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Tragus roxburghii sp. nov. proposed for
T. biflorus auctt. (*Gramineae*)

G. PANIGRAHI*

Summary. The grass from the Coromandel coast of India long known incorrectly as *Tragus biflorus* Schultes (or *Lappago biflora* Roxb.) is described as *T. roxburghii* sp. nov. The earlier names applied to this plant must be typified through *Phalaris muricata* Forssk. by a plant from the Sea of Marmora in Turkey.

Roxburgh (Fl. Ind., ed. Carey & Wall. 1: 284 (1820)) proposed the name *Lappago biflora* for a grass growing in the driest pastures of the Coromandel Coast of India. The description is supplemented by an unpublished drawing of *L. biflora* Roxb. in the Kew Collections (Roxb. Ic. No. 780 at CAL & K—*vide* Sealy (1956: 353)). The drawing might be accepted as the type of *L. biflora* Roxb. but for the fact that Roxburgh had cited '*Phalaris muricata* Forsk. *descript.* [Fl. Aegypt.:] 202 [1775]' as a direct nomenclatural synonym. In consequence, *L. biflora* Roxb. must be regarded as a superfluous name for *P. muricata* Forssk. and Forsskal's type, '*Ad littora Maris Marmorae*' (near the Dardanelles in Turkey), must also be treated as the type of *L. biflora* Roxb. (International Code of Botanical Nomenclature, Art. 7, para. 11).

Similarly, *Tragus muricatus* Moench (Meth. Pl.: 53 (1794)), for which Moench had cited *Cenchrus racemosus* L. as a direct synonym, is a superfluous name for *T. racemosa* (L.) All., Fl. Pedem. 2: 241 (1785). *T. muricata* Moench cannot be regarded as a new combination for *Phalaris muricata* Forssk. since Moench did not cite that name and his description bears no relation to that of Forsskal's species.

Since the combination *Tragus muricatus* was thus already occupied by the name proposed by Moench, albeit illegitimately, Schultes (Mant. Syst. Veg. 2: 205 (1824)) proposed the combination *T. biflorus*, based on Roxburgh's *Lappago biflora* and still including *P. muricata* Forssk. as a synonym. Since the basionym was illegitimate, because *P. muricata* Forssk. was included in the circumscription, and since the name *T. muricatus* based on the latter could not be taken up because of the earlier homonym published by Moench, *T. biflora* Schultes must be regarded as a legitimate *nomen novum* under Art. 72 (Note) as already indicated by Bor (1960: 682 & 1970: 462). However, contrary to Bor's assumption, although Schultes provided almost a verbatim latin translation of Roxburgh's (*l.c.*) description referring to Roxburgh's name, and to plants from the Coromandel Coast, *T. biflora* Schultes cannot be typified by the plant from there, but has to be based on the type of *Phalaris muricata* Forssk. from the Sea of Marmora in Turkey.

It is pertinent to note here that the type of *Phalaris muricata* Forssk. cannot be traced in Forsskal's Herbarium at Copenhagen despite a search by Carl Christensen (1922: 33) and by Dr. Bertil Hansen (personal communication, 29 Oct. 1973). However, the description '*flos sessilis, geminus, semper in pedicello, communi brevissimo*' may apply to *Tragus* (= *Lappago*) *biflorus*,

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but it could also apply to a poorly observed, depauperate specimen of *T. racemosus*; the Turkish locality (from whence Roxburgh's species of the Coromandel Coast has not been reported so far) suggests that *T. racemosus* is the more likely. *P. muricata* Forssk. has, at best, to be treated as a synonym of *T. racemosus* (L.) All., at worst, as a name of uncertain application.

It is evident, therefore, that the Indian species so long known under the name *T. biflorus* Schultes is still without a valid name. I, therefore, here describe it as a new species, *Tragus roxburghii* sp. nov., the name commemorating the historical connexion of this species with Roxburgh. In order to ensure identical treatment, and as it fits the type I have selected, the latin description provided by Bor (1970: 462) is reproduced *verbatim*.

***Tragus roxburghii* Panigrahi, sp. nov.**

Lappago biflora sensu Roxb., Hort. Beng.: 82 (1814), *nomen nudum*, & Fl. Ind., ed. Carey & Wall. 1: 284 (1820), quoad descript., excl. typo.

Tragus biflorus sensu Schultes Mant., Syst. Veg. 2: 205 (1824); Bor, Grasses of India, Pakistan, Burma & Ceylon: 682 (1960) & Fl. Iran. 70, Gramineae: 462 (1970), quoad descript., excl. typo.

[*T. racemosus* sensu Hook. f., Fl. of Brit. Ind. 7: 97 (1896), *non* (L.) All. (1785)]

Gramen annuum. *Culmi* usque ad 15 cm alti, basi prostrati, quoquoersus patentes, nodis radicanes, demum erecti, laeves glabrique, glauci. *Foliorum laminae* lineari-acuminatae, vel lanceolato-acutae, rigidisculae, 1–5 cm longae, 2–3 mm latae, basi cordatae, vel rotundatae, planae, inferne marginibus pilis rigidis e tuberculis ortis instructae, ceterum glabrae, marginibus scaberulae. *Panicula* spiciformis basi vagina, summa circumdata, 3–4 cm longae. *Spiculae* 4 mm longae; gluma superior 5-nervis, nervi uncinis armati.

TYPE: India, Tamil Nadu (Madras), Vela Cherry, July 1845, *G. Thomson* s.n. (holotypus, K), labelled '*Lappago biflora*'.

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