

A NEW SPECIES OF *ORIGANUM* (LABIATAE) FROM LIBYA

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SUMMARY

A new species of *Origanum*, *O. akhdarens*, is described from GEBEL AKHDAR (Cyrenaica, Libya) and its position in the genus is briefly discussed.

Origanum akhdarens IETSWAART et BOULOS* *sp. nov.*, Fig. 1.

Species haec affinis *O. cyrenaico* Beg. et Vacc. sed foliis tenuioribus puberulis pallide virentibus, bracteis parvioribus margine ciliatis, labiis inferioribus calycum manifeste bidentatis labia superiora aequilongis, corollis purpureis diversa.

Fruticulus, flores bisexuales. *Surculi juveniles* puberuli. *Caules* basi lignosi et sparsim ramosi, erecti vel adscendentes, c. 30 cm alti, pallide brunei, puberuli. *Rami spiciferi* in parte superiori caulis, c. 7 pares per caulem, 6 (2-14) mm longi; ramuli spiciferi brevissimi in ramis inferioribus interdum praesentes. *Folia* c. 14 pares per caulem, puberula (pro parte pilis capitatis); petioli c. 1,5 mm longi; laminae subrotundatae vel ovaes, apice obtuso, 16 (8-19) mm longae, 13 (6-16) mm latae, tenues, pallide virentes, margine paulum ciliatae (pilis c. 1 mm longis), glandibus sessilibus obsoletis, usque ad 150 per cm². *Spicae* ellipsoideae, c. 12 mm longae, c. 6 mm latae, plus minusve nutantes. *Bracteae* c. 7 pares per spicam, oblongae, apice plus minusve acuto, c. 6 mm longae, c. 2 mm latae, pro parte pallide purpurascens, indumento fere ut in foliis. *Flores* 2 per verticillastrum, subsessiles. *Calyces* pro 1/5 parte bilabiati, c. 5 mm longi, extus puberuli, margine ciliati, faucibus annulo villosi; labia superiora integra (vel brevissime dentata); labia inferiora longitudine superiora aequantia, in dentes duos triangulares, c. 1 mm longos, tota divisa. *Corollae* pro 1/4 parte bilabatae, c. 11 mm longae purpureae, non saccatae, fere glabrae; labia superiora pro c. 1/8 parte in lobos duos aequilongos obtusos, c. 0,3 mm longos, divisa; labia inferiora superioribus paulo longiora, pro c. 3/4 parte in lobos tres paulum inaequilongos ovaes, c. 1,7 mm longos, divisa. *Stamina* recta, longe exserta; filamenta usque ad 6 mm et 8 mm longa. *Styli* usque ad 16 mm longi. *Nucae* c. 1 mm longae.

* Professor Dr. L. BOULOS collected the specimens of this new species in 1970. His address is: Department of Biological Sciences, University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan.

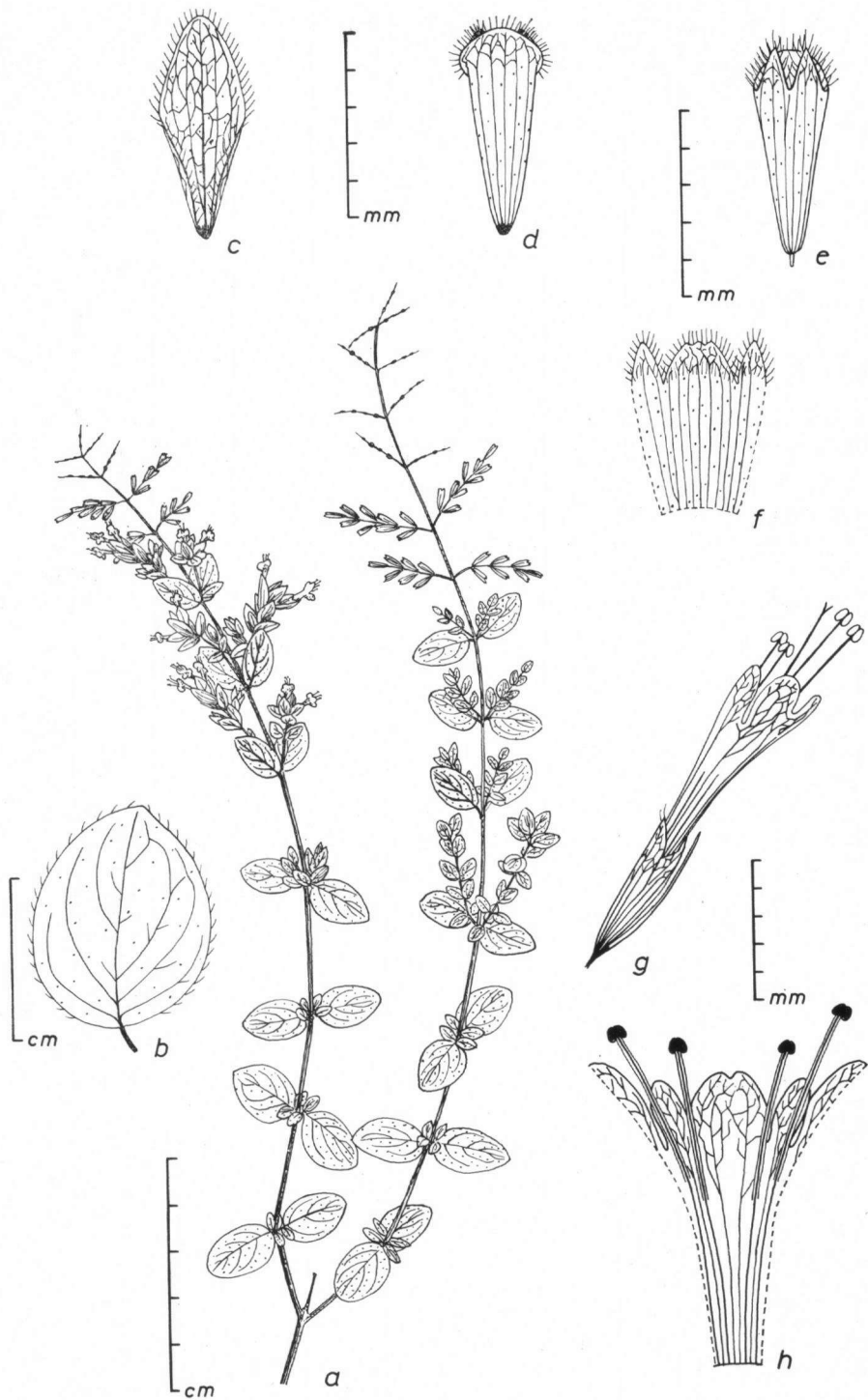


Fig. 1. *Origanum akhdarenses* Ietswaart et Boulos sp. nov.: (a) stem, (b) leaf, (c) bract, (d) calyx, view of upper lip, (e) calyx, view of lower lip, (f) calyx cut between the two lower lip teeth, (g) flower with bract, (h) corolla cut through middle lobe of lower lip.

Libya, Cyrenaica, GEBEL AKHDAR, WADI EL-KOUF, 27 Oct. 1970, L. Boulos no. 4469 (holotype in CAI, isotype in AVU).

Origanum akhdarensense is the second species of the genus found in Cyrenaica. The other one, *O. cyrenaicum*, has been described by BÉGUINOT & VACCARI (1913) and is mentioned in the Prodrumus della Flora Cirenaica by PAMPANINI (1931). Both species are endemic for Cyrenaica and are rather closely related. They have the following characters in common: a chamaephytic habit, frequent occurrence of non-flowering axillary sprouts in the lower part of the stems, short spike bearing branches that persist after the bracts and flowers have fallen off, small bracts that are only slightly purple coloured and an entire (or nearly entire) calyx upper lip. The two species are, however, distinctly separated by several other characters. In *O. cyrenaicum* the leaves are more or less hirsute and leathery, the bracts measure c. 7×4 mm and are not ciliate, the lower lip of the calyx measures c. 1/6 of the upper lip length and is slightly bidentate, and the corolla is white.

In *O. akhdarensense* the leaves are minutely pubescent, thin and not leathery, the bracts measure c. 6×2 mm and are ciliate at the margin, the lower lip of the calyx is as long as the upper lip and is clearly bidentate, and the corolla is purple coloured. On account of characters in calyx and flower-spike both species should be attributed to the group *Amaracus* within the genus *Origanum*. They lack some of the features that mark the greater part of the species in this group, however, like: large, conspicuous purple coloured, clearly nodding flower spikes and stamina ascending under the upper lip.

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