

## Nomenclatural status and identity of *Palicourea moritziana*

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**Abstract:** Tkach, N., Taylor, C. & Braun, U. 2019: Nomenclature and identity of *Palicourea moritziana*. *Schlechtendalia* **36**: 97–99.

We analyze the identity and nomenclatural status of *Palicourea moritziana* (Rubiaceae), a designation coined in lit. by D. F. L. von Schlechtendal in 1857. The name *P. moritziana* was not explicitly accepted by Schlechtendal, but only proposed as an appropriate name in case further examinations of collections referred to *P. petiolaris* Kunth might confirm the presence of a second species. Hence, *P. moritziana* has to be considered invalid following ICN (Shenzhen) Art. 36.1 (a). The authentic material of *P. moritziana* in Schlechtendal's herbarium at HAL falls within the morphological range today included in *P. petiolaris*.

**Zusammenfassung:** Tkach, N., Taylor, C. & Braun, U. 2019: Nomenklatur und Identität von *Palicourea moritziana*. *Schlechtendalia* **36**: 97–99.

Die Nomenklatur von *Palicourea moritziana* (Rubiaceae), eine 1857 von D. F. L. von Schlechtendal geprägte Bezeichnung, wird diskutiert. *P. moritziana* wurde von Schlechtendal nicht explizit akzeptiert und nur in Erwartung weiterer Untersuchungen auf Grundlage umfangreicherer Kollektionen vorgeschlagen, die bestätigen könnten, dass diese Kollektionen tatsächlich eine eigene Art, verschieden von *Palicourea petiolaris*, darstellen. Folglich muss *P. moritziana* nach ICN (Shenzhen) Art. 36.1 (a) als invalider Namen klassifiziert werden. Eine Neubewertung der Morphologie des Originalmaterials von *P. moritziana* in Schlechtendals Herbarium in HAL führte zur Schlussfolgerung, dass diese Kollektion aus Venezuela in die morphologische Variation von *P. petiolaris* fällt, was mit der ursprünglichen Bestimmung des Materials übereinstimmt.

**Key words:** Rubiaceae, *Palicourea* subg. *Montanae* sect. *Psychotrioides*, *Palicourea petiolaris*, Schlechtendal, Venezuela

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D. F. L. von Schlechtendal (1794–1866), one of the leading and most productive German botanists of the 19th century, left the Berlin museum to hold the positions of professor of botany and director of the botanical garden in Halle (Saale) from 1833 to 1866. A detailed biography has recently been published (Heuchert et al. 2017). Schlechtendal produced a huge scientific oeuvre, mainly focussed on the taxonomy of a wide range of higher plants but also treating pteridophytes, fungi and other cryptogams. An annotated survey of his publications was published by Heklau (1998). One broad work was Schlechtendal's (1857) continuation of the “*Plantae Lechlerianae*”, which included a treatment of genera of the Rubiaceae (pp. 486–546) with *Palicourea* Aubl. on pp. 423–532. On p. 526 here, he critically discussed a collection made by J. W. K. Moritz in Venezuela. This collection was originally identified as *P. petiolaris* Kunth. Schlechtendal compared Moritz's specimen with *P. petiolaris*, which he synonymized with *Psychotria elliptica* Willd. ex Roem. & Schult., and postulated several morphological differences. In the last sentence here, he coined the designation *Palicourea moritziana* for this collection but noted that he was not sure if describing a species distinct from *Palicourea petiolaris* was justified based on a single specimen and suggested that a final decision about the status of this specimen would require more collections. Owing to Schlechtendal's doubts, *Palicourea moritziana* has to be regarded as not accepted by the author at the time of its publication and thus an invalid name:

*Palicourea moritziana* Schldl., *Linnaea* **28**: 526, 1857, nom. inval. [ICN (Shenzhen) Art. 36.1 (a)].

Authentic material: Venezuela, [Monagas,] Caripe, undated (flowering in August), J. W. K. Moritz 470 (HAL 113737). Fig. 1.

The morphology of the original material of *Palicourea moritziana*, deposited at HAL, falls within the current morphological range included in *Palicourea petiolaris* (Steyermark, 1974:

1791–1795, fig. 321). The differences that Schlechtendal postulated to separate this specimen from *Palicourea petiolaris* were details of distribution and form of the pubescence, the size, persistence, and form of the stipules, drying colour and arrangement of the venation of the leaves, larger inflorescences with pedicellate flowers, and corolla size and form. These features are not differences between the Moritz specimen and *Palicourea petiolaris*, but they do distinguish *Palicourea petiolaris* from the type material of *Psychotria elliptica*. The identity of this last name has been unclear for some time, but it corresponds to a species of *Psychotria* L. (Taylor et al., in prep.). Thus, the potential separation of *Palicourea moritziana* noted by Schlechtendal was based at least in part on misidentification of the identity of *Palicourea petiolaris*, rather than discovering the existence of a related second species.



Fig. 1: *Palicourea moritziana* (nom. inval.), authentic material, HAL 113737.

It is unclear how the authentic material of *P. moritziana* found its way to Schlechtendal in Halle (Saale). J. W. K. Moritz was born on 21 July 1797 at Klein SanTERSleben, today part of Groß SanTERSleden, part (Ortsteil) of Einheitsgemeinde Hohe Börde, Landkreis Börde in Sachsen-Anhalt, Germany. Moritz studied theology but soon decided to continue his professional activity as scientific traveller and collector of natural materials, above all plants, for European museums and universities. Between 1831 and 1833 he visited the West Indies, where he became acquainted with José María Vargas, later the first president of Venezuela (1835–1836). In 1837, Moritz followed Vargas to Venezuela and settled in Colonia Tovar, where he lived from 1835 to 1837 and then from 1840 to 1866; in the interval he visited Europe and transferred to Berlin his prepared animals and plant specimens. Moritz died on 26 June 1866 at Colonia Tovar. A brief obituary published by Anonymous (in *Flora* 50: 15, 1867) noted that Moritz's private herbarium was transferred to the British Museum in London. Additional collections of his are also to be found in various other herbaria, including B, LZ (destroyed), KIEL, and W. Numerous collections made by Moritz are also preserved at HAL in Schlechtendal's herbarium. [Sources, see at the end of the references.]

It is unknown if these specimens were sent to Schlechtendal directly or via Berlin. It seems that Moritz and Schlechtendal did not have any direct contacts: Schlechtendal's correspondence is almost completely preserved at HAL (Tkach et al. 2014), and no letters written by Moritz are included there. This suggests that Moritz's herbarium collections were transferred to Schlechtendal in Halle via the herbarium in Berlin.

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