

**NOMENCLATURE AND SYNTAXONOMIC NOTES ON THE
VEGETATION OF ITALY I: SESLERIETALIA APENNINAE, SESLERION
APENNINAE AND SESLERIETUM APENNINAE**

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ABSTRACT – The nomenclature history of the *Seslerietalia apenninae*, *Seslerion apenninae* and *Seslerietum apenninae*, three crucial syntaxonomic units typical of the Apennine (sub)alpine calcareous grasslands, is discussed. The paper suggests the correct names of the syntaxa and provides their nomenclature typification according to the Code of Phytosociological Nomenclature (Ed. 3). All three syntaxa considered were validly published by Bruno & Furnari (1966).

KEY WORDS – *Elyno-Seslerietea*, Italy, *Seslerietalia apenninae*, *Seslerion apenninae*, *Seslerietum apenninae*, Syntaxonomic nomenclature

During the syntaxonomic revision of several groups of vegetation types described from Central Apennines, I have encountered a number of nomenclature and syntaxonomic problems, which I am addressing here. In the sequel, the Code of Phytosociological Nomenclature (Weber, Moravec & Theurillat 2003) is recognised as the presently accepted guideline for creation and correction of the syntaxonomic nomenclature.

The first part of this series features an attempt to solve the lingering nomenclature problem surrounding the correct names of the *Seslerietalia apenninae*, *Seslerion apenninae*, and *Seslerietum apenninae*. I classify all these syntaxa within the *Elyno-Seslerietea* Br.-Bl. 1948.

SESLERIETALIA APENNINAE

The authorship of the *Seslerietalia apenninae* is usually ascribed to Lakušić (1969), who suggested "*Seslerietalia apenninae* Lakušić prov." as preliminary (provisional) name, rendering it invalidly published according to Art. 3b. Lakušić (1969) further failed to name at least one validly described alliance to belong to this order (see Art. 8 for conditions of validity of a high-rank syntaxon name). In the latter paper Lakušić cited the name "*Seslerietalia apenninae* Lakušić 1968" a number of

times, however, this name had not been published in 1968 in any of Lakušić's papers. This citation obviously relates to a public lecture given by Lakušić at a symposium in Camerino in June 1968. This form of publication is, however, not recognised by the Code as effective publication following Art. 1.

The correct name of this order, if somebody prefers to use it for the Apennine high-altitude *Sesleria*-rich grasslands, is *Seslerietalia apenninae* Bruno et Furnari 1966. Bruno & Furnari (1966) provided a short description, a list of character species and, most importantly, classified one validly published alliance (*Seslerion apenninae*; see below) to this order in the original description.

I wish to make it clear that the resolution of the nomenclature problem surrounding the *Seslerietalia apenninae* does not automatically signalise any preference for adopting this syntaxonomic concept in favour of the *Seslerietalia tenuifoliae* Horvat 1930. The latter syntaxon was described from the Dinarides by Horvat (1930) and the *Seslerion tenuifoliae* Horvat 1930 automatically becomes the holotype of the *Seslerietalia tenuifoliae* (see Art. 18 of the Code). The question of syntaxonomic relationship between the *Seslerietalia apenninae* and the *Seslerietalia tenuifoliae* can only be addressed in comprehensive syntaxonomic synthesis of both Apennine and Balkan *Sesleria*-rich grasslands, and it partly also depends on the stabilisation of the taxonomy of the *Sesleria tenuifolia* group. In case somebody would prefer to unite the Apennine and Balkan (sub)alpine *Sesleria tenuifolia* communities within the same order, then the name *Seslerietalia tenuifoliae* Horvat 1930 should be given preference by virtue of priority.

SESLERION APENNINAE

The correct name for this alliance reads "*Seslerion apenninae* Furnari in Bruno et Furnari 1966" (See also Blasi, Di Pietro, Fortini & Catonica, 2003) and not "*Seslerion apenninae* Furnari 1966" as suggested, for instance by Biondi, Ballelli, Allegrezza, Taffetani, Frattaroli, Guitian & Zuccarello (1999: 62). The discussion about the syntaxonomic position of this alliance in relation to the *Seslerion tenuifoliae* and *Seslerion coeruleae* in Bruno & Furnari (1966: 15 & Tab. 1) reveals undoubtedly that *Seslerietum apenninae* (also validly described in the same paper) belongs to the *Seslerion apenninae*. This is, according to the Code (Art. 8), sufficient for the diagnosis of an alliance and renders the name of the alliance validly published if this happened in published form prior to January 1, 1980. The *Seslerietum apenninae* - validly published by Bruno & Furnari (1966) - automatically becomes the holotype of the *Seslerion apenninae* (and not lectotype as suggested by Blasi, Di Pietro, Fortini & Catonica 2003). The later typification of the *Seslerion apenninae* using the *Scabioso silenifoliae*-*Seslerietum apenninae* as holotype (Bazzichelli & Furnari, 1979: 57) is superfluous.

SESLERIETUM APENNINAE

This grassland type was obviously described for the first time by Lüdi (1943) under the name "*Carex laevis*-*Sesleria tenuifolia* Trockenrasen", a form not recognised by the present Code as correct (Art. 3c). Montelucci (1953: 259-263, on the basis of relevés using frequency of sub-plots) and Furnari (1961: 369, one relevé) put forward the names "*Seslerietum tenuifoliae*" for (presumably) the same community. The same name

(*Seslerietum tenuifoliae*) was coined by Horvat (1930) for a syntaxonomically different vegetation unit described from Croatia. This creates a situation where the names suggested by Montelucci (1953) and Furnari (1961) become apparent later homonyms (Art. 31) and therefore cannot be used as correct names for the syntaxon under discussion.

Biondi *et al.* (1999: 62), making reference to Furnari (1961), noted that “lo stesso autore [Furnari] indica la prateria in oggetto come “associazione a *Sesleria apennina* e *Carex kitaibeliana*”, and argued that “in base al Codice di Nomenclatura Sintassonomica si ritiene pertanto che il secondo nome [associazione a *Sesleria apennina* e *Carex kitaibeliana*] sia una correzione del primo”. As a consequence, Biondi *et al.* (1999: 62) suggested that the “*Seslerietum apenninae* Furnari 1961 corr. Furnari 1966” was the correct name for this unit and typified it by the sole relevé published by Furnari (1961; sub *Seslerietum tenuifoliae*). This interpretation of the literature has three aspects to be addressed:

- (1) Bruno & Furnari (1966, and not “Furnari 1966” as suggested by Biondi *et al.*, 1992) have not mentioned any association of *S. apennina* and *C. kitaibeliana*. Bruno & Brunari (1966: 5) mentioned “*Seslerietum* à *Sesleria apennina* Ujhelyi et *Carex kitaibeliana* Degen (1936); Becherer (1960)”, while later in the text they cite “*Seslerietum*”. It is clear that Bruno & Furnari (1966) meant “*Seslerietum apenninae*”, because *Sesleria apennina* is the only *Sesleria* species found in their two relevés (rel. 1 on p. 5 and rel. 4 on p. 17).
- (2) The suggested formal correction (Biondi *et al.*, 1999: 62) is an incorrect interpretation of the Code because Bruno & Furnari (1966) did not make any direct reference to the name *Seslerietum tenuifoliae* Furnari 1961, which would only then indeed imply a correction *sensu* Art. 43 of the Code.
- (3) The typification of the name “*Seslerietum apenninae* Furnari 1961 corr. Furnari 1966” Biondi *et al.* (1999: 62) using the relevé in Furnari (1961) is not admissible, because the sole relevé published by Furnari (1961) automatically typifies the name “*Seslerietum tenuifoliae* Furnari 1961”. The change of the name *S. tenuifolia* to *S. apennina* for the Apennine populations cannot be considered to be a taxonomic correction according to the Code (Art. 43). Taxonomic controversy still surrounds the problem of *Sesleria tenuifolia sensu lato* leaving a lot of latitude either for using both taxon names for the Apennines and the Balkans, respectively (Ujhelyi, 1959; Deyl, 1980) or for considering them as one taxon (Strgar, 1982: 505).

“*Seslerietum apenninae* Migliaccio 1970 cm. Bonin 1978”

Bonin (1978) argues that the *Seslerietum apenninae* was described by Furrer & Furnari (1960) apparently on the basis of “tableau phytosociologique brut, (c’est-à-dire sans hiérarchisation phytosociologique”, but this does not conform to reasons given in the present Code to discard this name. Bonin (l.c.) has also discarded the name *Seslerietum* by Bruno & Furnari (1966), because the name was presented “sans ajouter d’interprétation phytosociologique détaillée”. The latter argument is not included in the Code as a reason for discarding a syntaxon name. Furthermore Bonin (1978) discovered that Migliaccio (1970), according to his opinion, provided a sufficient diagnosis of *Seslerietum apenninae* and further “improved” the nomenclature of this case by suggesting an emendation, probably, by fusing the Migliaccio’s (1970) *Seslerietum apenninae* and *Helianthemum alpestris* into one unit.

In summary, the correct name of this syntaxonomic unit is ***Seslerietum apenninae* Bruno et Furnari 1966** and here I choose the nomenclature type (holotype): Bruno & Furnari (1966: rel. 4, page 17).

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RIASSUNTO

Viene qui presentata la storia della nomenclatura di *Seslerietalia apenninae*, *Seslerion apenninae* e *Seslerietum apenninae*, tre unità sintassonomiche tipiche dei pascoli calcarei (sub)alpini dell'Appennino. Il lavoro suggerisce il nome corretto del sintaxa e fornisce la loro nomenclatura di tipificazione in accordo con il Codice di Nomenclatura Fitosociologica (Ed. 3). Tutti e tre i sintaxa considerati sono stati validamente pubblicati da Bruno & Furnari (1966).

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