



Lectotype designation for three North African names of *Biscutella* (Brassicaceae) published by Claude Thomas Alexis Jordan

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Abstract

Three names of North African species described by Jordan in the end of the 19th century, *Biscutella algeriensis*, *Biscutella choulettei* and *Biscutella mauritanica*, are typified. Lectotypes are designated from syntypes conserved in the herbaria K, LY, MPU, P and W. Furthermore, some historical comments are reported that support type selection.

Key words: Cruciferae, Mediterranean flora, Nomenclature, Typification

Introduction

Claude Thomas Alexis Jordan (1814–1897) was one of the most renowned French botanists of his time. He possessed a very important library and his personal herbarium was one of the biggest in Europe at that time, gathering around 400000 sheets and comprising exsiccata from about 200 other botanists (Thiébaud & Labussière 2013). Moreover, he created an experimental garden in Villeurbanne (Lyon) of around 10000 m², where thousands of species were cultivated over fifty years (cfr. Coquillat 1946), in order to study their reproductive behaviour.

Jordan adopted an analytical taxonomical system based on a very narrow species concept, which led him to describe over 1685 species (cfr. Coquillat 1947), later referred as “jordanianas species” by Johannes Paulus Lotsy or “jordanians” by Georges Coutagne (cfr. Du Rietz 1930). He defended that most of the Linnaean species accepted by that time were indeed formed with a number of akin species (“espèces affines”) which must be treated as autonomous (Chevalier 1923). Many of those “jordanons” (or microspecies) were later disregarded or considered as mere variations (varieties or forms) of wider species (“linnaeons”), with lesser biological value. However, Jordan was a pioneer of the experimental work, who based most of his results on observations made on the field and/or on plants cultivated in his own garden.

Upon his death in Lyon (7 February 1897), Jordan bequeathed his library and botanical collections to his collaborator, Hilarion Borel, remarking in his testament the possibility of sending or destroying the material *unuseful, cumbersome or duplicate* (Thiébaud & Labussière 2013). But it was from 1903, after Borel’s death, that the duplicates began to be sold; therefore, it is possible to find part of this herbarium in many important collections. The major part of Jordan’s herbarium, nevertheless, still remains the property of the Catholic Faculty of Lyon and is deposited in the herbarium of the Université Claude Bernard (LY) since 2007. Other important sets of Jordan’s material are housed at BM, K or P (acronyms according to Thiers 2014), with 1800, 1225 and 1000 specimens respectively. Among all this material, many unidentified types still remain.

The genus *Biscutella* Linnaeus (1753: 652) includes a variable number of taxa which ranges from 25 to 49, depending on the different sources (cfr. De Candolle 1811, Malinowski 1910, Machatschki-Laurich 1926, Guinea 1963, Appel & Al-Shehbaz 2003). They are annual herbs or dwarf shrubs which are distributed in Europe, North Africa and western Asia, with a high diversity centre in the western Mediterranean basin. In 1864, Alexis Jordan published his *Diagnoses d’espèces nouvelles ou méconnues*, where he described 36 new species of *Biscutella*, following his analytical system of “espèces affines” (microspecies). Among them, only three species were described from North Africa: *B. algeriensis* Jordan (1864: 318), *B. choulettei* Jordan (1864: 316) and *B. mauritanica* Jordan (1864: 325).