



Tulipa kosovarica (Liliaceae), a new species of tulip from Kosovo

LULËZIM SHUKA¹, KIT TAN² & ELEZ KRASNIQI³

¹Department of Biology, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Tirana University, Bld. ZOG I, Albania

²Institute of Biology, University of Copenhagen, Øster Farimagsgade 2D, DK-1353 Copenhagen K, Denmark. E-mail: kitt@bio.ku.dk

³Department of Biology, Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Pristina University, Mother Theresa str., Kosovo

Abstract

Tulipa kosovarica (Liliaceae) is illustrated and described as a new species from a serpentine area in Rahoveci province, southwestern Kosovo. It is related to *T. serbica* from northern Kosovo and had previously been confused with *T. scardica* from (F.Y.R.) Macedonia and southern Kosovo, all found on serpentine soils. Comparison is made with the recently described *T. albanica* from northeastern Albania. Ecological data for *T. kosovarica* is presented in detail and the distribution of all four species in the Balkan Peninsula is mapped.

Key words: Balkan Peninsula, serpentine substrate, taxonomy, *Tulipa albanica*, *T. scardica*, *T. serbica*

Introduction

In spite of its small territorial area, Kosovo has an extremely rich flora, due to its varied climate, topography and geology. The number of vascular plant species is estimated as *ca.* 1800 (Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning [MESp] 2010) and comprises diverse floristic elements, in particular Balkan endemics and paleo-endemics. According to MESp, biodiversity ‘hot-spots’ are the Sharri mountains in the southwest, the Prokletije mountains (Bjeshkët e Nemuna) in the northwest, and the Koritniku and Pashtriku mountains, both situated in the south of Kosovo.

The genus *Tulipa* in Kosovo is represented by three native species: the widespread *T. australis* Link (in Schrader 1799: 317), which some botanists treat as a subspecies of the tetraploid *T. sylvestris* Linnaeus (1753: 305), *T. serbica* Tatić & Krivošej (1997: 733) a species first described from Mt. Rogozna and the hill Beli Laz, two localities on the opposite sides of the Ibar river, and *T. scardica* Bornmüller (1923: 199), which is distributed in the Vardar valley in Macedonia and Krivenik, southern Kosovo, with an outlying locality to the west. In this paper a fourth species known from two localities in the serpentine area of Mirusha in Gjakova district, Rahoveci province in southwestern Kosovo is described.

On 14 May 2010, two of the authors (L.S. & E.K.) together with Prof. F. Rexhepi and Prof. F. Millaku from Pristina University, went to the Mirusha area at the foot of Mt Kozniku in Rahoveci province, Kosovo to investigate plants that had been earlier reported by E.K. as *T. scardica* (Rexhepi & Krasniqi 2004). They also planned to compare the material with the recently described *T. albanica* Kit Tan & Shuka from the Kukësi district in northeastern Albania, occurring less than a hundred kilometres from this site (Shuka *et al.* 2010: 19). In mid-May, most of the Mirusha plants had finished flowering and were in early fruit. Some important floral characters were observed but we wanted to be convinced as to their consistency. Therefore L.S., together with Z. Hashani (PhD student at Department of Biology, Tirana University), went to the area again in early May and mid-July 2011 to confirm initial observations. Morphometric measurements were obtained from numerous plants in full bloom and later, in fruit. We are now convinced that the Mirusha plants differ from *T. scardica* to which it had previously been assigned (Rexhepi & Krasniqi 2004, Shuka *et al.* 2010) and furthermore, it appears to be more similar to *T. serbica*.