

Current situation of the *Gaudinio fragilis*-*Hordeion bulbosum* alliance in the Iberian Peninsula

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Abstract. - This study reveals the occurrence of *Phalaris coerulescens* communities both in Portugal and the south of Andalusia (Spain). These grasslands present a variable cover ratio and have an average dominant vegetation size of about 100 cm. They tend to occur in river beds and in places which are sometimes water-logged, with a certain amount of organic matter including the occurrence of nitrophilous companion species. The soils are always siliceous, very poor in carbonates, but with a high proportion of sand. Consequently, flooding never lasts for long. The grasslands of Portugal are located in the Maritanico-Monchiquense unit, within the series of *Pyro bourgaeanae*-*Queceto rotundifoliae* s. and *Poterio agrimonioidis*-*Querceto suberis* s. The new *Senecio foliosi*-*Phalaridetum coerulescentis* is characterized by *Senecio jacobaea* var. *foliosus*, meanwhile, in the south of Andalusia, the *Hedysaro coronari-Phalaridetum coerulescentis* is described for the Aljibic and Gaditano-Onubense Sectors, and, in the Rondean and Bermejeense areas, the *Elymo repentis*-*Phalaridetum coerulescentis*. These associations are included in the *Gaudinio fragilis*-*Hordeion bulbosum* alliance.

Key words : communities - graminoid - water-logging - Portugal.

Résumé. - Cette étude fait connaître la présence de communautés à *Phalaris coerulescens* dans le Portugal et le sud de l'Andalousie (Espagne). Les herbages présentent divers degrés de couverture selon l'existence ou non de l'élevage. La hauteur moyenne de la végétation dominante est autour de 100 cm. Ils se trouvent dans les lits des rivières et les endroits humides selon la saison, qui présentent une certaine quantité de matière organique, d'où la présence d'espèces compagnes nitrophiles. Les sols sont toujours siliceux, très pauvres en carbonates, avec un grand pourcentage d'arène. Ainsi n'est-il pas très longtemps imbibé d'eau. Les herbages du Portugal se trouvent dans l'unité biogéographique Maritanico-Monchiquense, dans les séries du *Pyro bourgaeanae*-*Queceto rotundifoliae* s. et du *Poterio agrimonioidis*-*Querceto suberis* s. On décrit le nouveau *Senecio foliosi*-*Phalaridetum coerulescentis*, tandis que, dans le sud de l'Andalousie, l'*Hedysaro coronari-Phalaridetum coerulescentis* est décrit pour les secteurs Aljibico et Gaditano-Onubense ; dans les Rondeñas et Bermejeenses, on trouve l'*Elymo repentis*-*Phalaridetum coerulescentis*. Ces trois associations appartiennent à l'alliance *Gaudinio fragilis*-*Hordeion bulbosum*.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The *Gaudinio fragilis-Hordeion bulbosif* alliance has been described by its authors for the eastern Mediterranean and it includes communities growing on deep, seasonally waterlogged, vertic soils. Galán *et al.* (1997) included in this alliance not only the *Hedysarum bronarii-Phalaridetum coeruleoventris* association for the western Baetic, Aljibic and Ingitan territories, but also the associations *Phalarido coeruleoventris-Agropyretum pun-nitis* Loppi & De Dominicis 1990 and *Phalarido coeruleoventris-Dactylidetum glomeratae* Scoppola & Pelosi 1995 (Scoppola & Pelosi, 1995) growing in the centre of Italy. Subsequently Pérez Latorre *et al.* (1998) described the *Elymno repentis-Phalaridetum coeruleoventris* association in the Rondean verticulous territories. Rivas-Martínez *et al.* (2001) include the two associations described so far in the south of Spain in the *Gaudinio-ordeion bulbosif* alliance, which is, in turn, included in the order *Holoschoenetalia vul-ris* Br.-Bl. ex Tchou 1948, which name *Phalaridetalia coeruleoventris* Galán, Deil, Haug Vicente 1997 and include in the *Molinio-Arrhenatheretea* Tüxen 1937 class. The communities of this class represent grass-like, annual and perennial vegetation which includes ed-grasslands and prairies undergoing frequent flooding followed by more or less long droughts.

II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Our research work identifies the communities under study, concentrating on occasionally inter-logged areas. We consider the area under study, which comprises the Alentejo region (Beja, Évora, etc.) and includes also the central area surrounding (Castello Branco), to be sufficiently suitable for the 21 phytosociological and edaphic relevés. The phytosociological sampling is accompanied by an estimate of the abundance-dominance for each taxon (+, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), as suggested by Braun-Blanquet (1979), in order to arrange the information systematically ready for the statistical data analysis. The Braun-Blanquet abundance-dominance weighted indexes were subsequently transformed into an ordinal scale following Van der Maarel (1979): 1-1, +2, 1-3, 2-4, 3-5, 4-6, 5-7. With the 86 relevés we obtained a matrix. Numbers 1-62 correspond to relevés 6-67, Table 1 in Galán *et al.* (1997); 63-65 correspond to relevés 1-3, Table 17 in Pérez Latorre *et al.* (1998), and 66-68 correspond to our own 21 relevés, in Table I. The data matrix makes a comparative analysis of the association with 106 species, considering only the characteristic species of the association, association and the higher ranked categories of alliance, order and class. An analysis, however, omits companion plants belonging to classes different from *Molinio-Arrhenatheretea*.

We carried out a phytosociological correlation analysis between our own relevés. In order to find out the value of statistical significance, the comparison was made by means of the data matrix with the Van der Maarel abundance-dominance indexes. In this matrix each of the rows corresponds to a species and each column to a (variable) sampling unit. In order to characterize and initially analyse both the communities and the edaphic profile of the sampling units, we applied techniques and methods peculiar to classical statistics by means of the MATLAB 7.1 programme. We not only used these types of methods of the phytosociological correlation analyses, but we also used them to obtain the following descriptive parameters for each of the edaphic features: mean, median, variance, standard deviation, standard error, minimum, maximum, first quartile, second quartile and

Table I.- General table of seasons and indexes for Portugal. Tm: average annual temperature; P: average annual rainfall rate; lo: ombrothermic index; lc: continentality index (annual temperature range); l/lc: thermicity index/compensated thermicity index. Txa: average temperature of the hottest month; Tmia: average temperature of the coldest month; Alt.: altitude. Is2, Is3: compensated ombrothermic indexes. PAV: period of vegetative activity.

Tableau I.- Tableau des données des stations météorologiques du Portugal.

Station	Tm	P	lo	lc	l/lc	Txa	Tmia	Alt
Trás de Alentejo (PO)	15.9	874.2	4.58	13.2	3.59	21.2	10.6	240
Alentejo (PO)	12.7	909.0	5.96	16.0	3.01	16.4	9.0	865
Portalegre (PO)	15.1	908.3	5.01	14.8	3.21	19.7	10.5	597
Evora-Mittra	15.4	664.6	3.59	14.5	3.26	21.5	9.2	200
Vizela do Alentejo (PO)	15.9	706.1	3.70	13.9	3.48	22.3	9.5	202
Castellão do Cacém(PO)	15.6	719.4	3.84	10.8	3.63	19.7	11.5	228
Evora (PO)	15.6	642.6	3.43	13.7	3.42	20.4	10.8	309
Beja (PO)	16.0	707.8	3.68	14.6	3.52	23.8	9.2	246
Monta (PO)	15.9	675.0	3.55	13.8	3.38	23.6	9.6	110
Monta (PO)	17.5	437.4	2.08	16.5	3.67	26.1	9.6	190
Elvas (PO)	16.1	670.7	3.47	16.5	3.26	24.8	8.3	208
Mértola, V. Formoso(PO)	16.4	606.7	3.08	15.4	3.43	24.4	9.0	190

coefficient of variation, and finally, we also made a phytosociological table with our own relevés and a synthetic table.

The new *Phalaris coeruleoventris* association suggested in this work grows in the continental territories of Portugal. Included in the Lusitan-Estremadurean Subprovince, these territories border to the north with the Cordillera Central, to the south with the rocky territory of the Algarve and, in Spain, with the piedmont of Sierra Morena. The territory under study is located in the Marianic-Monchiquensean (Alto Alentejo) Sector and in the Toledoan-Taganean Sector (north of Estremoz, Elvas, the Tagus Basin and Sierra do Mamede). According to the values shown in the following table, the territory of our proposed new association presents a pluvisesional-oceanic, thermo- and mesomediterranean, dry, subhumid bioclimate (Fig. 1).

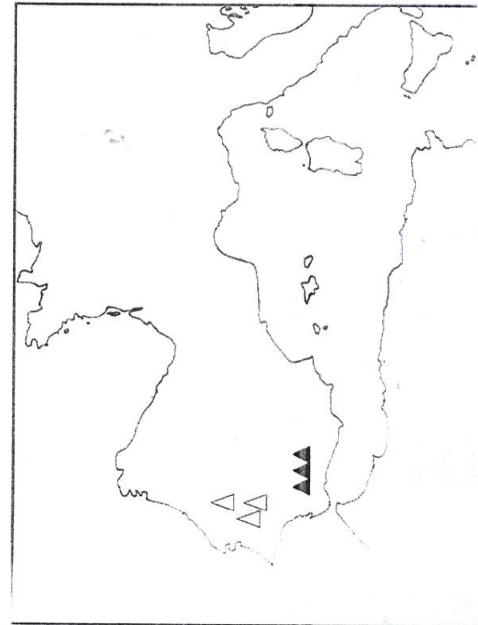


Fig. 1.- Location of the study area. ▲ bibliographical sampling units; △ our own sampling units.
Fig. 1.- Localities de l'aire d'étude. ▲ inventaires issus de la bibliographie ; △ inventaires propres.

The Portuguese territories under study, located in the Alto Alentejo and Portuguese Alentejo, are dominated by siliceous materials, Paleozoic slates, granites and quartzites. There are also calcareous islands of Cretaceous origin, whose materials produce red, omic soils as a result of decarbonisation processes, with pH-values close to neutrality, carried out a biogeographical and bioclimatical study of the territory following the works by Rivas-Martínez & Loidi (1999a, 1999b), Pinto Gomes & Lazare (2002) and Rivas-Martínez *et al.* (2007) (Table I).

In order to define the different taxa, we made use of the following references: Strovitj *et al.* (1986-01), Valdés *et al.* (1987), Tutin *et al.* (1964-93), Pignatti (1997), Vieira Coutinho (1939), Amaral Franco (1984), Amaral Franco & Rocha Alfonso (1994).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Phytosociological analysis

The new association we have suggested, *Senecio foliosi-Phalaridetum coeruleoensis*, would be included in the *Gaudinio fragilis-Hordeion bulbosi* alliance, which comprises associations found in an area stretching from Italy to Portugal. This association varies on seasonally water-logged soils with severe summer drought and cattle-rearing activities. Consequently, it presents a strong anthropozoogenous character. The summer drought is caused basically by the high percentage of sand in the soil composition, which leads to heavy water loss via evapotranspiration and drainage.

Alano-Ortiz *et al.* (2007) sampled the new community in the Portuguese Alentejo in sites of edaphic moisture. Owing to the pressure of intense cattle-raising, the landscape is made up of fields of tall grass dominated by *Phalaris coeruleoensis*, which is accompanied by nitrophilous species belonging to the *Carduus* and *Carlina* genera. The floristic composition includes the species *Phalaris coeruleoensis*, *Senecio jacobaea* var. *foliosus*, *maemelum nobile*, *Scirpus holoschoenus*, *Mentha suaveolens* and *Mentha pulegium*, together with other companion taxa peculiar to neighbouring associations, such as *actito-Vulpium membranaceae*. This last association occurs as a result of the presence of intense cattle-raising on the *Trifolium resupinatum-Holoschoenetum vulgaris* reef-stand: the continuous trampling of the animals and the increase of O.O.M. cause a change in the flora and structure of the vegetation. Consequently, we propose the association *Senecioi foliosi-Phalaridetum coeruleoensis nova* (Table II, rel. 1 to 21; typus rel. 1). This association differs from *Hedysaro coronarii-Phalaridetum coeruleoensis*, described for the Iberian Aljibic, Tingitan and Baetic areas, not only in that it is located in Lusitanian-madurean biogeographical territories, but also in that *Hordeum bulbosum* and *psarum coronarium* (Galán *et al.*, 1997) are absent (Table III).

coeruleoensis association in the Rondean verticolous territories. This association is characterized by *Achillea ageratium*, *A. odorata*, *Elymus repens*, *Narcissus bugei*, etc. (Table I). Like Rivas-Martínez *et al.* (2001), we also include the suggested association, together with the two associations so far described in the south of Spain, in the *Gaudinio-Hordeion aristata* alliance and in the order *Holoschoenetalia vulgaris* Br.-Bl. ex Tehou 1948, of it, within the class *Molinio-Arrhenatheretea* Tüxen 1937. The presence of *Agrostis reptans* and *A. castellana* in our relevés is due to the dynamics between these communi-

Table III.- Synthetic table of the *Gaudinio fragilis-Hordeion bulbosi* alliance in the Iberian Peninsula.

Tableau III.- Tableau synthétique de l'alliance *Gaudinio fragilis-Hordeion bulbosi* dans la Péninsule ibérique.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>Phalaris coeruleoensis</i>	V	+	IV	+	V	IV	I
<i>Hedysarum coronarium</i>	V	+	+	+	+	+	I
<i>Hordeum bulbosum</i>	III	+	III	+	+	+	I
<i>Trifolium isnocarpum</i>	III	+	+	+	+	+	I
<i>Danthonia decumbens</i>	IV	+	+	+	+	+	I
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	IV	+	+	+	+	+	I
<i>Bromus lanceolatus</i>	IV	+	+	+	+	+	I
<i>Scirpus muricatus</i>	III	+	+	+	+	+	I
<i>Scirpus papyraceus</i>	III	+	+	+	+	+	I
<i>Trifolium squamosum</i>	II	+	+	+	+	+	V
<i>Carduncellus caeruleus</i>	II	+	+	+	+	+	III
<i>Stachys cordigera</i>	II	+	+	+	+	+	III
<i>Scrophularia sambucifolia</i>	I	+	+	+	+	+	III
<i>Narcissus baeticus</i>	I	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Narcissus papyraceus</i>	I	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Cichorium intybus</i>	I	+	+	+	+	+	I
<i>Stella peruviana</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	V
<i>Leontodon longirostris</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	III
<i>Cynara humilis</i>	I	+	+	+	+	+	III
<i>Leontodon maroccanus</i>	III	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Pestuca atlantigena</i>	I	V	IV	I	+	+	+
<i>Carex divisa</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Gnaphalium globulosum</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Poa sylvicola</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Scirpus maritimus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Juncus maritimus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Scirpus holoschoenus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Mentha pulegium</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Mentha suaveolens</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Ranunculus macropophyllus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Alythum junceum</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Ranunculus viscosus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Gaudinia fragilis</i>	III	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Briza minor</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Rumex crispus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Lysochis castellana</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Lysochis ampla</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Hypochaeris platylepis</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Loxanthanthum ovatum</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Trifolium pallidum</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Chamaemelum nobile</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Trifolium baeticum</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Conyza hirta</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Ranunculus trilobus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Garrigium dissectum</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Carex distans</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Juncus striatus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Prunella laciniata</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Hordeum geniculatum</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Silene laeta</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Danthonia decumbens</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Serapias lingua</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Serapias parviflora</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Crepis capillaris</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Achillea ageratium</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Achillea odorata</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Elymus repens</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Narcissus bugei</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Koeleria valesiana humilis</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Phleum bertolonii</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Carex flacca serrulata</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Leontodon tingitamus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Juncus inflexus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Ononis repens australis</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Senecio jacobaea foliosus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Mentha pulegium</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Pulicaria uliginosa</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Agrostis pourretii</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Lotium perenne</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Chamaemelum mixtum</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Rumex pulcher</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Anthemis praecox</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Mentha suaveolens</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Hypericum humifusum</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Tordylium maximum</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Ranunculus polidostus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Lotus subiflorus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Cyperus longus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Chamaemelum nobile</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Avena barbata lusitanica</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Verbena officinalis</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Trifolium resupinatum</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Genanthus crocata</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Chaetopogon fasciculatus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Centaureum maritimum</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<i>Carex divulsus</i>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

1. *Hedysaro coronarii-Phalaridetum coeruleoensis* (Galán *et al.*, 1997, Table I, rel. 6-39). 2. *Poa sylvicola-Festucetum atlantigenae* (Galán *et al.*, 1997, Table I, rel. 40-45). 3. *Poa sylvicola-Festucetum atlantigenae scirpetosum maritimi* (Galán *et al.*, 1997, Table I, rel. 46-51). 4. *Gaudinio fragilis-Agrostetum castellanae hypochaeridetosum platylepis* (Galán *et al.*, 1997, Table I, rel. 52-57). 5. *Elymo repentis-Phalaridetum coeruleoensis* (Pérez Latorre *et al.*, 1998, Table XVII, rel. 1-6). 6. *Senecio foliosi-Phalaridetum coeruleoensis nova* (our own relevés, Table II, rel. 1-21).

