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

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The High Mountain Vegetation of Turkey - a State of the Art Report, Including a First Annotated Conspectus of the Major Syntaxa

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Abstract: This contribution spotlights the present research on the (oreal) subalpine to subnival mountain vegetation of Turkey. It concisely compiles our present knowledge, which is very heterogeneous in geographical terms. The situation is comparatively good in NW and W Anatolia and the western half of the Taurus range, from where a first consolidation stage can be reported. By contrast, the E Taurus remains a largely unexplored area. The Pontic chains have hitherto attracted a few local researchers only, and those important pioneering accounts cover less than half of the vegetation types actually present. The results of the last years' field work in the Taurus range represent the core of the presentation and focus on the syntaxonomy and phytogeography of the Tauric System. An annotated conspectus of all known major syntaxa (alliances to class group level) recorded from the Anatolian mountains is presented. It includes 15 first records of mostly Euro-Siberian and Mediterranean orders and classes that proved to be incorrectly interpreted, completely unstudied or as yet unreported. The classification of the N Anatolian mountain vegetation suffered severely by neglecting the rich literature about the neighbouring mountain chains of the Balkans or the Great and Little Caucasus. In taking a broader view, some major vegetation units are re-defined to better reflect Turkey's position in the Eurasian Alpico-Himalayan fold mountain system. A phytogeographical subdivision of the Turkish mountain ranges and all of the Tauric System based on both the asylvatic high mountain vegetation and flora is provided. The subdivision is fully backed by the pattern revealed by the forest communities. Despite the achievements in the past, such a lecture is to a certain extent a tale of ignorance. Pointing out the gaps in our knowledge may help to co-ordinate the studies needed. Another goal is to discuss conflicting or even inappropriate syntaxonomic concepts and working methods to come closer to a common base for future vegetation surveying projects.

Key Words: (Anatolian) mountains, phytogeography, phytosociology, syntaxonomic conspectus, Tauric System, Turkey, vegetation

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