

# Paper mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*) as a commensal model for human mobility in Oceania: Anthropological, botanical and genetic considerations

Seelenfreund, D.

Clarke, A. C.

Oyanedel, N.

Piña, R.

Lobos, S.

Matisoo-Smith, E. A.

Seelenfreund, A.

Paper mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera* (L.) Vent.) was one of the most widely distributed crop species in prehistoric Oceania, occurring from continental East Asia to the Polynesian islands. Its broad distribution is largely due to human-mediated dispersal during colonization of the islands of Near and Remote Oceania. We explore the potential for analyses of genetic variation in paper mulberry and the value of such data for the development of a new commensal model species for reconstructing patterns of human mobility in Oceania. We introduce and discuss paper mulberry as another commensal species and outline key features for its contribution to the understanding of human migration and post-colonization interaction. Here, we describe some of the extant *B. papyrifera* populations in Remote Oceania and Taiwan that were sampled for initial studies. We argue that the unique characteristics of this species and its importance in ancient Pacific island societies may provide the opportunity to