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HERBARIUM OF SIR J. BENJAMIN STONE

City of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery

The Catalogue on Microfiche

The complete catalogue of 700 pages, together with 528 index-pages, is available in a microfiche edition for convenience in search and reference (the entire work on just six fiches). There are three separate indexes to genera-and-species, collectors and localities, including every specimen listed. The main catalogue comprises full details from the original data of 10,000 specimens of vascular plants in 1,600 genera. They appear in systematic order of families according to the arrangement of Engler & Melchior, with alphabetic listing of genera in each family, every specimen being identified by its sheet-number for reference from indexes.

The specimens were gathered predominantly in the decade 1880-1890 by about 160 botanical collectors, many of whom are well known. The coincidence of so many active field collectors distributing herbaria at this time is testimony to the expansion of descriptive taxonomic botany toward the end of the nineteenth century. Many of those botanists whose specimens were received by Stone died in the years preceding the war of 1914, which was also the year of Sir Benjamin Stone's death. Thus his herbarium encapsulates the endeavours and achievements of a generation of European and American botanists.

The restricted time-span during which most of the material was collected gives a strong cohesive integrity to the entire herbarium and, in effect, enables the regional lists to stand as floristic statements of their own time and place. The earliest dated specimens are from two Mediterranean tours, one by Endress (1829) and the other by Muller ("Unio Itineraria" 1827).

The specimen sheets bear the original collectors' labels without later annotation. This is a valuable feature of the herbarium, providing first-hand information on localities and habitats, also examples of individual botanists' handwriting and signature. The nomenclature has not been revised or altered in any way and therefore preserves the taxonomy of the 1880's. The catalogue reproduces these names virtually as given and syntypes are listed by reference to sheet numbers in the accompanying notes.

Generally, the authors of plant names are cited by the collector, some with reference to published works. The constraints of the catalogue's format have dictated that these data are not reproduced on the fiches but they may be obtained by request to the Keeper of the Herbarium. If information required is in manuscript, a facsimile of the label may be offered to avoid errors arising from misinterpretation of illegible script.

The catalogue is accompanied by explanatory notes on the system adopted for translation of information from various European languages, together with a glossary of habitat descriptions derived from Latin. Detailed information is given on the treatment of plant names, personal names and place-names, and on the scheme of geographical classification that has been applied in order to index without distorting original data.

COLLECTORS: Major collections, with number of specimens given in brackets, include material gathered by H. Bordere (385) from the Central Pyrenees; by F.H. Hosford (379) from Vermont U.S.A.; P. Porta (514) from the S.Tirol; by C.G. Pringle (1638) from Arizona and Mexico; E. Reverchon (1088) from Spain, Alpes Maritimes, Corsica and Sardinia; G. Rigo (460) from northern Italy; J.B. Stone (637) from Norway and Switzerland; W.N. Suksdorf (836) from the state of Washington U.S.A.; and F.O.Wolf (897) from the Valais, Switzerland.

Other smaller but nonetheless significant collections included in Stone's herbarium are those from C. Baenitz (127) most from Norway; J. Bornmuller 252 from Anatolia, Bulgaria and Serbia; G.A. Geneve (154) without provenance; R. Huter (286) from the Central- and East-Tirol (Austria); Bjorn Lindberg 135 from Norway; R.P. Murray (172) from the Canary Islands; and G.E. Post (264) from Lebanon.

GEOGRAPHY: The considerable interest of the Stone Herbarium resides in the wide geographical spread of specimens representing the larger generic groups of flowering plants, especially across Europe to the Middle East and within the North American continent. Its scientific value is further increased by the fact that collecting was concentrated in certain districts and provinces: and in consequence, their local floras are well represented.

Major collecting areas, with number of specimens in brackets, are: --- in Europe --- the Austrian Tirol (447); France, the Pyrenees (321) and Maritime Alps (206); Italy, the Alto Adige (493) and Brescia-Verona (488); the central Mediterranean, Corsica and Sardinia (366); Norway, the Dovrefjell and Tromso (387); Spain, mainly Andalucia (447); Switzerland, the Valais (908); and --- in N.America --- the Mexican state of Chihuahua (727) and others, in addition to Arizona (505), Washington (820) and Vermont (381) in the United States.

Smaller collections of some significance are from Crete (105), the Canary Islands (173), Czechoslovakia (88), Iceland (71), Romania (106), Lebanon (265) Turkey (180), and Yugoslavia (126).

TAXONOMY : Among the Mexican specimens gathered by Pringle are numerous syntypes named by Sereno Watson at the Gray Herbarium of Harvard University. Syntypes are also included among Bornmuller's specimens from Anatolia. About 1600 genera are listed (equalling the number in Flora Europaea). Many genera are represented by between 30 and 50 sheets and the larger genera by even more as the following list indicates (with number of specimens in brackets):

Anemone (59), Arabis (52), Astragalus (68), Campanula (57), Carex (244), Centaurea (69), Dianthus (62), Draba (55), Euphorbia (88), Galium (75), Gentiana (62), Hieracium (125), Juncus (68), Polygonum (52), Potentilla (115), Ranunculus (140), Rosa (106), Salix (87), Saxifraga (151), Senecio (67), Silene (77), Trifolium (89), Veronica (54) and Viola (89).

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