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A new Flora of Greece

A. GOULANDRIS

There could hardly be a more suitable occasion to announce the plans for a new Greek Flora than this Flora Europaea Symposium. I should like to express my gratitude to the Editorial Committee of Flora Europaea for having included this subject in the agenda.

Although Greece was the birthplace of taxonomic botany, there has never been a full-scale botanical exploration of all regions of the country. Part of the explanation lies, no doubt, in her history. As an example, suffice it to mention that the "Conspectus florae graecae" by HALÁCSY leaves out nearly half of the present Greek State (Macedonia, Thrace, the East Aegean Islands and the Dodecanese) because at that time these areas were still under foreign domination.

Flora Europaea deals, of course, with the Greek flora. However, since it largely draws on research work done in Northern and Central Europe, it is inevitable that our region, in which botany is not yet as developed, is rather poorly represented.

A large amount of information concerning the flora of Greece has been accumulated in standard works such as E. VON HALÁCSY's "Conspectus florae graecae" (1900-1904; supplements in 1908 and 1912), A. VON HAYEK's "Prodromus florae peninsulae balcanicae" (1924-1933), H. DIAPOULIS' "Flora of Greece" (in Greek, 1939) and K. H. RECHINGER's "Flora aegaea" (1943), as well as in periodicals in many languages. Considerable time and effort will be needed to collate, arrange and check this material.

The Goulandris Botanical Museum was founded six years ago to promote botanical research in Greece and to collect plants from little known areas of the country. It has already started a large-scale programme of intensive botanical research and collection and provides a major centre for present and future field work in Greece and in the S. E. Mediterranean region.

It has always been the ambition of the Goulandris Botanical Museum to sponsor the publication of a critical modern Greek Flora. Now that we are embarking on this venture I should like to pay special tribute to the Conservatoire et Jardin botaniques de Genève, which, through its director Prof. J. MIÈGE, offers its cooperation and provides ideal working facilities for our collaborators.

Geneva has a special link with Greek botany because inter alia it houses the invaluable collections of E. BOISSIER, who was the first to collect and study systematically the plants from the Adriatic to the Indian subcontinent. BOISSIER's collections are the corner-stone of any modern research concerning the flora of Greece.

Together with the Naturhistorisches Museum Wien, whose director Prof. K. H. RECHINGER is actively supporting our work, the Conservatoire botanique de Genève houses most of the classic and recent plant collections from our area and possesses an almost complete set of the relevant floristic and monographic literature. The herbaria of the British Museum (Natural History); Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh; Botanical Museum, Lund; Botany Departments of the Universities of Munich, Athens and Thessaloniki as well as many other public and private collections contain further valuable materials and will, as far as possible, be consulted during the compilation of the new Flora of Greece. Further exploration (floristic and phytogeographical) and taxonomical revision of many genera will also be required.

The new Greek Flora will be a product of international cooperation. We hope that one of its effects will be the encouragement of taxonomic botany in Greece, with consequent contributions to agriculture, horticulture, forestry, pharmaceuticals, and industry.

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