

ON TRIGONELLA OVALIS BOISS., A FORGOTTEN
SPECIES OF THE SPANISH FLORA

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Resumen. En esta nota se indican cinco localidades de *Trigonella ovalis* Boiss., especie poco conocida de la flora española.

Summary. Five localities of the badly known species *Trigonella ovalis* Boiss. are indicated.

Trigonella ovalis Boiss., *Elenchus* n. 60 (1838).

Pocockia ovalis (Boiss.) Boiss., *Diagn. Pl. Or. Nov.* 2 (9): 12 (1849).

Medicago ovalis (Boiss.) Urban, *Verh. Bot. Ver. Brandenb.* 1873: 81 (1873).

In his revision of the genus *Trigonella*, URBAN (1873: 81) transferred Boissier's species to the genus *Medicago* because of the absence of an articulation at the base of the cotyledons. ŠIRJAEV (1928-34) followed URBAN, but HEYN (1963: 21-22) claimed that the use of this one character to separate *Trigonella* from *Medicago* leads to difficulties; he pointed out that the limits between *Medicago*, *Melilotus* and *Trigonella* are ill-defined and added that the monographers of the three genera: URBAN (1873), SCHULZ (1901), and ŠIRJAEV (1935), each commented on their difficulties in delimiting their genus. He added that, except for this one character of the node at the base of the cotyledons, *T. ovalis* (along with several other species excluded by ŠIRJAEV from the genus) fits into *Trigonella* in every sense.

The genus *Pocockia* Seringe ex DC. was published by DE CANDOLLE (1825: 185) to accommodate one species, *P. cretica* (L.) Ser., and in 1849

Boissier (loc. cit.) transferred to this new genus a number of other species including his *T. ovalis*. However, BENTHAM & HOOKER (1865: 486) reduced *Pocockia* to a section of *Trigonella*; their index does not mention *Melissitus* Medik. (1787), a name that antedates *Pocockia* (WILLIS, *Dict. Fl. Pl.*: 923). HUTCHINSON (1964: 456, footnote), cites both *Pocockia* and *Melissitus* as synonyms of *Trigonella*.

It seems therefore that the species with which this note is concerned is best called by its original name of *Trigonella ovalis* Boiss. In *Flora Europaea* vol. 2 (1968) it does not appear in the text, but in the index (p. 440) we find *Medicago ovalis* Urban listed as a synonym of *T. monspeliaca* L., an entirely different species vide the key and drawings of pods of each in QUEZEL & SANTA (1962). Thus this unlucky species has been thrown out of *Trigonella* by URBAN and SIRJAEV and excluded from *Medicago* by HEYN and *Flora Europaea*.

WILLKOMM & LANGE (1877: 379) recorded the species (under the name *Medicago ovalis* Urban) from near the Guadalhorce river in Málaga province (where BOISSIER collected a single specimen), and from Riópar in Albacete province (formerly in the old kingdom of Murcia) where BOURGEOU found it. These two stations are roughly 350 km. apart. It was re-discovered, after a lapse of over a century, in May 1975. It was found in three squares with the following U.T.M. grid references:

TF-88. 1 km. SW of Algodonales, 23.V.1975, in a corner of a ploughed olive grove, growing with other low annuals including *Trigonella monspeliaca*.

UF-28. 1 km. SE of Serrato, 24.V.1975, on a bank of a cornfield, with *Medicago* spp.

UF-15. Just above Igualeja, 28.V.1975, with another low annuals.

In May-June 1976, E. J. CLEMENT located the species in two further localities in the province of Málaga:

UF-88. Near Riogordo, on the bank of an olive grove.

UG-80. Just W of Estación de Salinas, on the edge of a cornfield.

The species may well occur in other areas of Andalucía between the provinces of Málaga and Albacete, and is at once recognizable by its distinctive pods, illustrated by BOISSIER (1839, tab. 51) and QUEZEL & SANTA (1962: 517). In addition to southern Spain, it is found in W Algeria and Marocco.

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