Reinvestigation of African Surirella taxa (Bacillariophyta) described by B.J. Cholnoky with some remarks on digitization of diatom types

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Abstract: Cholnoky described several new Surirella taxa from Africa and we have re–investigated this material. As many other of his contemporary authors, especially in the case of description of new African diatoms, Cholnoky did not indicate holotypes. In the present paper original materials are re–evaluated, lectotypes and a holotype are designated and also epitypes whenever it was appropriate. Taxa later transferred to Stenopterobia have not been taken into account. A short description of the seven species concerned (Surirella anassae, S. chasei, S. coei, S. oliffii, S. ostentata = Surirella ovata var. africana, S. pseudotenuis and S. pseudothienemannii) is given based on the original light microscopic descriptions. Additional morphological information based on scanning electron microscopy is added if available. The presently known ecology and distribution of the taxa is given as are other remarks, based on own observations. For each of the seven taxa Cholnoky’s original drawings are presented, which were later re–drawn for publication and which are kept in the archive of the South African National Diatom Collection. The results are discussed referring to the outcome of the digitization project of African Surirellaceae (diatoms, microscopic algae) in the frame of the African Plants Initiative.

Key words: Cholnoky, South Africa, Surirella, taxonomy, types, African Plants Initiative

INTRODUCTION

A re–investigation of material used by Cholnoky to describe several Surirella Turpin taxa from Africa (Cholnoky 1954, 1955, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960a, 1960b, 1960c, 1962) was conducted. The study of Cholnoky’s Surirellaceae resulted from a digitization project of African Surirellaceae types for Aluka, an international collaborative initiative tasked with building an online digital library of scholarly resources about Africa. In 2008 Aluka became part of JSTOR which merged with Ithaka in 2009 (www.JSTOR.org). The digitization project of African Surirellaceae included among others taxa described from Central and East Africa by Müller (Müller 1903, 1904, 1905, 1910; Cocquyt 2000; Cocquyt & Jahn 2005a, 2007a, b, c, d; Cocquyt et al. 2007) and by Hustedt (Hustedt in Hüber–Pestalozzi 1942), from West Africa by Foged (Foged 1966; Cocquyt & Kusber 2010) and by Woodhead & Tweed (Woodhead & Tweed 1958, 1960; Cocquyt et al. 2013). Cholnoky, as many other authors in the past (e.g., Woodhead & Tweed 1958, 1960), did not indicate holotypes. Therefore we designate lectotypes in the present paper and, when preparations within the original material are absent, epitypes.

Within the genus Surirella, Cholnoky described thirteen species, two varieties and two forms; within the genus Stenopterobia Brébisson ex Van Heurck only one species and a form. The present paper only deals with the Surirella species; the Stenopterobia species and the taxa belonging to the genus Surirella, which are already or not transferred, e.g. Surirella schweickertii Cholnoky (Brassac et al. 2003) will not be discussed here. Two Surirella taxa described by Cholnoky, S. deliciosa Cholnoky and S. gieskesii Cholnoky (Cholnoky 1963), were not from Africa but from New Guinea (Asia) and are not taken into account in the present paper which only deals with African material. It is worth noting that Cholnoky made his original drawings on paper with large squares, with each quadrant corresponding to a square of 5 × 5 µm. These original drawings, kept at the South African National Diatom Collection, were scanned and reproduced here for all the considered taxa.
**Material and Methods**

Original slides of the material from which Cholnoky described thirteen *Surirella* species, two varieties and two forms, held in the South African National Diatom Collection (housed at the North West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa) were studied. The investigation was done both at the North–West University, South Africa, and at the Botanic Garden Meise, Belgium. In South Africa microscopy was done using a Nikon Eclipse 80i, in Belgium using an Olympus BX51. Both microscopes were equipped with Differential Interference Contrast and digital cameras, a Nikon DS-U2 and an Olympus ColorView III digital camera respectively. Small parts of raw material, available in the South African National Diatom Collection were cleaned with peroxide, rinsed with distilled water. Aliquots of the cleaned material were put on aluminum stubs, air dried and sputter–coated with gold palladium for scanning electron microscopy (SEM). SEM was done at the North West University, South Africa with a FEI Quanta 339 operating at 10 KV. SEM stubs are deposited in the South African National Diatom Collection, housed at the North–West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa.

The following slides were examined:

NIWR 169/3367, collector number: S.W. Africa 164; South West Africa (now Namibia) collected by Cholnoky in Okawango, Tscheye on 10 August 1962. Preparation made on 26 November 1962.

NIWR 186/3707, collector number: Tugela 70; Natal (now Kwa–Zulu Natal), Nkunzini River between Tugela Village and Stanger, under the bridge of the Zululand road, Kwa–Zulu Natal, South Africa, collected by Cholnoky on 16 July 1954.

NIWR 186/3708, collector number: Tugela 70; Natal (now Kwa–Zulu Natal), Nkunzini River between Tugela Village and Stanger, under the bridge of the Zululand road, Kwa–Zulu Natal, South Africa, collected by Cholnoky on 16 July 1954.

NIWR 191/3802, collector number: Tugela 217; Usutu River (now Maputo River) below the bridge on the road to Gorlela, Swaziland, collected by Cholnoky on 18 July 1957.


NIWR 194/3873, collector number: Tugela 298; Natal (now Kwa–Zulu Natal), Goedeggun (now Nhlangano) near Pongola, South Africa, collected by Cholnoky on 28 July 1957. Preparation made on 13 January 1959.


NIWR 236/4716, collector number dHFR 4; Northern Transvaal (now Limpopo Province), De Hoek nature reserve: trickling stream, shallow, Debelegen, South Africa, collected by H.G. Schweikerdt in December 1953.

**Results**

*Surirella anassae* CHOLNOKY (Figs 1–8), Österreichische botanische Zeitschrift 104: 84, figs 278–279, 1957.

**Light microscopy** (Figs 1–6): Valve heteropolar, elongate ovate with broadly rounded apical pole and a sub–acutely rounded base pole, 60.0–95.0 µm long and 38.0–48.0 µm wide; length to width ratio: 1.8–2.0. Broadest part of the valve located between ¼ and ½ of the valve face towards the apical pole. Valve face appears flat in LM, apical and base pole not in the same plane but bent towards the girdle, the head pole much more strongly bent than the foot pole. Wing projection not very distinct but most obviously pronounced near the head pole. Alar canals 2.0 in 10 µm, becoming denser near the base pole to about 3.5 in 10 µm. Alae poorly developed and only visible on the valve face near the margin. Broad alar canals divided into 1–2 canaliculi, except near the base pole where the alar canals have only one canaliculus. Space between two alar canals about 3.0–4.0 µm. Striation parallel mid–valve to about 3.5 in 10 µm. Axial area narrow, elliptical.

**Scanning electron microscopy** (Figs 7–8): Valve face undulate, transapical valve undulations (porcae) shallow and reaching the middle of the valve which is elevated. At the end of this elevation the valve face is indented to both sides. Near the apical pole the valve...
face raises again originating in an undulation perpendicular to the porcae (Fig. 7). Four longitudinal lines, parallel to and on each side of the axial area (Fig. 8) are present extending from the head pole towards the foot pole. The longitudinal line close to the axial area is less distinct than the other three lines. No spines present on the valve. Striae uniseriate near the middle, becoming quickly bi- to triseriate towards the valve margin, composed of about 100 areolae in 10 µm. Striae continuous in the middle, no hyaline axial area present. Striae on the mantle dense, around 70 in 10 µm. Fenestra much smaller than the alar canals, 5–7 fenestral fibulae present per fenestra. Canaliculi seem to be subdivided by canaliculi of the second order (Fig. 7), with the result that there can be 5 canaliculi in total in an alar canal which is in contrast to the LM observations where only 1–2 canaliculi were observed. Raphe canal smooth. Girdle bands not observed.

**Lectotype (designated here):** Slide NIWR 186/3707 (the valve representing the lectotype is here illustrated as Figs. 3, 4), South African National Diatom Collection, housed at the North–West University, South Africa.

**Type locality:** Tugela Village, Nkunzini (Kwa–Zulu Natal, South Africa), Nkunzini River between Tugela Village and Stanger (halfway the bridge of the Zulu–land–mainstreet).

**Ecology:** Epiphytic on aquatic plants in neutral to slightly alkaline rivers. In the type locality the taxon was found epiphytic on a *Spirogyra* filamentous mass; the pH measured colorimetrically was 7.6.

**Distribution:** This taxon is reported from South Africa (Cholnoky 1957) and Ghana (Foged 1966). However, the data in the literature have to be carefully checked as closely related taxa such as *S. capensis* are easily misidentified as *Surirella anassae*, even in reports from South Africa. Foged (1966) reported *S. anassae* from Ghana in small rivers located in macro–vegetation area of coastal shrubs, coastal zone and semi–deciduous forest.

**Remarks:** This taxon is closely related to *S. capensis* Ehrenberg ex Cocqyt et R. Jahn (Cocqyt & Jahn 2005b). The valve outline is the most distinguishing characteristic between the two taxa with the broadest part of the valve located at a different position with regard to the apical pole. Beside the fact that the alar canals of *S. anassae* are broader than in the closely related *S. sparsipunctata* Hustedt (Cocqyt & Vyverman 1993), described from Lake Tanganyika, this taxon differs distinctly by possessing fenestrae and fenestral bars, which are totally absent in *S. sparsipunctata*. *Surirella capensis* is found only on the mica type slide of Ehrenberg with no other material available, thus the presence or absence of fenestrae and fenestral bars could not be observed in this taxon. The ecology of *S. anassae* also differs from *S. sparsipunctata*: epiphytic in slightly alkaline rivers versus benthic in a large alkaline lake.
**Surirella chasei** Cholnoky (Figs 9–29),

**Light microscopy (Figs 9–17):** Valve distinct heteropolar, become less heteropolar in the smaller valves, with evenly ovate–elliptical rounded poles, length: 35.0–78.9 \( \mu \)m, width: 17.0–33.3 \( \mu \)m, length to width ratio: 1.9–2.5. Wing projection distinct; 35–45, mostly 40 alar canals in 100 \( \mu \)m. About 13–14 striae in 10 \( \mu \)m. Valve face ornamented with small refracting granules located at the rim of the alar canals on the top of the porcae and irregularly scattered on the valve face in between the porcae.
Table 1. Overview of different morphological features in *S. oliffii*, based on Cholnoky’s original drawings kept at South African National Diatom Collection, North-West University, South Africa and here represented in Figures 40–43.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Fig. 40</th>
<th>Fig. 41</th>
<th>Fig. 42</th>
<th>Fig. 43</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length (µm)</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td>103.0</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>93.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Width (µm) near apical pole</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>29.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>near foot pole</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>29.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>constricted middle</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length-to-width ratio</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apical pole</td>
<td>broadly rounded and slightly acute</td>
<td>broadly rounded</td>
<td>broadly rounded</td>
<td>broadly rounded but less than the others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foot pole</td>
<td>broadly rounded</td>
<td>broadly rounded</td>
<td>broadly rounded</td>
<td>broadly rounded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alar canals/100 µm</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alar canals mid-valve</td>
<td>almost parallel</td>
<td>almost parallel</td>
<td>almost parallel</td>
<td>parallel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apical pole</td>
<td>radiate</td>
<td>radiate</td>
<td>radiate</td>
<td>radiate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foot pole</td>
<td>radiate</td>
<td>radiate</td>
<td>radiate</td>
<td>radiate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Striae</td>
<td>visible</td>
<td>visible</td>
<td>invisible</td>
<td>invisible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fenestrae/alar canals</td>
<td>broader</td>
<td>broader</td>
<td>much broader</td>
<td>slightly broader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fenestrae width (µm) mid-valve</td>
<td>2.0 – 5.0</td>
<td>2.0 – 3.5</td>
<td>4.0 – 6.0</td>
<td>3.0 – 4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Axial area</td>
<td>linear</td>
<td>linear</td>
<td>linear</td>
<td>linear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>narrow</td>
<td>very narrow</td>
<td>very narrow</td>
<td>very narrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spines</td>
<td>absent</td>
<td>absent</td>
<td>absent</td>
<td>present</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scanning electron microscopy (Figs 18–29): Porcae not reaching the very narrow axial area, except close to the base pole. Mid-region of the valve slightly undulate (Fig. 18). Small blunt teeth present near the apical pole at the junction of the valve face and the valve mantle (Figs 20, 27, 28). This row of blunt teeth continues at the edge of the valve mantle but are located in the indented part of the mantle (Figs 20, 28). Striae uniseriate near the axial area and composed of 56 round areolae in 10 µm, becoming biseriate towards the valve margin. Valve face plentifully ornamented, ranging from valves with scattered granules (Figs 24–25) to more complex structures with small granules and blunt cones/spines near the axial area and in the shallow parts of the porcae (Figs 23, 26), while on the top and on both sides of the porcae there are larger and more complex silica structure present, from bone-like (Figs 18–21) to ramificated with short branches (as is a Baobab tree) (Fig. 26) to flower-like in top view (Fig. 23). Wings vertically developed from the valve face and with a reduction in height near the apices where they are interrupted, leaving a broad space near the head pole and a narrow space near the foot pole. Fenestrae more or less rectangular and wider than the alar canals with 4–6, exceptionally 2, fenestral bars in each fenestra. The complex silica structures present on the valve face are also present on the alar canals adjacent to the fenestrae. Raphe canal smooth; raphe endings straight and slightly enlarged at both poles. Valve mantle indented, striae uniseriate near the mantle edge and becoming biseriate towards the fenestrae. Silica granules or more complex silica structures present on the mantle in accordance with the structures on the valve face.

Internally the uniseriate striae become biseriate towards the valve margin and again uniseriate on the mantle close to its outer margin (Figs 27–29). Portula round, the striae entering the portulae are bi– to triseriate (Figs 27–29).

Lectotype (designated here): Slide NWU 07–172, from material C4 (the valve representing the lectotype is here illustrated as Fig. 14), South African National Diatom Collection, housed at the North–West University, South Africa.

Type locality: Eastlands, Umtali District, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Stream bank fully exposed to sunlight, source of mountain ravine on a fern hill on border of Eastlands.

Ecology: Periphytic and epiphytic on mosses in streams, prefers alkaline and probably rather mesotrophic water.
Distribution: South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho.

Remarks: This taxon is closely related to *Surirella rudis* Hustedt, a species described from Lake Tanganyika (Hustedt in Schmidt 1922, T. 356, figs 5–6). *Surirella rudis* differs in its valve shape which is obviously heteropolar with a broadly rounded apical and sharply rounded base pole. Moreover *S. rudis* can become larger, with a length of 60 to 112 µm (Hustedt in Huber-Pestalozzi 1942; Cocquyt 1998). In the last mentioned publication *S. rudis* was wrongly put in synonymy with *Surirella terryl* Ward ex Terry (Veselá et al. 2013). The number of alar canals in 100 µm also differs: 35–45 in *S. chasei* and 16–20 in *S. rudis*. No SEM images are available of *S. rudis*, so no comparison can be made on the structure of the granules, which are star shaped in *S. chasei*. The ecology of both species is also different: periphytic and epiphytic on mosses in streams with are probably rather mesotrophic compared to oligotrophic large lakes (Hustedt in Huber-Pestalozzi 1942).

*Suri rella coei* Cholnok y ex Cocquyt, J.C. Taylor et Kusber, sp. nov. (Figs 30–39)


Light microscopy (Figs 30–35): Valves isopolar with broadly rounded ends, linear and constricted mid–valve; length: 31.8–75.0 µm, width: 8.0–14.0 µm mid–valve and 9.7–16.0 µm at the broadest parts: length–to–width ratio 4.2. Wing projection rather distinct. Alar canals irregularly distributed and smaller than fenestrae, 3.0–3.3 in 10 µm. Porcae (transapical valve undulations) are irregularly distributed and reach the narrow axial area. The transapical undulations are straight mid–valve, becoming radially towards the poles. Striae not always visible in LM, about 20–24 in 10 µm.

Scanning electron microscopy (Figs 36–39): External valve face without ornamentation (spines, granules, ridges). Porcae relatively high and reaching the axial area (Figs 36, 37). Striae mostly biseriate; uniseriate striae also present but then mostly becoming quickly biseriate towards the valve margin (Fig. 38). In a number of striae a third row of areolae are present in a limited part of striae so that it becomes triseriate. Striae composed of round areolae, 65–70 in 10 µm. Fenestra almost rectangular with slightly rounded angles near the valve face, and with 2–4 thin fenestral bars (Figs 36, 37). Fenestra are much higher than they are wide. Stiation present on the outside of the alar canals on both sides of the fenestrae (Fig. 38). Wings vertically well developed from the valve face, relatively very high near the middle portion of the valve margin and decreasing in height near the apices where they are interrupted leaving a broad space near on pole (the apical pole) (Fig. 38) and a narrower space near the other pole (the base pole) (Fig. 39). Raphe ending near both poles straight and not enlarged (Figs 38, 39). Valve mantle indented and with a similar striation as the valve face (Fig. 39).

Holotype (designated here): Slide NIWR 332/6627 (the valve representing the holotype is here illustrated as Figs 32–33), South African National Diatom Collection, housed at the North–West University, South Africa.

Type locality: Mount Kenya.

Ecology: The taxon was observed in samples from the
Alpine zone (4000–4500 m) on Mount Kenya: two samples from Hall Tarn at 4358 m asl in the Gorges Valley collected by M.J. Coe (Cholnoky 1960), and in samples from a sediment core taken in Hausburg Tarn at 4352 m asl just beneath the Cesar and Joseph glaciers (Cocquyt 2007) sampled by D. Verschuren. In the samples of Hall Tarn, *S. coei* occurred sporadically; in the Hausburg Tarn sediment record it was common. This points to an alpine ecology of this species: high elevation, low water temperature and conductivity, and oligotrophic water conditions.

**Distribution:** Mount Kenya, Kenya. Up to now no other records from other high mountains in East Africa such as the Rwenzori Mountains and high mountains in the Virunga National Park.

**Remarks:** The valves observed in Hausburg Tarn (Cocquyt 2007) are somewhat smaller than given by Cholnoky (1960): length 48.0–75.0 µm versus 31.8–42.0 µm. Cholnoky (1960) discussed the differences between *Surirella coei* and two closely related taxa, *S. linearis f. constricta* (Ehrenberg) Grunow and *Surirella sublinearis* Hustedt. The valves and the alar canals of *S. linearis f. constricta* are broader; the valves of *Surirella sublinearis* are also broader, larger and more robust. As mentioned by Cocquyt (2007) a first investigation of the type slide of *S. linearis* W. Smith (slide BM 2321 b, unpublished data) showed that the valves of this taxon are indeed larger and have less alar canals in 10 µm: width of 18.1–24.0 µm and 1.8–2.2 alar canals in 10 µm compared to a width of 8.0–14.0 µm mid–valve and 9.7–16.0 on the broadest parts of the valve, and 3.0–3.2 alar canals in 10 µm in *Surirella coei*. However, these data on the type of *Surirella linearis* do not match those listed in several literature resources: length 20.0–125.0 µm, width 9.0–25.0 µm, 2.0–3.0 alar canals in 10 µm (Hustedt in...
Figs 18–23. *Surirella chasei*, SEM, type material from sample CH 4: exterior view of valve showing the valve ornamentations, the fenestrae with fenestral bars and the transapical valve undulations; small blunt teeth present near the apical pole at the junction of the valve face and the valve mantle (arrow). Scale bar 20 µm (18, 20, 22), 10 µm (21, 23), 2 µm (19).

**Huber–Pestalozzi** 1942); length 20.0–120.0 µm, width: 9.0–25.0 µm, 2.0–3.0 alar canals in 10 µm (**Kramer & Lange-Bertalot** 1988); length 14.0–57.0 µm, width 12.0–20.0 µm and 2.7–3.5 alar canals in 10 µm (**Cocquyt** 2007). The constriction of the valve margins is not a differentiating character in *Surirella* (**Cocquyt** 2007a), meaning that *S. linearis* f. *constricta* should be included in the valve variability of *S. linearis*. Most of the observed *Surirella coei* valves were slightly constricted. We can state with some certainty that *Surirella*
Figs 24–29 *Surirella chasei*, SEM, type material from sample CH 4: (24–26) exterior view of valve showing the valve ornamentations, (24–25) eroded valve showing the head pole and the raphe endings at the foot pole as well as the uniseriate striae becoming biseriate towards the valve margin, (26) detail of complex silica structures on the top and on both sides of the porcae; (27–29) interior view of valve, note the small blunt teeth near the apical pole at the junction of the valve face and the valve mantle (arrow). Scale bar 20 µm (28), 10 µm (27, 29), 5 µm (24, 25, 26).
and S. linearis are different species. The broadest part of the valves of *Surirella sublinearis* is significantly wider, 18.0–22.0 µm, than the 9.7–16 µm width for *S. coei*. The length of the valves is generally larger for *S. sublinearis* (55.0–75.0 µm) and more robust than for the valves of *S. coei* (31.8–75.0 µm). Although Simonsen (1987) designated a lectotype, we are convinced that no statement can be made regarding the precise identity of *Surirella sublinearis*, unless an in-depth study of that taxon, is undertaken.

**Surirella oliffii Cholnoky** (Figs 40–58)

Österreichische botanische Zeitchrift 103: 90, fig. 134, 1956.

**Light microscopy (Figs 40–50):** Valves slightly heteropolar, linear–elliptical, broadest part near the head pole, becoming gradually narrower towards the foot pole, often slightly constricted in the middle. Head and foot pole broadly rounded, sometimes slightly acute. Length 75.0–100.0 µm, largest width 24.0–30.0 µm and 20.0–23.0 µm in the constricted part. Wing projection distinct, about 1.7–2.0 alar canals in 10 µm; alar canals narrower than the fenestrae. Porcae reaching the narrow linear axial area; parallel to slightly obliquely orientated to the axial area, diagonal in the middle portion of the valve and becoming radiate near the poles. Striae about 20–24 in 10 µm, not always visible in LM. Generally few tiny spines present in the depressions of the porcae.

**Scanning electron microscopy (Figs 51–58):** Striae uniseriate near the axial area and becoming bi– to triseriate near the fenestrae, composed of small round areolae (Figs 55, 58). Areolae on the top of the verrucae often rimmed. Fenestral bars about 24 in 10 µm (Fig. 52). Small silica cubes and spines scattered only on the top of the transapical valve undulations and on the raphe canal (Figs 51, 52, 55, 56); spines are less abundant than the cubes and can attain about 1 µm in length (Figs 53, 54). Raphe endings straight and not enlarged (Figs 53, 54). Mantle strongly indented, and fringed near the raphe canal with 15–20 teeth in 10 µm (Fig. 54). Irregular oval silica plaques present on the valve mantle near the junction with the girdle (Fig. 54). Valvacopula open near one of the poles (Fig. 54).

**Lectotype (designated here):** [icon] Cholnoky reproduced in Cholnoky 1956, fig. 134; here reproduced as Fig. 41. South African National Diatom Collection, housed at the North–West University, South Africa.

**Epitype (designated here):** Slide NIWR 193/3860 from sample Tugela 285 (the valve representing the epitype is here illustrated as Fig. 46), South African National Diatom Collection, housed at the North–West University, South Africa.

**Type locality:** Kwa–Zulu Natal, Umgeni River at Albert Falls, Umgeni, South Africa.

**Epitype locality:** Kwa–Zulu Natal, Umhlalzi River between Eshowe and Melmoth, South Africa.

**Ecology:** optimum in alkaline waters (Cholnoky 1968).

**Distribution:** South Africa, Swaziland, Chad.

**Remarks:** In the description of this taxon Cholnoky (1956) mentioned that there are no spines or processes present on the valves of *Surirella oliffii*. However, some years later Cholnoky (1962) reported valves ornamented with few tiny spines along the porcae. All valves observed during the present study bore tiny spines but always in a small number and along the junction of the depression and top of the verrucae.

At a first view the four drawings Cholnoky originally made of this taxon (Figs 40–43), of which only three were published (Cholnoky 1956, 1960, 1962), seem not to belong to the same taxon, but to three different entities. A comparison of the morphological fea-
The fourth drawing reproduced her in Fig. 43 differs from the others mainly in the presence of tiny spines. Cholnoky (1962, p. 337) mentioned that the presence of these tiny spines is not genetically determined and used to be assigned as form punctata. A similar observation was made in S. sparsipunctata where the presence or absence of small granules (not spines) is not a good characteristic to determine a taxonomic entity (CoCquyt & VyVerMan 1993).

Cholnoky mentioned already that S. oliffii is related to S. elgeri Hustedt, to S. rudis Hustedt and to S. decipiens Hustedt. Surirella oliffii differs from...
**Figs 36–39.** *Surirella coei*, SEM, type material from sample Kenya “A”; exterior view of valve showing the transpical valve undulations and multiserial striae, the canal raphe and high fenestrae with fenestral bars. Scale bars 10 µm (36–37, 39), 5 µm (38).

*S. elgeri*, described from Fagula, Samoa by being much larger and more robust: 75.0–100.0 µm long and 24.0–30.0 µm broad versus 55.0–73.0 µm long and 15.0–19.0 µm broad. Differences between *S. oliffii* with *S. rudis*, described from Lake Tanganyika, are the mid–valve constriction which is not always a good taxonomic characteristic in *Surirella* (see Cocquyt 2000; Cocquyt & Jahn 2007), and the more ovate–elliptical valve–outline. In his original description Cholnoky (1956) mentioned also that the presence of small spines on the valve face of *S. rudis* differentiates it from *S. oliffii* but in 1962 he added the possible presence of spines to his description. *Surirella decipiens* described from Sulawesi (previously Celebes) is much smaller than *S. oliffii* (about 50.0–60.0 µm long and 16.0–20.0 µm broad), has a less developed wing structure, and has a characteristic line of spines (Hustedt in Huber–Pestalozzi 1942; Bramberger et al. 2006).

*S. oliffii* is also related to some taxa described from West Africa: *S. agonaensis* Foged and *S. bonsaensis* Foged (Foged 1966). *S. agonaensis* has a smaller number of alar canals in 10 µm (1.4–1.6) and *S. bonsaensis* is isopolar with a higher number of alar canals in 10 µm (2.0–2.4) (Cocquyt & Kusber 2010). A table summarising the differences in morphological features is given in Cocquyt & Kusber (2010).

*S. oliffii* occurs only rarely in the samples studied. Besides from South Africa and Swaziland, this taxon was also reported from Chad (Compère 1975). For comparison to the South African valves, a valve from material of Chad (slide BR 1595, Lake Chad, north–eastern branch of the delta; collected by Ilitis in 1967) is given in Fig. 50. No differences could be observed between these in LM, and the length, width and number of alar canals in 10 µm (79.0 µm, 26.6 µm and 25 µm and 1.8–1.9 in 10 µm respectively) match *Surirella oliffii*.

The interrupted distribution of this taxon, South Africa and Chad, can be explained by the lack of studies in similar habitats (alkaline waters) in between these two countries.
**Surirella ostentata** CHOLNOKY (Figs 59—64)


**Light microscopy** (Figs 59—62): Valves ovate with a bluntly rounded apical pole and a distinctly sharply elongated foot pole, 8.0–13.0 µm long and 5.0–6.4 µm wide. Wings very weakly developed. Alar canals about 8 in 10 µm. Striation on the valve face indistinct.

**Scanning electron microscopy** (Figs 63–64): Striae parallel in mid-valve, becoming radiate near the apices (Fig. 64). Striae almost reaching the axial area; irregular silica ridges present in between and parallel to the striae which are replaced by silica granules towards the valve margin (Fig. 63). Axial area narrow and almost linear except near the head pole where it is almost absent. Large conopeum present starting at the raphe canal and lying on the valve surface covering it for about ¼, and interrupted near the apices (Fig. 63). Valve mantle indented. Internally mostly 3, sometimes 4 of the uniseriate striae, which are strongly radiate near the head pole, are present in each portula (Fig. 64). Girdle bands not observed.

**Lectotype (designated here):** Slide NIWR 191/3802 from type material, indicated by CHOLNOKY (1962), Tugela 217 (the valve representing the lectotype is here illustrated as Fig. 62), South African National Diatom Collection, housed at the North–West University, South Africa.

**Type locality:** canal near Vredendal, splitting from the Olifantsrivier in the mountains, Western Cape, South Africa.

**Ecology:** slightly alkaline water.

**Distribution:** South Africa and Swaziland; South Africa, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Ethiopia, Afar and Uganda as *S. ovata var. africana*.

**Remarks:** In 1955 CHOLNOKY described this taxon as a variety of *S. ovata* KÜTZING from which it differs in its characteristic hyaline valves. Seven years later CHOLNOKY (1962) was convinced that the taxon he described as *S. ovata var. africana* had no relationship with *S. ovata* and he elevated it to species rank under the name *Surirella ostentata* to avoid a later homonym for *S. africana* LEUDUGER–FORTMOREL (LEUDUGER–FORTMOREL 1898).
In the type slide only 3 valves could be observed. They all have an oval valve shape as Cholnoky mentioned in his description, in contrast to Cholnoky’s original drawing were the foot pole is typically elongated. The sharply elongated foot pole is masked by the well developed conopeum, as in visible in SEM.

This small *Surirella* species is rather common in samples from Mpumalanga (Eastern Transvaal), in a tributary of the Elands River between Belfast and Machadodorp, South Africa. Valves better resembling the original drawing of Cholnoky were observed in sample NIWR 206/4103 (Figs 65–70). According to the distribution records in the literature, it should be present not only in South Africa but also in East and West Africa. The reports of *Surirella ovata* var. *africana* from East Africa are based on Gasse (1986). However this taxon was treated together with the var. *ovata* and var. *pinnata* (W. Smith) Brun, without illustration and the real identity is to be confirmed. In West Africa Möller (1962) found *Surirella ovata* var. *africana* rarely (1%) in the Kantebge river, with granite and granodiorite bedrock, near Matini in Sierra Leone, and Foged (1966) reported it from a river with clear water in the vicinity of Takoradi in Ghana. Again no drawings are available to confirm the identity of the taxon observed in Sierra Leone and Ghana.

*Suirrella pseudotenuis* Cholnoky (Figs 71–78)
Portugalliae Acta Biologica Ser. B. 4: 226, fig. 120, 1954.

**Light microscopy (Figs 71–78):** Valves slightly heteropolar, with a rounded apical pole and a acute base pole; length: 22.2–35.0 µm and up to 40.0 µm for the initial cell (Fig. 78), width: 7.0–9.6 µm, length to width ratio: 2.9. Apical pole not laying in the same plane as the rest of the valve but somewhat curved to the girdle. Alar canals (4.5) 5.5–6.0 in 10 µm. Wing projection present but not very distinct, alar canals smaller than the fenestrae. About 30 striae in 10 µm, parallel mid–valve becoming radiate towards the poles. In LM striation only visible on the top of the transapical valve undulations. Transapical undulations shallow, not reaching the axial area. Axial area narrow. Fenestral bars same density as the striae.

**Scanning electron microscopy:** no valves of *S. pseudotenuis* were observed during SEM investigation.

**Lectotype (designated here):** Slide NWU 07–138 from material C5 (the valve representing the lectotype
**Surirella oliffii**, LM: (48–49) valve from slide NIWR 193/3860 taken at different foci; (50) valve from slide BR 1595 (Tchad). Scale bar 10 µm.

is here illustrated as Fig. 76), South African National Diatom Collection, housed at the North–West University, South Africa.

**Type locality:** Gully, south of the road to Vumba, Umatali, South Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

**Ecology:** Found on mosses growing on rocks at the edge of a stream in full sunshine. According to Cholnoky (1954) *S. pseudotenuis* occurred together with “moss diatom taxa” typical for small subtropical mesotrophic (to slightly eutrophic) running waters with a pH around 6, which are common in the region: dominance of *Caloneis chasei* Cholnoky, and *Eunotia praerupta* and *Nitzschia palea* (Kützing) W.Smith as common species. Rather common taxa in the community were *E. tenella* and *Frustulia saxonica* Rabenhorst (as *F. rhomboides* var. *saxonica* (Rabenhorst) De Toni, while *Achnanthis minutissimum* (Kützing) Czarnecki (as *Achnanthes minutissima* Kützing), *Encyonema perpusillum* (A. Cleve) D.G. Mann (as *Cymbella perspusilla* A. Cleve), *F. chasei* Cholnoky, *Gomphonema lagenula* Kützing (as *G. parvulum* var. *lagenulum* (Kützing) Frenguelli), *Navicula cincta* var. *angusta* (Grunow) A. Cleve (as *N. cari* var. *angusta* Van Heurck) and *Nitzschia ignorata* Krasske were not uncommon.

**Distribution:** only reported from Zimbabwe.

**Remarks:** The observed valve (22.2 µm long and 7.6 µm wide) is smaller than the dimensions given by Cholnoky (1954): 25.0–35.0 µm long and 7.0–9.0 µm wide. On the other hand the number of alar canals in 10 µm is somewhat denser 5.5–6.0 compared to 4.5–5.5 given by Cholnoky (1954). Cholnoky (1954) remarked that the striae on the valve face are very indistinct even under phase contrast. However the striae on the top of the transapical valve undulations were clearly visible on the lectotype when using differential interference contrast. Differences with the related *S. tenuis* Ant. Mayer (1916) are not only the smaller dimensions of *S. pseudotenuis* (22.2–35.0 µm long and 7.0–9.0 µm wide versus 22.0–46.0 µm and 6.5–10 µm), but the valves are also less pronouncedly heteropolar, the wing projection is less distinct and the fenestrae are broader than the alar canals.

**Surirella pseudothienemannii** Cholnoky (Figs 79–84)

Nova Hedwigia Beiheft 21: 72–73, fig. 184, 185, 1966.

**Light microscopy** (Figs 79–84): Valves isopolar, linear with conical/tapering not very broadly rounded.
Figs 51–54. *Surirella oliffii*, SEM from material NIWR 193/3860, outside valve views: (51–52) scattered silica bars on the top of the verrucae and on the raphe canal; (53–54) apical pole with straight raphe endings, (54) silica plaques present on the edge of the indented valve mantle and the side of the valvocopula. Scale bars 10 µm (51), 5 µm (52), 1 µm (53–54).

ends. No constriction mid–valve. Length 90.0–220.0 µm, width 20.0–38.0 µm. Wing projection narrow, distinct. Transapical valve undulations irregularly distributed on the valve face, parallel mid–valve and strongly radiate near the poles, 1.8–2.8 in 10 µm. The depressions of the transapical undulations are much broader than the alar canals. Striae fine, very indistinct.

**Scanning electron microscopy:** no valves of *S. pseudotenuis* were observed during SEM investigation.

**Holotype:** Collection numbered S.W. Africa 164, slide NIWR 169/3367 (the valve representing the holotype is here illustrated as Figs 82–83), South African National Diatom Collection, housed at the North–West University.

**Type locality:** Okavango, in between the indigenous colonies of Tshey and Shakawe at the limit of South West Africa, British Bechuanaland (now Botswana).

**Ecology:** freshwater river and swamp.

**Distribution:** Botswana and South Africa.

**Remarks:** Closely related to *S. thienemannii Hustedt* (in HUBER–PESTALOZZI 1942, BRAMBERGER et al. 2006) described from Sumatra and Sulawesi (Indonesia, Asia). Differences between the two taxa can be observed in the shape of the poles, the more strongly radiate alar canals near the poles and the broader axial area in *S. pseudothienemannii*. According to CHOLNOKY (1966) differences can be observed in the wing projection which is very distinct in *S. pseudothienemannii* while it is narrow and indistinct in *S. thienemannii*. However the reports of *S. thienemannii* in Okavango and South Africa (CHOLNOKY 1957b, 1960c) have to be checked as at the first view these valves seem to be different from the taxon described from Sulawesi (HUSTEDT in HUBER–PESTALOZZI 1942; BRAMBERGER et al. 2006).

It is also related to *Surirella engleri* O. MÜLLER, a common species in Central Africa (COQUYT & JAHN 2007a). The main differences between the two taxa are the shape of the poles and the more strongly radiate striae near the poles in *S. pseudothienemannii* compared to *S. engleri*.

**Documentation of African Surirellaceae: Impact for knowledge and science**

In this paper we added types, LM and SEM micro-
Discussions

In this study the Cholnoky’s material of Surirellaceae was reinvestigated by light and, if possible, scanning electron microscopy. The descriptions of the taxa were extended and the taxonomic status of taxa described as new by Cholnoky was confirmed.

As this is the last article of a series of ten studies on African Surirellaceae taxa (CoCquyt & Jain 2005a, 2007a, b, c, d, 2014; CoCquyt & Kusber 2010; CoCquyt et al. 2007, 2013) dealing with nomenclatural types, we discuss the outcome of the “Pilot project on the digitization of African micro-algae types and typical specimens: the diatom family Surirellaceae”. The evaluated taxa have been described by seven authors or teams of authors between the 1830s and 1966. All species were depicted by drawings based on light microscopy studies and for all taxa slides and/or materials were deposited in publicly available collections. In publications dealing with diatom research, drawings were replaced in the mid 20th century by light micrographs and complemented soon after by scanning electron micrographs. For 81% of the taxa included in our re-evaluation up-to-date documentation was added. Making nomenclatural types accessible is an important requisite for taxonomy (Smith 2004). Whereas vascular plants have been in the focus of the African Plant
Figs 59–64. *Surirella ostentata*; (59) original drawing by Cholnoky, kept at the South African National Diatom Collection, North–West University, South Africa, each quadrant corresponds with a square of 5 × 5 µm, (60–62) LM, valves from the type slide NIWR 191/3802; (63–64) SEM, valves from type material JO 8, (63) exterior view of valve showing the irregular silica ridges, present in between and parallel to the striae and replaced by silica granules towards the valve margin, and the large conopeum starting at the raphe canal, (64) inside valve view. Scale bars 10 µm (60–62), 5 µm (63, 64).

Initiative (SMITH 2004), KLOPPER et al. (2002) stated that micro–organisms have been severely neglected. One reason might be that digitization of micro algae is not comparable with scans of herbarium sheets because each cell in a mixed sample has to be found, measured and photographed separately. As expected these steps can be very time consuming. In some cases the original material was not available (COQUYT & JAIN 2005b, c), or the labeled species could not be found (COQUYT et al. 2013), and in one case the cell in a valve moved within a permanent preparation (COQUYT & KUSBER 2010). Even though diatom material used for descriptions was deposited in collections in most cases strict typification of new taxa was not usual in diatom research before 1958 (JAIN & KUSBER. 2009), we typified 65% of the taxa investigated, digitizing the valve representing the respective type. In case where the original material was not available, we epitypified specimens according to the provisions of McNEILL et al. (2006). This treatment allowed us to link the name to the specimen, which represents the described taxon best.

Compared to the documentation of the Hustedt collection (SIMONSEN 1987), the Greville collection (WILLIAMS 1988), the Krasske collection (LANGE–BERTALOT et al. 1996) or parts of the Ehrenberg collection (JAIN & KUSBER 2004, 2006), we have chosen a monographic approach for a chosen higher taxon (*Surirellaceae*). Both approaches are very helpful for studies on diatom taxa, described originally with an outdated documentation. The focus of the first is to make natural history collection specimens available; the focus of the latter is a taxonomic investigation. The latter makes sense,
Fig. 65–70. Surirella ostentata (syn. S. ovata var. africana), LM, valves from slide NIWR 206/4103. Scale bar 10 µm.

Fig. 71–78. Surirella pseudotenuis: (71) original drawing by Cholnoky, kept at the South African National Diatom Collection, housed at the North–West University, South Africa. Each quadrant corresponds with a square of 5 × 5 µm; (72–78) LM, valves from slide NWU 07–138 made from material from sample C 5. Scale bar 5 µm.
if the material is to be completely taxonomic assessed, especially when no types were designated and the actual identity of the taxon is in doubt. This approach generates the best added value but goes far beyond the scope of a digitization project. In the course of our ten studies, 4% of the taxa have been validated, 18% have been synonymized and 18% have been recombined. Two taxa from historic material proved to be new to science. Our findings emphasise that both deposition of material in publicly available collections as well as re-evaluation of these materials and availability of the results are essential for future research.

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Figs 81–84. *Surirella pseudothienemannii*, LM, valves from holotype slide NIWR 169/3367: (82–83) same valve taken at different foci. Scale bar 10 µm.


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