Studies in fossil gymnospermous woods-part VIII.
A new species of *Araucarioxylon* — *A. wejgaoense* from Lower Gondwana of Chandrapur District, Maharashtra

Shripad N. Agashe & M.S. Shashi Kumar


Recent palaeobotanical field work carried out in Lower Gondwana exposures of Chandrapur District has brought to light several petrified woods with good preservation. Most of them were found in nalis. Amongst them, a new species of *Araucarioxylon* has been described in this paper.


S.N. Agashe & M.S. Shashi Kumar, Palaeobotany Lab, Department of Botany, Bangalore University, Bangalore 560 056, India.


The present work involved collection and investigation of a large number of well preserved petrified woods from various Lower Gondwana localities of Chandrapur District. The Present paper incorporates the anatomical studies of a petrified wood.

**MATERIAL AND METHOD**

Petrified wood described here was collected during field trips to Chandrapur District, Maharashtra.
Table 1—Showing comparative anatomical characters of species of *Araucarioxyton*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Growth ring</th>
<th>Medullary ray</th>
<th>Tangential pitting</th>
<th>Border pitting on radial walls</th>
<th>Cross field pits</th>
<th>Locality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>A. arberi</em> (Seward 1919) comb. nov. Maheshwari 1972</td>
<td>Upper Carboniferous</td>
<td>Distinct</td>
<td>1-21 cells usually 6-12 cells high</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>1-4 seriate circular</td>
<td>1-10 oblique</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A. manieri</em> (Krausel &amp; Dolianiti 1956) comb. nov. Maheshwari 1972</td>
<td>Upper Carboniferous</td>
<td>Distinct</td>
<td>1-47 cells high average of 9-10 cells high</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>1-4 seriate pore elliptical</td>
<td>1-9 some times in groups</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A. mohgaoensis</em> Lakhmanpal et al. 1977</td>
<td>Early Tertiary</td>
<td>Distinct</td>
<td>Uniserate 2-30 cells high mostly 8-15 cells</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>1-3 seriate mostly 2 seriate contiguous alternate Hexagonal</td>
<td>1-2 bordered cupressoid circular-oval in shape</td>
<td>Mohgaon Kalan Chandwara District M.P.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A. gondwanense</em> (Mathy 1964) comb. nov. Maheshwari 1972</td>
<td>Lower Permian</td>
<td>Distinct</td>
<td>13% rays Biseriate 1-43 cells high average of 9-10 cells high</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>1-5 seriate alternate/sub-opposite</td>
<td>2-8 contiguous or separate circular-oval in shape</td>
<td>Jharia Coalfield, Bihar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A. parbeliense</em> Agashe &amp; Gowda 1978</td>
<td>Permian</td>
<td>Distinct</td>
<td>1-24 cells mostly 2-5 cells high</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>1-5 seriate pore circular-oval</td>
<td>8-9 bordered pores oblique slit like</td>
<td>Parbelia Colliery, Bengal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A. lathiense</em> Agashe, Prasad &amp; Suresh 1981</td>
<td>Permian</td>
<td>Distinct</td>
<td>1-2 seriate 2-27 cells high average of 11 cells high</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>1-4 seriate round-hexagonal with distinct border</td>
<td>2-9 most commonly 2,4,6</td>
<td>Lathi, Chandrapur, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A. lathiense</em> Agashe, Prasad &amp; Suresh 1981</td>
<td>Permian</td>
<td>Distinct</td>
<td>1-2 serate Commonly uniserate 1-35 cells average of 4 cells high</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>1-4 seriate alternate, separate contiguous Hexagonal</td>
<td>1-11 cupressoid commonly 2-4 round-oval</td>
<td>Lathi, Chandrapur, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A. nandori</em> Vagyan &amp; Raju 1981</td>
<td>Upper Permian</td>
<td>Distinct</td>
<td>1-2 serate mostly uniserate 2-30 cells high</td>
<td>Absent</td>
<td>1-4 seriate alternate, separate contiguous</td>
<td>1-10 cupressoid circular-oval with thin border</td>
<td>Lathi, Chandrapur, Maharashtra Nandori, Chandrapur, Maharashtra Wejgaon, Chandrapur, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A. Kotharanensis</em> Agashe &amp; Prasad 1984</td>
<td>Permian</td>
<td>Distinct</td>
<td>1-3 serate 1-44 cells high with an average of 8 cells</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>1-4 seriate Araucarioxyton free/contiguous radial pits in groups of 2,3,4,6,8 occur.</td>
<td>1-12 cupressoid with thin border commonly 4-8 field pits occur</td>
<td>Bhivkund, Chandrapur, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A. bhivkundense</em> Agashe &amp; Prasad 1984</td>
<td>Permian</td>
<td>Distinct</td>
<td>1-2 serate free 1-35 cells high with an average height of 8 cells</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>1-2 serate free/contiguous some times in groups of 2,3,4</td>
<td>1-8 cupressoid commonly 1-2 field pits per field occur</td>
<td>Bhivkund, Chandrapur, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A. wejgaonense</em> sp. nov.</td>
<td>Permian</td>
<td>Distinct</td>
<td>1-2 serate mostly uniserate 2-34 cells high on an average of 8-12 cells high.</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>1-2 serate mostly biseriate contiguous alternate/ sub-opposite may be in groups of 2 also.</td>
<td>1-6 cupressoid commonly 2-4 field pits occur</td>
<td>Wejgaon, Chandrapur, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**PLATE 1**

*Araucarioxyton wejgaonense* sp. nov.

1. T.S. of the spring wood x 250.
2. Uniseriate and biseriate medullary ray in T.L.S X 100.
3. R.L.S. showing uniseriate contiguous bordered pits x 400.
4. R.L.S. with biseriate contiguous or free bordered pits x 400.
5. Uniserate and biseriate bordered pits, biseriate pits in groups of 2,3,4,6,8 occur. x 400.
6. R.L.S. showing biseriate alternate bordered pits x 1000.
7. Cross field having two, three, four field pits x 400.
8. Cross field showing maximum of six field pits x 400.
9. Cross field having four field pits x 1000.
PLATE 1
One of the petrified woods numbered as B.U.P.W. No. 2074 was silicified and collected from Wejgaon, a small village, situated at a distance of about 60 km southeast of Chandrapur. This wood was collected from an open field. Several thin sections in different planes were made using standard methods of sectioning. Though these specimens were rich in silica lot of organic matter was also well preserved with them.

**DESCRIPTION**

*Araucarioxylon* Kraus 1870 emend. Maheshwari 1972

*Araucarioxylon wejgaoense* sp. nov.

**Diagnosis**—Decorticated secondary wood with distinct growth rings, 1-2 seriate, mostly uniseriate, 2-34 cells high medullary ray, 2 seriate rays being rare. Tangential pits present, radial pits 1-3 seriate. Araucaroid field pits, cross field pits 1-6 cupressoid type.

**Holotype**—B.U.P.W. no. 2074 along with slides deposited in Palaeobotany and Palynology Laboratory, Department of Botany, Bangalore University, Bangalore.

**Locality**—Wejgaon Village, Chandrapur District, Maharashtra, India.

**Horizon**—Lower Gondwana (Permian).

The anatomical characters of the present wood compare with the generic diagnostic characters of *Araucarioxylon*. Further comparison with known species of *Araucarioxylon* made us to describe a new species for this wood.

**Observations**—The material consists of decorticated secondary wood measuring 11.3 cm in length and 6.6 x 5 cm in thickness. Secondary wood shows distinct growth rings. Spring wood tracheids are 120-140 cells thick and appear mostly rectangular in shape measuring 180 x 60 μm (Pl. 1, fig. 1). Autumn wood tracheids are comparatively narrow with 2-4 cells thick measuring 60 x 30 μm. Medullary rays are 1-2 seriate, commonly uniseriate, rarely biseriate rays occur 2-34 cells high, average height of ray is 8-12 cells, tangential pits distinct. Uniseriate rays constitute 98 per cent whereas biseriate rays are represented by 2 per cent of the total rays. Radial pits range from 1-2 seriate. Araucaroid bordered pits circular oval in shape with distinct border. Radial pits ranged in various manner. Uniseriate radial pits are contiguous (Pl. 1, fig. 3). Biseriate radial pits contiguous/free alternate sub-opposite, arranged in group of 2, 4. Hexagonal biseriate radial pits are also seen (Pl. 1, figs 4, 5, 6.) Maximum diameter of radial pit 25 μm, that of lumen is 10 μm. Cross field pits 1-6 cupressoid spherical oval in shape, commonly 2, 4 pits occur in a field. Average diameter of field pit is 15 μm (Pl. 1, figs 7, 8, 9).

**DISCUSSION AND COMPARISON**

The petrified wood described in this paper shows the typical characters of *Araucarioxylon* Kraus emend. Maheshwari 1972 in the presence of cupressoid round pits in cross field areas and Araucaroid pitting on radial walls. In having maximum number of six cross field pits the present species comes closer to *A. nandori*, but differs in radial pitting and ray characters. However, this new species does not have any resemblance with *A. bhivkundense* in cross field pits and in medullary rays. The only similarity is in the arrangement of radial pits. In both *A. wejgaoense* and *A. bhivkundense* the radial pits are arranged in groups of 2, 4. *A. wejgaoense* sp. nov. differs from *A. mohgaoensis* in radial and cross field pit characters. In both the species, the medullary ray characters are similar being mostly uniseriate, although average ray height show slight variations. The other araucarian wood, *A. lobarinense*, described from the same horizon, differs from new wood in medullary ray and radial pitting. The only resemblance between the two is in cross field pits arrangement where 2, 4 pits/field occur commonly. It also somewhat resembles *A. surangeii* in cross field pits arrangement, but differs from *A. surangeii* in medullary ray and radial pitting characters.

The comparison of the new species with all the known and described species of *Araucarioxylon* has been shown in the Table 1.

Since it differs from all the known species, it has been described as a new species—*A. wejgaoense*. The specific epithet is after the village Wejgaon from where the wood was collected.
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REFERENCES


