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Comments on the type of *Bauhinia vahlii* Wight & Arn. (Leguminosae: Caesalpinioideae)

Subir Bandyopadhyay

Abstract

BANDYOPADHYAY, S. (2008). Comments on the type of *Bauhinia vahlii* Wight & Arn. (Leguminosae: Caesalpinioideae). *Candollea* 63: 35-37. In English, English and French abstracts.

Discussion is made on the type specimen of *Bauhinia vahlii* Wight & Arn. (Leguminosae: Caesalpinioideae) and the relevant illustration given by Martin Vahl.

Key-words

LEGUMINOSAE – *Bauhinia* – Type – Taxonomy

Résumé

BANDYOPADHYAY, S. (2008). Commentaires sur le type de *Bauhinia vahlii* Wight & Arn. (Leguminosae: Caesalpinioideae). *Candollea* 63: 35-37. En anglais, résumés anglais et français.

Le spécimen type de *Bauhinia vahlii* Wight & Arn. (Leguminosae: Caesalpinioideae) est commenté et discuté avec les illustrations relatives données par Martin Vahl.

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The name *Bauhinia vahlii* Wight & Arn. was first validly published in WIGHT (1833: 38) (see MABBERLEY, 1980: 106), though unaccompanied by any description or diagnosis, because they cited “*Bauhinia racemosa* Vahl (*haud* Lam.)” which indirectly referred to the previously and effectively published description by VAHL (1794) (cf. *Art* 32.6, *Ex.* 8 of MCNEILL & al., 2006). Thus *B. vahlii* was not actually published in WIGHT & ARNOTT (1834) for the first time, as generally recorded in majority of the published literature.

The reason is that Wight & Arnott (in WIGHT, 1833: 38) had realized in fact that Vahl misapplied the binomial *B. racemosa* Lam. to a specimen that should have been described as a new species. Thus they provided a new name commemorating Vahl. In the protologue of *B. vahlii*, WIGHT (1833: 38) cited the n° 628, i.e. Wight’s herbarium specimens to which the n° 628 is attached (see NOLTIE, 2005: 306), but validated the name solely by referring to *B. racemosa* Vahl (*haud* Lam.) and thus only the Schumacher specimen from “India Orientali” and the plate LXII given in VAHL (1794) qualified as original materials (NOLTIE, 2005; Noltie, *pers. comm.*), according to MCNEILL & al. (2006) (*Art.* 9, *Note* 2).

The herbarium sheet with the type specimen (C; image CAL!) shows that it is from the Vahl herbarium (see inscription on its top left hand corner) and bears the name “Schum” in the lower right hand corner of the sheet, but the plant could not have been collected by Christian Friederich Schumacher because the latter did not travel outside Europe. However, the plant may have belonged to Schumacher’s herbarium. In VAHL (1794), the statement concerned was “Dedit Dn. Schumacher”. The sheet bears three names viz. “*Bauhinia sericea*”, “*Phanera vahlii* (Wight & Arn.) Benth.”, and “*Bauhinia vahlii* Wight & Arn.” (the latter on a det. slip attached by Kai Larsen & Supee S. Larsen in 1982). The locality has been given as “India Orient”. Further, an annotation by A. Fox Maule (“A. F. M.”) in 1984 reveals that in Vahl’s manuscript the epithet *sericea* was deleted and replaced by *racemosa*.

The plate LXII given in VAHL (1794), however, does not fully match with the type specimen and Indian materials. The calyx has been shown to be perfectly 5-lobed instead of being 2(-3)-lobed (in herbarium specimens occasionally these lobes are seen to be split apart at apex, as seen in one of the flowers in the type specimen, because of pressure given at the time of drying the specimens). The ovaries have been shown to be elliptic to broadly elliptic in outline instead of narrowly elliptic to elliptic-oblong in outline. In the accompanying description in VAHL (1794), the calyx is described as “*tomentosus, incanus*” and the ovary as “*pilis longis sericeis hirsutum*”. WIGHT & ARNOTT (1834: 297) correctly stated the calyx to be “ovate, splitting to the base of the limb into two reflexed segments” but did not mention about the shape of the ovary.

The nature of splitting of the calyx and the shape of the ovary of this species given in Roxburgh’s excellent plate n° 53 at CAL (labeled as *Bauhinia racemosa*) also fully agrees with my observations.

Despite the differences the plate in VAHL (1794) resembles very closely to the type specimen. So it seems to me that the plate in VAHL (1794) is of the said type specimen only but has been inaccurately portrayed. The only specimen at C is probably the holotype, but in case it is not, it is designated here as lectotype of *B. vahlii* Wight & Arn.

***Bauhinia vahlii* Wight & Arn.** in Wight, *Cat. Ind. Pl.*: 38. 1833 (Fig. 1).

Lectotype (here designated): India Orient, *s.d.*, *s.coll.* *s.n.* (C).

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Fig. 1. – Photograph of the type specimen of *Bauhinia vahlii* Wight & Arn. This is probably the holotype, but in case it is not, it is to be accepted as the lecto-type.

[s.coll. s.n., C] [© Botanical Museum and Library, University of Copenhagen. Reproduced with permission]

