

On the occurrence of *Oxybasis rubra* (Amaranthaceae) in Sardinia, with notes on *Chenopodium blitoides* and *C. humile*

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Abstract

ON THE OCCURRENCE OF *OXYBASIS RUBRA* (AMARANTHACEAE) IN SARDINIA, WITH NOTES ON *CHENOPODIUM BLITOIDES* AND *C. HUMILE*.—As part of an ongoing study on the genus *Chenopodium* s. l., 20 populations of *Oxybasis rubra* var. *rubra* were discovered in Sardinia, representing a confirmation of this taxon in the Mediterranean Island. In fact, based on literature, *O. rubra* was differently indicated in Sardinia over the time as occurring, doubtful or absent. Morphological characters, as well as ecological and chorological data are given. Nomenclatural notes about the names *C. blitoides* and *C. humile* are provided and neotypifications were proposed using specimens preserved, respectively, at the Herbaria BR and K.

Key words: Amaranthaceae; Italy; *Oxybasis*; *Oxybasis rubra* var. *humile*; synonymy; typification.

Resumen

Sobre la presencia de *OXYBASIS RUBRA* (AMARANTHACEAE) EN CERDEÑA, CON NOTAS SOBRE *CHENOPODIUM BLITOIDES* Y *C. HUMILE*.—Como parte de los estudios en curso del género *Chenopodium* s. l., se descubrieron 20 poblaciones de *Oxybasis rubra* var. *rubra* en Cerdeña, representando una confirmación de este taxón para la flora de la isla. De hecho, según la literatura, *O. rubra* fue indicada de manera diferente en Cerdeña a lo largo del tiempo como presente, dudosa o ausente. Se dan caracteres morfológicos, así como datos ecológicos y corológicos. Se proporcionan notas nomenclaturales sobre los nombres *C. blitoides* y *C. humile*, y se proponen neotipificaciones utilizando especímenes conservados, respectivamente, en los herbarios BR y K.

Palabras clave: Amaranthaceae; Italia; *Oxybasis*; *Oxybasis rubra* var. *humile*; sinonimia; tipificación.

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INTRODUCTION

The genus *Oxybasis* Kar. & Kir. (Amaranthaceae s. l. *sensu* APGIII, 2009; APGIV, 2016) was restored as a separate genus from *Chenopodium* L. based on morphological and molecular data by Fuentes-Bazan *et al.* (2012; see also Hernández-Ledesma *et al.*, 2015), and it currently contains *ca.* 13 species, classified in five sections (Mosyakin, 2013, 2018). *Oxybasis* is nowadays widely accepted by many authors (e.g. Mosyakin, 2013; Sukhorukov *et al.*, 2013, 2015; Verloove, 2013; Iamonico, 2014; Sukhorukov, 2014; Mered'a, 2016).

Oxybasis rubra (L.) S. Fuentes, Uotila & Borsch is naturally distributed in the northern temperate hemisphere (POWO, 2024). It is a morphological variable species that has often misidentified as *O. chenopodioides* (L.) S. Fuentes, Uotila & Borsch (see e.g. Iamonico, 2014).

Uotila (2011) recorded *Oxybasis rubra* in most of the European countries (including Sardinia) on the basis of the *Checklist of the Italian Vascular Flora* by Conti *et al.* (2005). Also Pignatti (1982), in the first edition of *Flora d'Italia*, and Mossa *et al.* (2004) reported this species as occurring in the island. Arrigoni (2006) in his *Flora dell'Isola di Sardegna* listed it as doubtful species for the island. Iamonico (2017) reported the species as erroneously recorded in Sardinia. Both the subsequent updating to the Italian flora (Conti *et al.*, 2007), the detailed study on the aggregate *Oxybasis rubra/chenopodioides* by Iamonico (2014), and the recent new Italian Checklist (Bartolucci *et al.*, 2018; see also Portal of Flora of Italy, 2024) considered *O. rubra* as not included in the regional flora being recorded in the past as a mistake. POWO (2024) does not record *O. rubra* in Sardinia.

As part of an ongoing study on *Chenopodium* s. l. (e.g. Iamonico, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2019; Iamonico *et al.*, 2015, 2022; Mosyakin & Iamonico, 2017; Iamonico & Mosyakin, 2018, 2020; Iamonico & El Mokni, 2019), field surveys carried out during the last years in Sardinia allowed us to find some populations referable to *Oxybasis rubra*, a discover which represents a confirmation of the species in the Island. Based on the literature review, the names *Chenopodium blitoides* Lej., which is currently considered by almost all the literature con-

sulted as synonym of *Oxybasis rubra*, and *C. humile* Hook., which is currently accepted as a good taxon at variety rank of *C. rubrum* or *O. rubra* [*C. rubrum* var. *humile* (Hook.) S. Watson, or *O. rubra* var. *humilis* (Hook.) S. Mosyakin; see e.g. Clemants & Mosyakin, 2003; Mosyakin, 2013] need to be clarified, and they are also investigated in the present paper.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present work is based on a review of the relevant literature (e.g. Pignatti, 1982; Arrigoni, 2006; Iamonico, 2014; Portal of Flora of Italy, 2024; POWO 2024), floristic surveys, and checking and examination of material preserved at BR, CAG, FI, K, LINN, and RO (acronyms according to Thiers, 2024 [continuously updated]), and in the personal *Herbarium Giuliano Mereu* (not listed in *Index Herbariorum*). The articles cited throughout the text follow the *Shenzhen Code* (Turland *et al.*, 2018, hereafter reported as “ICN”). The description of the species is based on plants collected in Sardinia.

RESULTS

Chenopodium blitoides

Chenopodium blitoides was described by Lejeune (1811: 126) who provided a diagnosis and the provenance (“Se trouve dans le fossés des fortification de la ville de Maastricht”).

According to Stafleu & Cowan (1979: 830), Lejeune's collection is preserved at BR. Lejeune's herbarium was in fact acquired, after his death, in 1871, by the Jardin botanique de Bruxelles (now Botanic Garden Meise; herbarium BR) (see Verloove, 2017). Most of Lejeune's specimens, however, only bear a name in Lejeune's handwriting, without indication of date and/or locality. Hence, there seems to be no extant material that doubtlessly was at Lejeune's disposal when he described taxa between 1811 and 1824 (Verloove, 2017). Only one specimen of *Chenopodium blitoides* was found at BR (barcode BR1-190-092), and it bears two plants and the following two original labels: “*Blitum ru-*

brum | DC. prodr. t. 13 p. 2 p. 87 | HERB. HORT. BRUXELL. | Coll. LEJEUNE”, and “*Chenopodium* | *Blitum rubrum* var. *blitoides* | fl. fr. | DC. prodr. t. 13 p. 2 p. 87 | HERB. HORT. BRUXELL. | Coll. LEJEUNE”. Since both the dates and localities of collection are lacking, this specimen cannot be considered as part of the original material with certainty and is not eligible as lectotype (Arts. 9.3 and 9.4 of ICN). A neotypification is therefore necessary (Art. 9.8 of ICN). BR1-190-092 is here designated as the neotype of the name *Chenopodium blitoides*.

On the basis of the current concept in *Oxybasis* (e.g. Akeroyd, 1993; Clemants & Mosyakin, 2003; Iamonico, 2014, 2017), BR1-190-092 is identifiable as *O. rubra* var. *rubra* and *Chenopodium blitoides* is a heterotypic synonym.

Chenopodium humile

Hooker (1838: 127) proposed *Chenopodium humile* to describe small forms of *Chenopodium* from Saskatchewan (“Saskatchewan” is reported in the protologue), an administrative province of South Canada.

According to Stafleu & Cowan (1979: 283), Hooker’s collection is preserved at K, where we traced one specimen (barcode K000898463, on the right of the sheet), which is pinned with further two collections (barcodes K000898462 and K000898464; image of the sheet at <https://www.kew.org/herbcatimg/544064.jpg>). K000898463 is linked to the label “*Chenop. humile* | Saskatchewan | Drummond” and matches Hooker’s diagnosis. Hooker (1838) did not indicate any collector in the protologue. However, note that “Drummond” was reported just above in *Flora boreali-americana* (same and previous pages of the protologue of *C. humile*) as collector of other *Chenopodium* species, i.e. *C. calciforme* Hook. (Saskatchewan was not reported among the localities of this species), *C. rubrum* L. (“Hab. About the Saskatchewan. Drummond”), *C. urbicum* L. (“Hab. ... Saskatchewan ... Drummond”), and *C. glaucum* L. (Saskatchewan was not reported among the localities of this species). So, we can presume that *Drummond* could be also the collector of *C. humile*. Despite this, since the date of collection is lacking in K000898463, we cannot be sure that the plant was an ante-1838

addition to the collection, and we prefer to consider this specimen as not part of the original material used by Hooker to describe *C. humile*. All things considered, no specimen useful for a lectotypification purpose was traced, a neotype should be designated (Art. 9.8 of ICN). K000898463 is here designated as the neotype of the name *Chenopodium humile*.

The taxon *humile* has been treated at different ranks during the time (from species to variety and form), whereas in other cases it was not recognized at all. According to Clemants & Mosyakin (2003), Hooker’s species is native in NW-America and introduced to East, while Brouillet *et al.* (2010) reported it in Canada as native in Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and Yukon. Waiting for further investigations on this taxon, we here accept it at variety rank according to Clemants & Mosyakin (2003).

Occurrence in Sardinia of *Oxybasis rubra* var. *rubra*

Twenty populations of *Oxybasis rubra* var. *rubra* were found in three Administrative Units of Sardinia [Metropolitan City of Cagliari (localities: Colostrai and Torre Salinas, and S. Giovanni), Province of Nuoro (Cala Gonone-Dorgali, Gairo, Scogliera di Punta su Mastixi-Bari Sardo, Su Sirboni), and Province of South Sardinia (Nuraghe Murtas-Muravera)] along the western coast (Fig. 1). In these sites, the plants are grouped in small populations (less than 30 individuals per population). They thrive in diverse habitats, encompassing salt marshes, sea shores (Fig. 2A), pond banks, human-made environments such as roadsides or anthroposols formed from the accumulation of various materials, and even basaltic rocky areas (Fig. 2B), as observed at one site. As highlighted by Iamonico (2014: 290), *Oxybasis rubra* has wider ecological demands than *O. chenopodioides*. *Oxybasis rubra* occurs in both natural and synanthropic habitat, which are characterized respectively by soils humid and not, whereas *O. chenopodioides* colonizes habitats with a seasonal cycle of submersion (mainly during the winter, with rain) and emersion (during the summer and autumn) (see Iamonico, 2014: 287).



Figure 1. Distribution map of *Oxybasis rubra* var. *rubra* in Sardinia (red dots). Zoomed maps (A–D), refer to white rectangles occurring in the central map (Sardinia island).

No specimen identifiable as *Oxybasis rubra* were traced at CAG, which is the main Sardinian herbarium.

TAXONOMIC TREATMENT

***Oxybasis rubra* (L.) S. Fuentes, Uotila & Borsch, Willdenowia 42: 15 (2012) var. *rubra* ≡ *Chenopodium rubrum* L., Sp. Pl. 1: 218 (1753) ≡ *Blitum rubrum* (L.) Rchb., Fl. Germ. Excurs. 2(1): 582 (1832).**

Type (designated by Uotila, 1993): Herb. Linnaeus 313.5 (lectotype LINN!, image available at <http://linnean-online.org/3079/>).

= *Chenopodium blitoides* Lej., Fl. Spa 1: 126 (1811).

Neotype (designated here): Belgium, Liège, Spa, s.d., A.L.S. Lejeune s.n. (BR1-190-092!). Fig. 3.

Description: annual herbaceous (therophyte), with herbaceous smell, 20–100 cm tall. Stem glabrous (slightly farinose along the inflorescence), more or less branched (branches erect, irregularly ribbed), green to red. Leaves green to dark-green, slightly shiny, petiolate (petiole 5–45 mm long), with blades green to red (especially at the apex),

slightly fleshy, ovate-rhomoidal (2.5–6.0 × 50–80 mm, reduced in size towards the distal part of the plant), margin irregularly dentate (2–3 acute teeth per side), base cuneate. Flowers grouped in not fleshy glomerules; glomerules arranged in spike-like structures each subtended by one bract-like leaf; tepals five, connate only at the base, keeled at maturity (keeled only in the distal part when young), rounded at the apex, green (red in the distal part at maturity), sparsely farinose. Fruits each with one seed, discoidal (diameter 1.2–1.5 mm), slightly wrinkled or punctulate, blackish to brown.

Flowering time: February–April.

Specimina Visa Selecta: Italia, Puglia: Taranto, Lungomare Vittorio Emanuele III, muri e bordi di aree pedonali, 7 m, 14.IV.2013, leg. T. Dura, det. D. Iamonico & T. Dura (FI). Sardegna: Cagliari, Muravera, stagno di Colostrai, sponda orientale dello stagno con prevalente prateria di *Salicornia fruticosa* (L.) L., 39.353460° N, 9.593219° E (WGS84), 1 m a.s.l., 14.III.2015, leg. G. Mereu, det. G. Mereu & D. Iamonico (RO, Herb. Mereu); Cagliari, Muravera, spiaggia di S. Giovanni, parte alta della spiaggia e area sabbiosa limitrofa, 39.396119° N, 9.611084° E (WGS84), 2 m a.s.l., 14.III.2015, leg. G. Mereu, det. G. Mereu & D. Iamonico (RO); Ogliastra, Bari Sardo, loc. Su Mastixi, scogliera basaltica, 39.853782° N, 9.695387° E (WGS84), 3



Figure 2. *Oxybasis rubra* var. *rubra*: (A), shores (two individuals); (B), basaltic rocky habitat (one population) [photos by G. Mereu].



Figure 3. Neotype of the name *Chenopodium blitoides* Lej. (BR1-190-092!).

m a.s.l., 02.V.2015, leg. *G. Mereu*, det. *G. Mereu & D. Iamonico* (RO); Nuoro, Dorgali, Porto di Cala Gonone, terrapieno del molo settentrionale, 40.283899°N, 9.639155°E (WGS84), 3 m a.s.l., 23.V.2015, leg. *G. Mereu*, det. *G. Mereu & D. Iamonico* (Herb. Mereu); Cagliari, Muravera, Nuraghe Murtas, bordo di strada serrata presso stagno salmastro, 39.406794° N, 9.603177° E (WGS84), 3 m a.s.l., 10.I.2016, leg. *G. Mereu*, det. *G. Mereu & D. Iamonico* (Herb. Mereu); Nuoro, Ogliastra, Gairo, Spiaggia di Coccorocchi, bordo di macchia mediterranea retrodunale, 39.728981° N, 9.674510° E (WGS84), 5 m a.s.l., 15.IV.2018, leg. *G. Mereu*, det. *G. Mereu & D. Iamonico* (Herb. Mereu); Cagliari, Muravera, Spiaggia di Colostrai, bordo di strada serrata presso depressione retrodunale salsa, 39.361214° N, 9.597575° E (WGS84), 3 m a.s.l., 28.IV.2018, leg. *G. Mereu*, det. *G. Mereu & D. Iamonico* (Herb. Mereu).

Oxybasis rubra (L.) S. Fuentes, Uotila & Borsch, Willdenowia 42: 15 (2012) var. **humilis** (Hook.) S. Mosyakin, Phytoneuron 56: 1–8 (2013) ≡ *Chenopodium humile* Hook., Fl. Bor.-Amer. 2: 127 (1838).

Neotype (designated here): Canada, Saskatchewan, s.d., T. Drummond s.n. K000898463! [plant on the right of the sheet], image available at <https://www.kew.org/herbcatimg/544064.jpg>.

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AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Duilio Iamonico: Conceptualization, Data curation, Investigation, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Giuliano Mereu:** Investigation, Writing – review & editing.

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