

The identity of *Hieracium largum* (Asteraceae)

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The name *Hieracium largum* Fr., formerly misinterpreted as a synonym of *H. robustum* Fr., is reduced to the synonymy of *H. umbellatum* L. The holotype citation for *H. largum* is provided.

Key words: *Hieracium*, nomenclature, taxonomy

The name *Hieracium largum* Fr. (Asteraceae) is one of the mysterious names in the European hawkweeds. As many of the oldest taxa in this notoriously difficult genus, this name has been interpreted variously during its history of use.

According to the protologue of *H. largum* (Fries 1862), the only specimen which was used for the original description of this species was sent to Elias Magnus Fries, the famous monographer of *Hieracium*, by his correspondent J. Heuffel. This specimen is currently kept in Uppsala (UPS), where the personal herbarium of E. Fries is located, and is the holotype of *H. largum*.

The specimen comes from Hungary, but the plant has probably been cultivated, as noted by Fries on its herbarium label. Fries interpreted the locality of this plant as the Tokay Province because he had seen another specimen from Tokay, which was “rather similar” (*subs simile*) to the typical *H. largum* but “approaching *H. boreale*” (*ad H. boreale accedit*). Fries had seen the specimen from Tokay in the National Museum in Prague, Czech Republic (Museum Bohemicum at that time), and considered it as close to his new species. Although this specimen is therefore

not part of the original material of *H. largum* but, being normally developed, it provided a basis for classification of the holotype plant under the unranked group *Sabauda* Fr. Fries noted the holotype plant was extraordinary for its enormous size (the inflorescence “over a foot long”, with numerous branches), and this impressively luxurious growth was apparently the very and the only reason to establish a new taxon for a single specimen.

In spite of its position in the system of *Hieracium*, *H. largum* was originally compared with *H. foliosum* Waldst. & Kit. currently treated as a synonym of *H. virosus* Pall. (Sell & West 1976), a member of the other unranked group *Foliosa* Fr. *Hieracium foliosum* was distinguished by Fries due to its broad amplexicaul leaves. Fries indicated that the new species differed from *H. foliosum* in its leaves neither amplexicaul nor reticulately venose beneath; the other character reading “leaves in shape and size as those of *Lysimachia nummularia*”, which is really extraordinary for most of the aphyllipodous *Hieracium* species similar to *H. sabaudum* L., unless the bract-like reduced leaves situated

below the inflorescence are described.

Otherwise, the unusual shape of the leaves, together with the giant habit, may be indicative of the fact that the plant was severely modified by cultivation. Fries acknowledged this fact on the herbarium label but left it unpublished and even not considered, whereas the diagnostic characters may be modified as well.

The unusual diagnostic characters and the relevant inaccessibility of the original material left the name *H. largum* open for interpretation. The most influential monographer of *Hieracium*, Zahn (1922) subordinated this taxon as a subspecies to *H. robustum* Fr. interpreted as intermediate between *H. virosum* and *H. umbellatum* L., with its distribution in Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, the Crimea, lower Volga and the Baikal Region. Zahn based his opinion on Heuffel's collections from Illok, Croatia, and rejected the material from Tokay as referable to *H. sabaudum* s. lato.

That interpretation has been followed (Üksip 1960), and Schljakov (1989) accepted *H. largum* as a separate “microspecies” different from *H. robustum* in the glabrous (not densely and rigidly hairy) stem and the lower side of leaves. The distribution area of *H. largum* was included in that of *H. robustum*. As became evident from a revision of the collections on which the earlier Russian *Hieracium* treatments were based, the plants of *H. robustum* are exactly as variable in their hairiness as those of its presumable “parent”, *H. umbellatum*, with the stems ranging from almost totally glabrous to densely hairy, but always possessing at least some hairs below the petioles (Sennikov 1999). For this reason, just a single taxon intermediate between *H. umbellatum* and *H. virosum* was recognised, with *H. largum* placed in the synonymy of *H. robustum* (Sennikov 1999, 2008).

My examination of the original specimen of *H. largum* (Fig. 1) confirmed Fries's assumption that it represents the upper part of a garden plant. The habit and leaves are much modified and consequently not indicative of any European *Hieracium* species. The leaves are evenly covered with stellate hairs, with their lower side having a few reduced (ca. 1 mm long) simple hairs at the base of the mid-vein, which are decurrent to the stem. Since the simple hairs are very short and

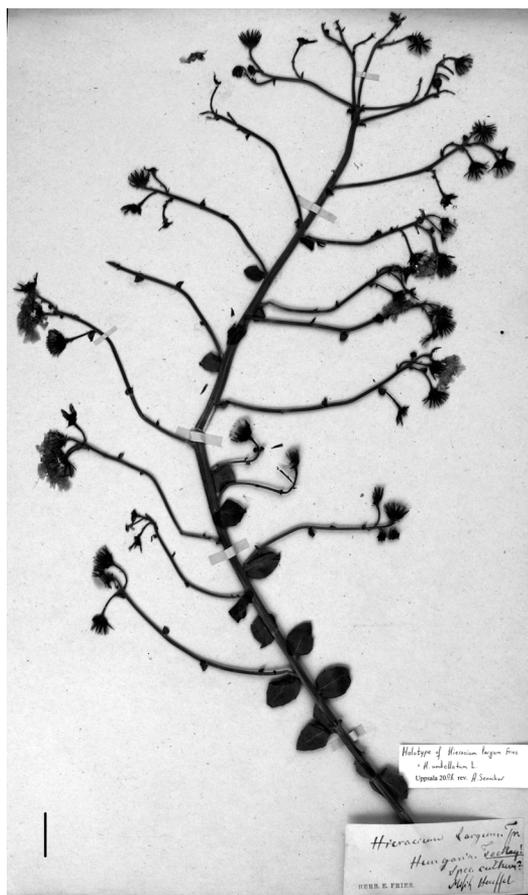


Fig. 1. Holotype of *Hieracium largum*. Scale: 2 cm.

not numerous, the specimen looks “totally glabrous” (*glaberrimum*) as noted in the protologue. The calathidia are rather large, with the phyllaries narrowly triangular and slightly covered with stellate hairs only. The phyllaries were described by Fries (1862) as appressed, but my own observations of the specimen are not fully congruent with the original description. The apical parts of some phyllaries (Fig. 2), especially on the immature and lateral calathidia, which are presumably less modified, are regularly reflected and folded, even though the specimen was accurately pressed. This feature is clearly indicative of the widespread and ubiquitous species *H. umbellatum*, which may be really vigorous both in cultivation and in nutrient-rich habitats such as humid roadsides. The phyllaries of the largest mature calathidia in *H. umbellatum* often have straight (appressed) apical parts, but the younger

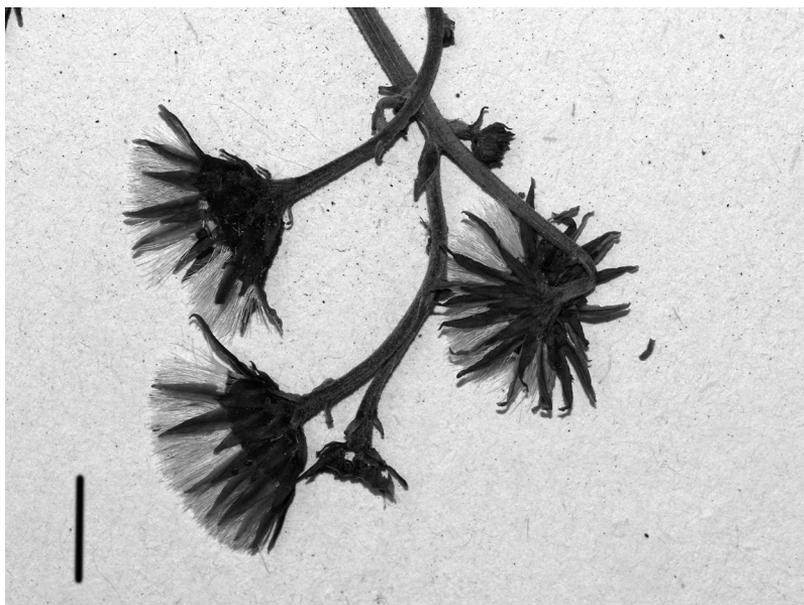


Fig. 2. A fragment of the holotype of *Hieracium largum*. Scale: 1 cm.

heads of this species are usually more expressive in the diagnostic characters.

Since the holotype of *H. largum* belongs to *H. umbellatum*, the later name *H. largum* falls into the synonymy of the latter.

***Hieracium largum* Fr.**, Uppsala Univ. Årsskr. 1862: 127. 1862 (*syn. nov.*) = *H. umbellatum* L.

PROVENANCE: "In Hungaria. Unicum suum specimen largitus est amicus quondam cariss. Heuffel."

TYPE: "Hungaria. Tockay" *J. Heuffel* in Hb. E. M. Fries (UPS, holotype).

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