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*Identity of Tortula baetica (Casas & Oliva) J. Guerra & Ros
with T. israelis Bizot & F. Bilewsky*

Tortula israelis was described by Bizot & Bilewsky (*cf.* Bilewsky & Nachmony, 1955) from sterile material collected in the hills of Judea and later reduced to a variety of *Tortula muralis* (Bizot, 1956). This taxon was characterized by the presence of very high cylindrical papillae, at least in the upper leaf cells. In Spain, *Tortula muralis* var. *baetica* was described by Casas & Oliva (1982). The original description of this taxon mentioned its similarity with *T. israelis* notably the presence of the same type of papillosoity in the cells although, according to the authors, other characteristics did not coincide.

Guerra, Ros & Carrión (1992) compared *T. muralis* with *T. muralis* var. *obcordata* and *T. muralis* var. *baetica*. As a result they elevated var. *baetica* to the rank of species based on the type of papillosoity (uncommon in *Tortula*), nerve anatomy, upper leaf cell size and sporoderm configuration.

For some time the common identity of *Tortula israelis* and *T. baetica* has been suspected by us. The same type of leaf papillosoity has been described for both taxa except that the number of papillae per cell differs: one for *T. israelis* and one–two(–three) for *T. baetica*. In an attempt to clarify the identity of both taxa, material of *T. israelis* was requested from several herbaria. We were finally able to study the type material (topotype) belonging to the Bizot Herbarium in Paris (PC): Bet Jimal, collines de Judaea, Beffroi antique, appr. 450 m. III. 54. Bilewsky. We conclude that *T. israelis* and *T. baetica* are indeed the same taxon. Slight variations in the number of papillae per cell are of quite common occurrence in the *Pottiaceae* genera (e.g. *Crossidium davidai* Catcheside and *Crossidium aberrans* Holz. & Bartr.), as are disjunctions between species distributed through the Irano-Turanic and Mediterranean regions.

We therefore propose that *T. baetica* and *T. israelis* should be considered synonymous and elevated to the rank of species, based on the study carried out by Guerra *et al.* (1992). The name *T. israelis* takes priority:

Tortula israelis Bizot & F. Bilewsky, Bull. Res. Council Israel, sect. D, Botany: 51. 1955.
Tortula muralis Hedw. var. *israelis* (Bizot & F. Bilewsky) Bizot, Rev. Bryol. Lichénol. 25: 270. 1956.

Tortula muralis Hedw. var. *baetica* Casas & Oliva, Acta Bot. Malacitana 7: 104. 1982.
Tortula baetica (Casas & Oliva) J. Guerra & Ros, J. Bryol. 47: 281. 1992.

Thus, the distribution area of *T. israelis* is extended to the southern part of the Iberian Peninsula (Casas & Oliva, 1982; Guerra *et al.*, 1992; Fuertes *et al.*, 1994; Cano & García-Zamora, 1995). The previously known range includes Israel (Bilewsky & Nachmony, 1955), Cyprus (Bilewsky, 1965, Koppe, 1976) and Turkey (Henderson & Prentice, 1969) (Fig. 1).

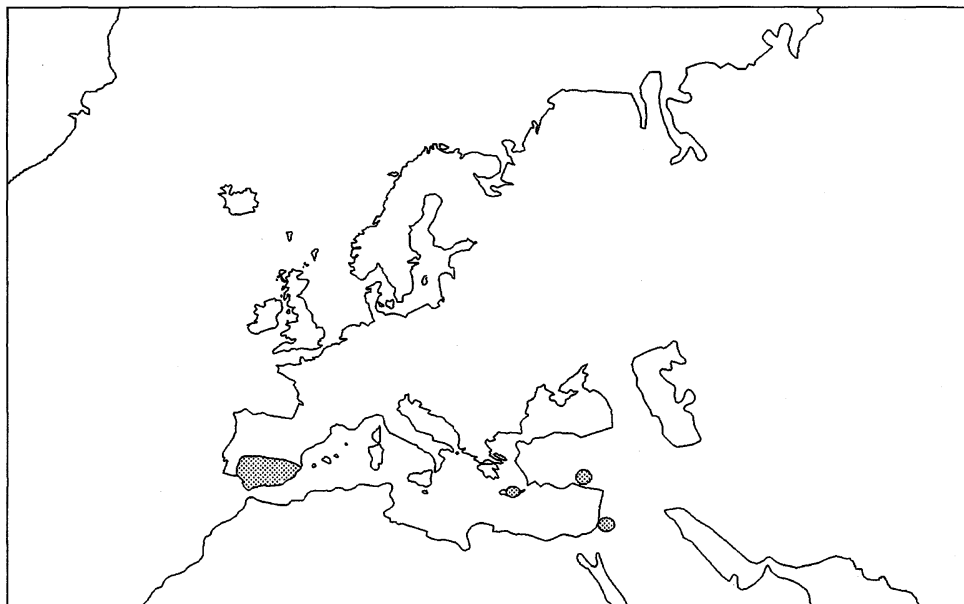


Figure 1. Distribution of *Tortula israelis*.

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Further observations on the bryophytes in Chawley Brick Pit, Oxford

Chawley Brick Pit, Berkshire, was first visited by E. W. Jones in 1948, and together with several other bryologists, he made detailed observations of the bryophytes over a number of years. This culminated in his paper 'Bryophytes in Chawley Brick Pit, Oxford, 1948–1985' (Jones, 1986). Chawley Brick Pit is also known as Hurst Hill SSSI, and it is in this connection that I visited the site on a number of occasions from 1994 to early 1995. It is very unusual to find a site with a history of meticulous bryological recording, and as such I was inspired to see if the plants that were once known from here still existed ten years on. Some of the species recorded in the past were quite remarkable, including (with dates last seen) *Lophozia capitata* (1951), *Buxbaumia aphylla* (1969), *Sphagnum riparium* (1962), *Ditrichum pusillum* (1968) and many others. Much of the scientific interest of the site is concerned with the successional changes that have occurred since the pit was abandoned in the late 1930s. Species have come and gone, a process that is still continuing today. Changes in the bryoflora within the SSSI over the last ten years are reported here.

Nomenclature follows Smith (1990) for liverworts and Corley *et al.* (1981) with amendments by Corley & Crundwell (1991) for mosses.

Table 1 lists additions to the bryophyte flora of the Pit in 1995 and the status of some of the more notable species that were recorded in 1985 or before. It is quite possible that a few of the species were overlooked in 1995. *Dicranella cerviculata* and *Gymnocolea inflata*, once locally abundant, were rare in 1985, and they were searched for unsuccessfully in 1995. In 1985 *Pleurozium schreberi* was thought to be only just persisting from former times when the site was relatively open, and was not seen in 1995. All three plants may have gone as a result of a closing tree canopy.

In 1985 *Thuidium tamariscinum* was regarded as a recent immigrant, but it is now abundant on the floor of the eastern hollow together with *Eurhynchium praelongum*. Jones (1986) remarked on the absence of *Eurhynchium striatum* since it was known to occur in nearby localities; it was found in 1995 although in small quantity. *Platygyrium repens* may be spreading, it was seen on a large birch in the eastern hollow, probably the same tree as Jones recorded it on in 1985, but now also occurs on mature gorse stems on the summit. *Lepidozia reptans* however shows no sign of increasing; it was seen on the base of one birch, in the eastern hollow and is again probably the same colony seen by