Pasture communities linked to ovine stock.  
A synthesis of the Poetea bulbosae class in the western Mediterranean Region

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with 5 figures and 4 tables

Abstract. The Poetea bulbosae class encompasses gramineous, leguminous and other plants adapted to the continuous treading and fertilisation of sheep stock. The two principal centres of diversity are located in the western Iberian Peninsula and the Atlas Mountains (Morocco), where they are specially linked to transhumance. Because the livestock routes function as ecological corridors, different aspects of this vegetation type have originated.

Four alliances are included in the Poetea bulbosae class: Trifolio subterranei-Periballion, Poo-Astragalion sesami, Plantaginion serrariae and Potentillo maureae-Campanulion filicaulis. Trifolio-Periballion presents two associations: Poo bulbosae-Trifolietaub subterranei, which is distributed in the siliceous soils of the Iberian Peninsula and northwestern Morocco; and Trifolio nigrescentis-Poetum bulbosae on the island of Sardinia. Poo bulbosae-Astragalion sesami includes only the Poo bulbosae-Astragaletum sesami association, which is distributed in the calcareous, gypsiferous and salty soils of the central and western Iberian Peninsula, although it extends to southern France. Plantaginion serrariae consists of two associations: Trifolio subterranei-Plantaginetum serrariae, which grows in the vertisols around the Strait of Gibraltar; and Paronychio echinulatae-Plantaginetum serrariae of northern Tunisia. Currently, Potentillo maureae-Campanulion filicaulis only includes the basophilous association Phleonodosi-Poetum bulbosae, distributed in the Atlas Mountains.

In addition to the impoverished forms of this class (Poetea bulbosae BC, Poetea bulbosae MC) and other geographical and successional aspects, the following syntaxonomic news is presented: Trifolio nigrescentis-Poetum bulbosae (Ladero et al. 1992) stat. nov., Plantaginion serrariae all. nova, Trifolio subterranei-Plantaginetum serrariae Martín Osorio & Galán de Mera ass. nova, Trifolio subterranei-Plantaginetum serrariae trifolietaum stellati subass. nova, Paronychio echinulatae-Plantaginetum serrariae ass. nova, Phleo nodosi-Poetum bulbosae silenetosum mekinensis (Benabid 1988) comb. nov., Phleo nodosi-Poetum bulbosae vulpietosum siculae (Benabid 1988) comb. nov., and Phleo nodosi-Poetum bulbosae caricetosum jahandiezii (Nègre 1961) comb. nov.

Keywords: Poetea bulbosae, classification, pastoralism, syntaxonomy, Portugal, Spain, Morocco, Sardinia, Tunisia.