

The Legacy of Henri Jumelle in Marseille: An Overlooked Collection of Palms from Madagascar

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20. CALLMANDER, Martin W., Bruno VILA, John DRANSFIELD & Henk BEENTJE: The legacy of Henri Jumelle in Marseille: an overlooked collection of Palms from Madagascar

Introduction

The Colonial Museum of Marseille was founded in 1893 by Edouard Heckel to illustrate to the general public the prosperity of the French colonies (JUMELLE, 1916). In the same year, Heckel initiated the *Annales de l'Institut botanico-géologique colonial de Marseille* where researchers were able to publish the results of numerous studies linked with scientific material brought back from the colonies. A year later Henri Jumelle arrived in Marseille as an Associate Professor at the Science Faculty of the University (CHOUX, 1936) (Fig. 1). He immediately followed Heckel's areas of interest and published the results of his research on aspects of applied botany, notably on potential industrial and food sources such as oil-producing plants. He became Professor of General Botany when Heckel retired in 1913 and Director of the Museum Colonial de Marseille after Heckel's death in 1916 (CHEVALIER, 1936).

In 1901, Jumelle initiated a correspondence with the French explorer and botanist Henri Perrier de la Bâthie, and a fruitful collaboration started between the two scientists that introduced Jumelle to the Malagasy Flora. Perrier de la Bâthie made a total of more than 20,000 plant collections in Madagascar between 1898 and 1928 (HUMBERT, 1958) accompanied by precise field notes and wrote several volumes of the *Flore de Madagascar et des Comores*, while Jumelle studied the material in his Laboratory in Marseille (AILLAUD, 2002). Jumelle described 328 new taxa (12 genera, 293 species, 19 varieties and 4 forma) and 31 new name combinations in 23 different families before his death in 1935, 230 (c. 65%) of which were published jointly with Perrier de la Bâthie (MADAGASCAR CATALOGUE, 2011). Among the genera published by Jumelle, six are still accepted. These include: *Arophyton* Jum. and *Carlephyton* Jum. (*Araceae*); *Ischnolepis* Jum. & H. Perrier and *Secamonopsis* Jum. (*Apocynaceae*); *Beccario-phoenix* Jum. & H. Perrier and *Masoala* Jum. (*Arecaceae*).

The main themes of Jumelle's research on the Malagasy Flora were on certain families, notably *Apocynaceae*, *Arecaceae* and *Rubiaceae*. Among these, *Arecaceae* was certainly the most important numerically with the publication of 90 taxa (5 genera, 77 species and 8 varieties) and 11 combinations. The first work that came out on the Malagasy palms (JUMELLE & PERRIER DE LA BÂTHIE, 1912) was followed by 23 other articles between 1915 and 1933 (see CHOUX, 1936 for a complete list), culminating in the palm volume for the *Flore de Madagascar et des Comores*, which was published after Jumelle's death (JUMELLE & PERRIER DE LA BÂTHIE, 1945). This long series of scientific publications was based mainly on the 247 palm collections made by Perrier de la Bâthie.

Henri Jumelle's palm collection in Marseille

Initially situated at the *Boulevard des Dames* in Marseille, the Colonial Museum was transferred after World War I to the 1st floor of the Natural Science building at the Science Faculty (AILLAUD, 2002, 2006). After World War II, Pierre Choux incorporated the Jumelle herbarium with the herbarium maintained by the city of Marseille (MARS) at the University of Provence, where it is still housed today (<http://www.univ-provence.fr/>). In the 1990s, HB and JD tried in vain to obtain information on the fate of the palm collections at the Colonial Museum of Marseille when they were working towards their monograph of the palms of Madagascar (DRANSFIELD & BEENTJE, 1995). The presence in the Paris Herbarium of many of the collections cited in protologues seemed to add evidence to what they had been told – that the Colonial Museum palm collection had been incorporated into the Paris Herbarium. Yet, some types (e.g., that of *Ravenea latisecta* Jum.) were missing. Other French herbaria were suggested, and HB and JD attempted to track down the missing specimens by corresponding with herbarium curators, but to no avail. The only specimens studied by Jumelle & Perrier de la Bâthie that were

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Fig. 1. – Personal of the Colonial Institute and Colonial Museum of Marseille in 1900. Henri Jumelle (the second from the left) is sitting next to Edouard Heckel (on his left) (reproduced from HECKEL & al., 1900).

available to them when they published the complete revision of the family for Madagascar were the specimens deposited in P and duplicates subsequently distributed to TAN, and therefore several important specimens could not be examined.

Aware of the important historical significance of the Jumelle legacy, in 2009 BV managed to alert the botanical community via *tela-botanica*, a French botanical community network (<http://www.tela-botanica.org>), to the existence of the important botanical collection at the herbarium of the University of Provence. Two years later, MWC made a visit to MARS and was able to confirm that the collections studied by Jumelle are still deposited at MARS, including a nearly complete set of palms collected by Perrier de la Bâthie. The MARS collection of Malagasy palms includes 208 collections of Perrier de la Bâthie, six by Raymond Decary, and one each of Charles I. Forsyth-Major, Henri Humbert and George F. Scott-Elliot, making a total of 217 collections. Among the MARS collection, 76 (35 %) are nomenclatural types and 69 represent gatherings that are not present at the P herbarium. The main interest remains in the types not deposited at P and therefore not seen by the specialists:

- *Perrier de la Bâthie 11735* (Syntype [ST] of *Neodypsis heteromorphus* Jum. = *Dypsis heteromorpha* (Jum.) Beentje & J. Dransf.).
- *Perrier de la Bâthie 11982* (ST of *Chrysalidocarpus oleraceus* Jum. & Perrier = *Dypsis madagascariensis* (Becc.) Beentje & J. Dransf.).
- *Perrier de la Bâthie 11986, 11987* (ST of *Neophloga lanceolata* Jum. = *Dypsis jumelleana* Beentje & J. Dransf.).
- *Perrier de la Bâthie 12008* (Holotype of *Ravenia latisepta* Jum.).
- *Decary 10295, 10297, Perrier de la Bâthie 18654* (ST of *Neodypsis decaryi* Jum. = *Dypsis decaryi* (Jum.) Beentje & J. Dransf.).

The re-discovery of the Malagasy palm collection housed at the University of Provence will provide a new stimulus to research on Malagasy Palms, and will eventually allow us to better understand several species that were poorly known due to unavailability of the relevant collections. Several nomenclatural and taxonomic works will certainly result from this discovery.

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