Three Grasses New to Turkey

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Received: 05.01.1998
Accepted: 14.12.1999

Abstract: Studies on herbarium material of grasses recently collected in Turkey revealed the existence of three taxa hitherto not reported from this country: *Bromus tomentellus* Boiss. subsp. *nivalis* (Bornm.) H. Scholz & Byfield, subsp. et stat. nov., *Microstegium vimineum* (Trin.) A. Camus as a probably introduced plant, and *Poa asiae-minoris* H. Scholz & Byfield, sp. nova, described here as a species new to science.

Key Words: Gramineae, new records, Turkey.

Türkiye için Yeni Üç Gramineae Türü


Anahtar Sözcükler: Gramineae, yeni kayıtlar, Türkiye.

Introduction

Through the courtesy of Professor Asuman Baytop (University of Istanbul), the senior author had the opportunity to study some grasses collected by A. J. Byfield and colleagues in Turkey during 1994 and 1995. Careful examination of this and other material - supported by literature studies-resulted in the recognition of three new members of the Turkish flora, the topic of the following short tripartite account.

Results

1. A new subspecies for Turkey:

*Bromus tomentellus* Boiss. subsp. *nivalis* (Bornm.) H. Scholz & Byfield, subsp. et stat. nov. (sect. *Pnigma* Dum.), Figure 1.


HOLOTYPUS: “Persia borealis: m. Elburs, in jugo Kendewan, 3000 m, 23.6.1902, Bornmüller Iter Persicum alterum, J. & A. Bornmüller 8390 (B)

TURKEY: N. E. Anatolia. A9 Çoruh: 23 km from Şavşat to Ardahan, before Çam pass, 2350 m, alpine pasture grassland on igneous rocks, abundant, 4.vii.1994, A. J. Byfield & D. Pearman B 1289 (ISTE 67154)

The Turkish material matches very well the holotype of *Bromus tomentellus* subsp. *nivalis* from the Elburs Mountains in N. Iran. The original description that reads “paniculae brevis pauci-(2-4)-spiculatae spiculis breviter pedunculatis solitariis, ceterum vaginis radicalibus reticulatim fibrosis, indumento velutino ut in typo”, unequivocally characterizes this alpine taxon: panicle short and poor-flowered, basal leaf-sheaths decaying into a fibrous reticulum (1). However, Bornmüller does not mention the short subapical lemma awn, which in length does not exceed 2/3 of the lemma body, in contrast to the usually longer awn nearly as long as the lemma body in subsp. *tomentellus* (2), a taxon widespread at lower alpine-montane altitudes of Turkey. The pubescent leaf indumentum consisting of very short fine hairs and scattered longer hairs is substantially alike in the
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specimens of subsp. nivalis from both Turkey and Iran. Flora Iranica (3) does not cite either the Bornmüller number or Bornmüller’s name. Turkish material of B. tomentellus subsp. nivalis is shown in Figure 1.

Distribution of subspecies: N. E. Anatolia, Iran. Irano-Turanian element. In Turkey, a subspecies of dry montane pasture on acid rocks, and currently known from one locality. It is not known to be under threat (IUCN threat category: Lower Risk (least concern).

2. A new genus and species record from Turkey:


Basionym: Andropogon vimineus Trin.

Synonym: Pollinia imberbis Nees

TURKEY: N. E. Anatolia. A7 Giresun: Espiye River, immediately e. of the town of Espiye, wet, seasonally-

tlooded river margin on gravels & sands. 5 m, 11.x.1994, A. J. Byfield B 1334 (ISTE 67575)

The genus and species, here recorded for the first time from Turkey, belong to the tribe Andropogoneae Dum. subtribe Saccharinae Griseb. In this country the most widely-known subtribe representatives include the genera Imperata Cyr. and Saccharum L., both strongly stout perennials with more or less compound dense silky panicles. Microstegium vimineum, however, is a weak-stemmed annual with loosely pilose narrow digitate or solitary spicate racemes. The whole plant, from material collected in Turkey, is reproduced in Figure 2.

It seems very unlikely that the riverside habitat of the Turkish plant indicates a natural occurrence. Outside the main distribution area of Microstegium, covering, with
about 15-20 species, Japan, S. China and S. Asia, *M. vimineum*, described from Nepal, has occasionally been reported as a weedy adventive in many other countries adjacent to Turkey, e.g., in Transcaucasia (4, 5). Thus it is equally reasonable to assume an alien status of this species also for Turkey.

3. A new species from Turkey:

Poa asiae-minoris H. Scholz & Byfield. sp. nov. (Sect. Homalopoa Dum.), Figures 3-4.


Poa remota Forselles affinis sed spiculis (4-)5-floribus 5-6 mm longis, lemmatibus dorso scabriusculoribus nervibus medians ad 1/3 sparsim hirsutis, internodis culmi ac vaginis ac basis foliorum laminae breviter pubescentibus distincta.

Different from the closely related *Poa remota* Forselles by (4-)5-flowered spikelets 5-6 mm long, more scabrous on the lemma back but sparsely hairy along the lower 1/3 of the midnerv, and by finely pubescent culm internodes, leaf-sheaths and basal parts of leaf-blades (especially on collar). *Poa remota* has quite glabrous (sometimes somewhat rough) shoots, the scabrosity of lemmas is not very pronounced, and its spikelets are only (2-)3(-4)-flowered and smaller. *P. asiae-minoris* and *P. remota* have in common very loose panicles with long spreading (later drooping) branches, naked below, and a thin wooly fleece at the lemma callus.

Critically, one has to assess the greater flower numbers and spikelet dimensions reported by some Flora writers for *Poa remota*, e.g. spikelet (2-)3-4 flowered and 6-7 mm long (6). Studies on a considerable number of herbarium specimens originating from European localities (in B) failed to confirm these statements, but nevertheless in its south-eastern distribution range, in the Caucasus and in Transcaucasia, populations of *P. remota* perhaps exhibit greater spikelets and flower numbers and in this respect may in part come near to *P. asiae-minoris* and deserve subspecific status. In former times, *P. remota* also was often confused with *P. chaixii* Vill. with larger spikelets, compared with typical *P. remota*. Turkish material of *P. asiae-minoris* is reproduced here as Figures 3 & 4.

Figure 3. Poa asiae-minoris H. Scholz & Byfield, A, habit, x 0.65; a, culm internode, x 20; b, ligule, x4; c, spikelet, x 12; d, floret, x 18 [holo. ISTE 69705].

Besides *Poa chaixii*, the new species is now the second representative of *Poa sect. Homalopoa* (together with about 5 Eurasian species) in Turkey, where *P. remota*, described from Sweden, is absent (see distribution maps in 6 & 7). More information on *P. asiae-minoris* is urgently required.

Endemic. Euro-Siberian element? Currently known from only one locality, where it is extremely local, restricted to a very small part of the calcareous peat fen at the south-west corner of Abant Lake. This fen is of considerable nature conservation importance, with locally and nationally rare plant species such as Carex diandra Schrank, C. lasiocarpa Ehrh., Dactylorhiza incarnata (L.) Soo subsp. incarnata, D. nieschalkiorum H. Baumann et Künkele, Lathyrus palustris L. subsp. palustris,
Figure 4. Poa asiae-minoris H. Scholz & Byfield, whole plant [ISTE 69705]
Ranunculus lingua L., Senecio paludosus L., Sium latifolium L. and Thelypteris palustris Schott. The site lies within a Nature Park, but increasing pressure from tourism may pose a threat in future (IUCN threat category Lower Risk (near threatened)).

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank David Pearman and Lady Rosemary Fitzgerald for help during field works, when two of the specimens were collected, and to Professor Asuman Baytop for her initial studies of the material. Professor Neriman Özhatay has made useful comments on the text, and is thanked as Keeper for allowing much of the background work to this study to take place at the Herbarium of the Department of Pharmaceutical Botany within Istanbul University. The work of one of the authors (A.J.B) is funded by Fauna and Flora International (Cambridge, UK), and supported by Doğal Hayatı Koruma Derneği (İstanbul). This discovery of the new Poa species took place during a peatland survey funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, Department of Nature, Forests, Landscape and Wildlife. They are thanked for their support.

References