

3. ORANIA RAVAKA

The name 'ravaka' is the Malagasy for ornament, jewel; this is a particularly elegant tree, rather like *O. trispatha*, but with a more slender trunk.

DISTRIBUTION. NE Madagascar.

HABITAT. Lowland rain forest; ridge crests and valley bottoms; 200–550 m.

LOCAL NAMES. *Sindro* (Betsimisaraka); *Vapakafotsy* (Tsimihety).

USES. Not recorded.

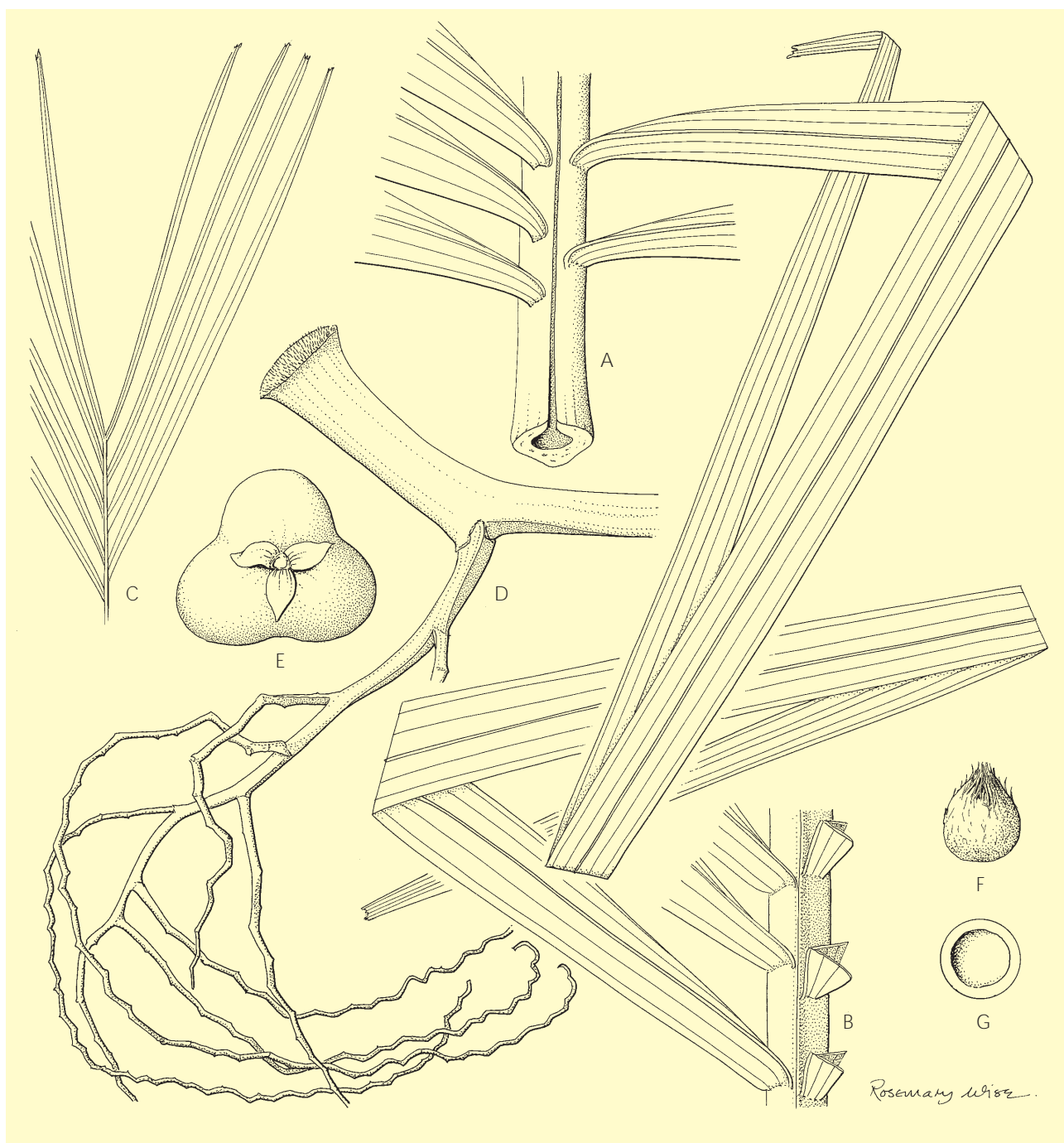
CONSERVATION STATUS. Vulnerable. Known only from

three sites, but with fairly large population numbers, though outside the protected area; total number estimated at 500.

***Orania ravaka* Beentje sp. nov.**

Palma disticha foliolis ramentas castaneas infra ferentis a ceteris speciebus Madagascariensibus inflorescentia in 2 ordines ramificanti et a *O. trispatha* foliolis paucioribus minoribus et inflorescentia longiore graciliore differt. Typus: Madagascar, Sahavary, *Dransfield et al.* JD6401 (Holotypus K; isotypi P, TAN).

Solitary palm. **TRUNK** 10–15 m tall, 9–20 cm diam.; diameter just below crown < 10 cm; internodes 2.5–5 cm long, pale brown or grey-brown; nodal scars obscure; basal boss c. 35 cm diam., with surface roots. **LEAVES** 6–8 in the crown, distichous; sheath open, 35 cm long, with marginal fibres; apparent petiole 30 cm long, channelled; sheath



***Orania trispatha*.** **A** distal part of petiole and basal leaflets $\times 1/3$; **B** mid section of leaf $\times 1/3$; **C** leaf tip $\times 1/3$; **D** first order branch of inflorescence $\times 1/4$; **E** fruit $\times 1/2$; **F** endocarp $\times 1/2$; **G** seed in section $\times 1/2$. All from *Beentje* 4522. Drawn by Rosemary Wise.



**Orania
ravaka**

and apparent petiole combined 65–94 cm long, with patches of dense red-brown or grey scales and wax, distally c. 1.3×0.9 –1 cm diam.; rachis 1.2–1.8 m long, in mid-leaf 1–2 cm wide, densely scaly, with scattered scales or glabrous; leaflets 33–44 on each side of the rachis, regular, stiff, those on opposite sides of the rachis at an angle of c. 90 with each other, strongly discoloured and much paler abaxially, the proximal 36–87 \times 0.4–2.4 cm, the median 47–77.5 \times 2.5–4.8 cm (interval 3.5–4.5 cm), the distal 18–45 \times 0.4–2.8 cm, distal pair hardly connate, apices obliquely praemorse, main veins 3–5, midrib (and occasionally on other major veins as well) with large red-brown ramenta to 15 mm, with scattered red small scales, with visible sinuous transverse veinlets. **INFLORESCENCE** interfoliar, branching to 2 orders, spreading, protandrous; peduncle curved, 42–60 cm long, distally 12–18 \times 5–12 mm diam., rusty-tomentose; prophyll borne 2.5–13 cm above the base of the peduncle, 16–32 cm long, 3.5–6 cm wide, with patches of red-brown scales; peduncular bract(s) one or two (in the same population), deciduous, inserted at 6.5–14



Orania ravaka, growing in groups along a stream in the Manarara Avaratra Biosphere Reserve.

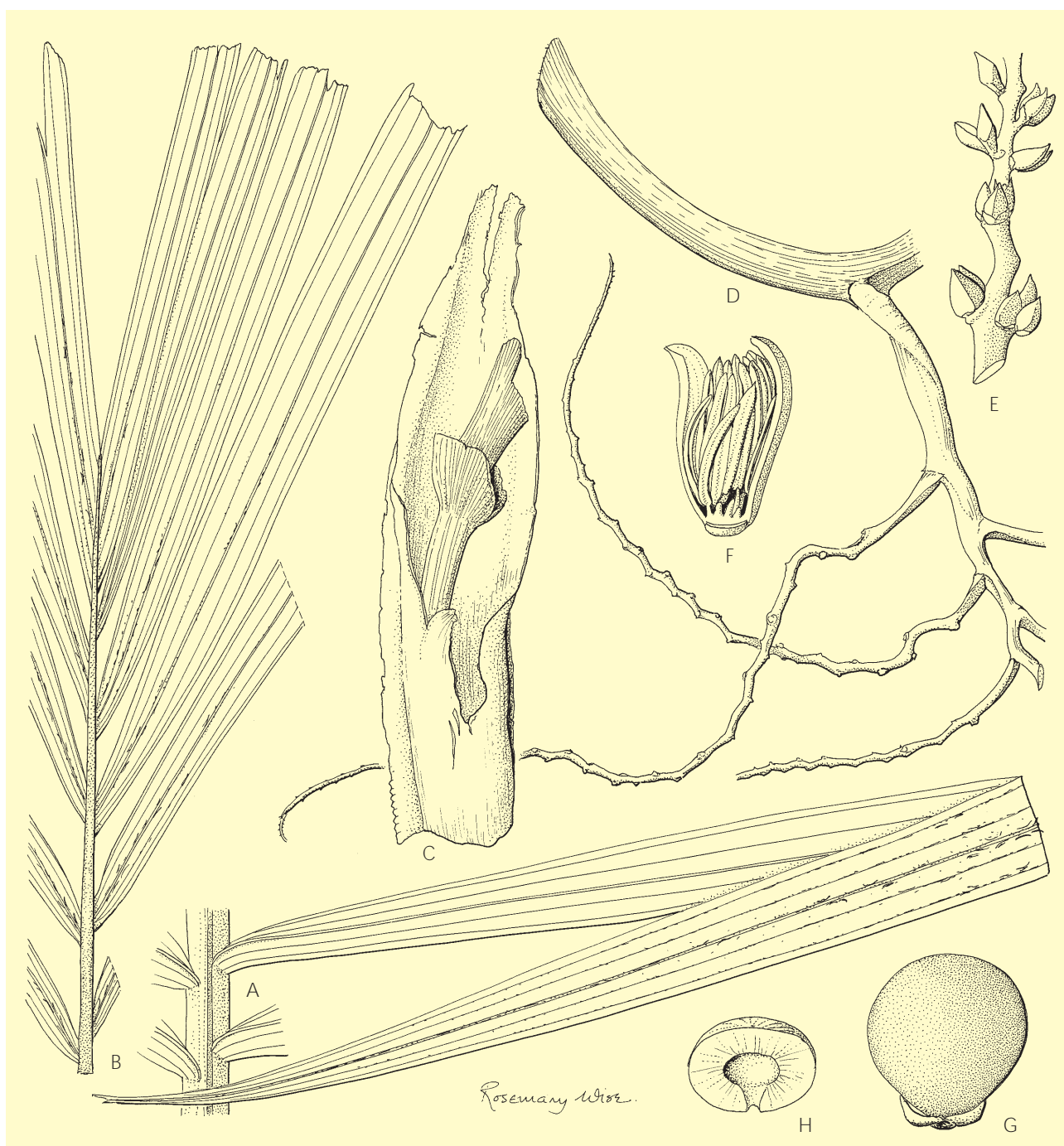


Orania ravaka. Detail of crown with (left) inflorescence at pistillate anthesis, and (right) inflorescence at staminate anthesis, Hiaraka.

cm and 16 cm from the base of the peduncle, 43–63.5 cm long, 7–9 cm diam., inflated, beaked; rachis with c. 13 first order branches, these proximally to 17 × 8 mm diam.; rachillae cream at anthesis, 7–40 cm long, 2–4 mm diam., zigzag, with rusty scales; triads distant. **STAMINATE FLOWERS** cream, not scented; sepals 1.5–2.4 × 2.2–2.8 mm; petals 8–13 × 4–6 mm; stamens 22–27, the filaments 0.7–2.5 mm (connate for up to 0.5 mm) with a bulbous base to 1 mm diam., anthers basifixed, slightly sagittate, equal or slightly unequal, 6.3–7.6 × 1.2–1.3 mm; pistillode not seen. **PISTILLATE FLOWERS** greenish, with sepals 1–4.5 × 4–5.5 mm; petals 10–15 × 9–11 mm; staminodes 9–12, thread-like; ovary globose, 10–11 mm diam., with c. 1 mm long papillose stigmas. **FRUIT** yellow or pale brown, slightly obovoid or globose, 4–6 cm diam., with sub-basal stigmatic remains. **SEED** depressed globose, 2.5–3.8 cm high, 3.2–4.2 cm diam., with fibrous surface; endosperm homogeneous; cotyledonary stalk up to 50 cm long and 6 mm diam.

NOTE. Differs from the other Madagascar species in the inflorescence branched to 2 orders, and from the other distichous species by the fewer leaflets which are smaller (with red-brown rather than grey ramenta), and the longer, more slender inflorescence.

SPECIMENS SEEN. Maroantsetra: Hiaraka, Oct. 1986 (fl.), *Dransfield et al.* JD6376 (K, P, TAN); Sahavary, Oct. 1986 (fl., fr.), *Dransfield et al.* JD6401 (Holotype K; isotypes P, TAN); idem, Feb. 1988 (y.fr.), *Dransfield et al.* JD6458 (K, TAN); idem, April 1989 (fr.), *Du Puy & Du Puy* MB 161 (K, TAN). Mananara Avaratra: Antanambe, Oct. 1991 (fl., fr.), *Beentje & Andriampaniry* 4466 (BH, K, MO, P, TAN).



Orania ravaka. **A** mid section of leaf × 1/3; **B** leaf tip × 1/2; **C** base of inflorescence × 1/3; **D** first order branch of inflorescence and tip of peduncle × 1/3; **E** detail of rachilla × 1; **F** staminate flower, one petal removed × 3; **G** fruit × 2/3; **H** seed in vertical section × 2/3. **A, B, G, H** from *Dransfield et al.* JD6458, **C – F** from *Dransfield et al.* JD6401. Drawn by Rosemary Wise.