 (1867).

Illustration: Kornas: t. 7a, b (1994).

The classical bigeneric system of dividing the Hymenophyllaceae into *Hymenophyllum* and *Trichomanes* is not natural. The system proposed by Iwatsuki (1984) is followed here, thus necessitating the new combination.

Crepidomanes mannii is a small and easily overlooked fern that is widely distributed in the tropical parts of continental Africa and Madagascar. Although widespread in tropical Africa the species was first recorded for the *Flora zambesiaca* area (Zambia) by Kornas (1976). The plants mostly grow on wet rocks or on the lower parts of tree trunks in moist, shady forests.

MALAWI.—Zomba Plateau, Mandala Falls, Roux 2870 (NBG).

VITTARIACEAE

***Antrophyum mannianum* Hook., A second century of ferns: t. 73 (1861).**

Illustration: Schelpe: t. 30 (1970).

This rare fern occurs in East and West tropical Africa. Until now, the species has only been known from one collection made at Namuli in the Zambézia Province of Mozambique (Schelpe 1970). This location could not be found but it may be a typographical error for Nalume, a river originating in the Gurué Mountains in the north-western corner of Zambézia Province. Plants are mostly found near streams on moist, deeply shaded rocks.

MALAWI.—Mt Mulanje, Ruu Gorge, Roux 2887 (MAL, NBG).

ASPLENIACEAE

***Asplenium gemmascens* Alston in Boletim da Sociedade Broteriana, Sér. 2, 30: 10 (1956). Figure 1.**

Asplenium torrei Schelpe: 209 (1967).

Alston (1956) described *A. gemmascens* as differing from *A. hemitomum* Hieron. in the proliferous bud at the apex of the rachis, the short-creeping rhizome, the herbaceous pinnae, and the conspicuous veins. In describing *A. torrei*, based on a single collection made on the slopes of Mt Nhandore in the Serra da Gorongosa, Mozambique, Schelpe (1967) (erroneously) stated that this and *A. blastophorum* Hieron. are the only proliferous African species belonging to the *A. aethiopicum* complex. All these species belong to *Asplenium* section *Sphenopteris* Mett.

I have studied the isotype of *A. torrei* in the herbarium of the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (LMU) in Maputo, Mozambique, and found it to be identical to my collection made on Mt Mulanje. The material fits both the descriptions of *A. gemmascens* and *A. torrei*. As there are now distinctive characters to separate the taxa, *A. torrei* is placed in synonymy. This supports the view of Pichi Sermolli (1985) who also found the taxa to be conspecific.

Asplenium gemmascens is a widespread but not very common species occurring in East and West tropical Africa. Plants form small clonal clusters on moist, deeply shaded rocks, or terrestrially, in evergreen forests.

MALAWI.—Mt Mulanje, Ruu Gorge, Roux 2901 (NBG).

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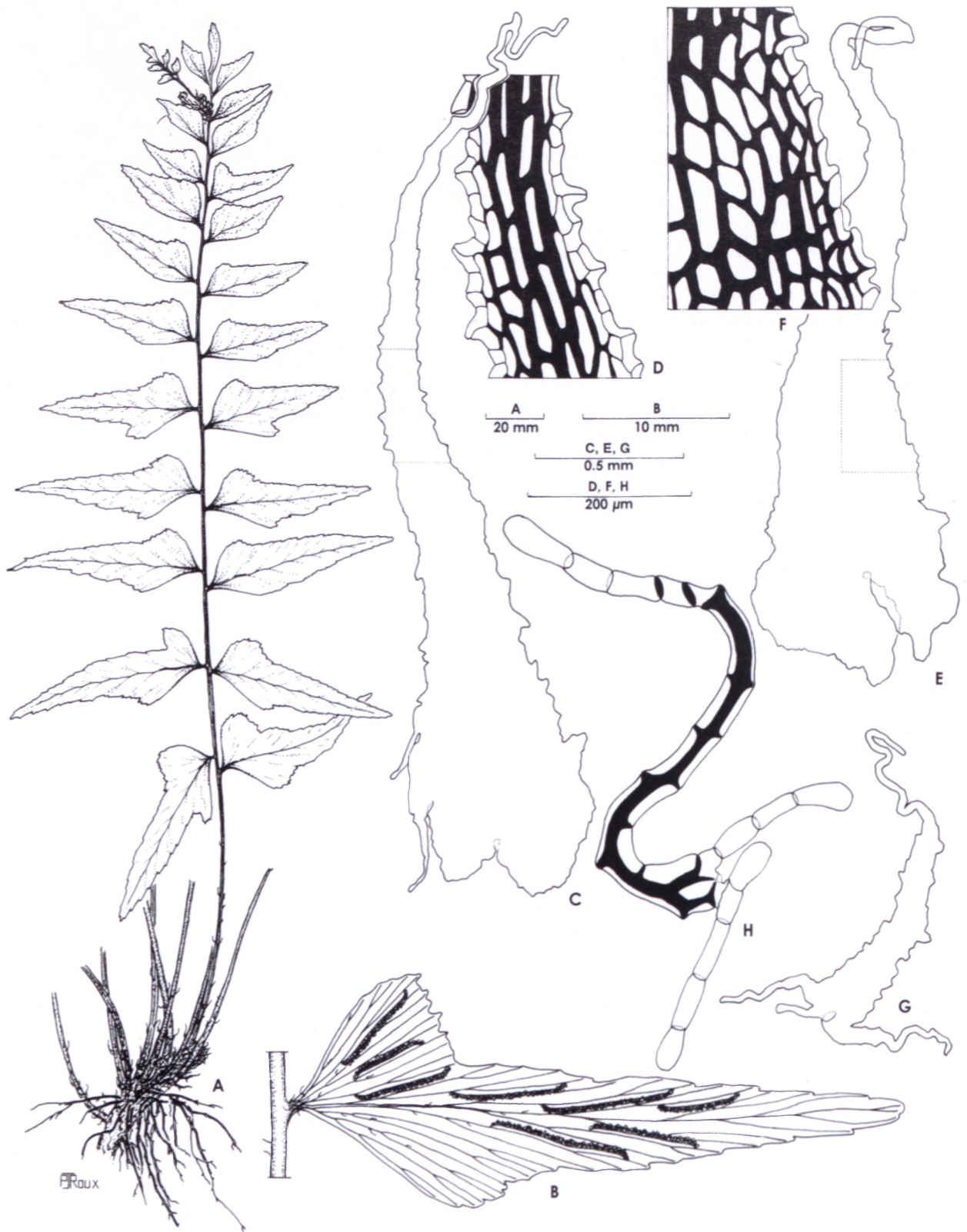


FIGURE 1.—*Asplenium gemmascens*, Roux 2901 (NBG). A, habit; B, abaxial surface of pinna; C, rhizome palea; D, section of C showing cellular structure; E & G, stipe paleae; F, section of E showing cellular structure; H, palea from abaxial surface of pinna. Scale bars: A, 20 mm; B, 10 mm; C, E, G, 0.5 mm; D, F, H, 200 μ m. Drawn by J.P. Roux.

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