DIGITISATION OF DIMITRIOS ZAGANIAKIS' HISTORICAL BOTANICAL COLLECTIONS DEPOSITED IN TAU (GREECE)

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Herbaria are deposits of biodiversity. Old botanical collections can be of equal importance compared to modern collections, since they provide information about past environmental facts, which may help scientists to assess the environmental changes in 21st century. The Thessaloniki Aristotle University Herbarium (TAU) holds several botanical collections from Greek and other European researchers dating back to the early 19th century. Dimitrios Zaganiaris (1900-1940) was a Greek botanist who travelled around Greece and published about eight floristic surveys between 1932 and 1940. One of his well-known published work is "Herbarium Macedonicum" (1938-1940), consisting of four volumes, with a total number of 4000 plant recordings from different regions of Northern Greece. However, many of his data were not made available to the scientific community, as they remained unpublished because of his early death, while several of his specimens were destroyed during World War II. This project aims to record all Zaganiaris' specimens found in TAU, targeting, through their digitisation, to make them accessible worldwide and useful to contemporary taxonomic and floristic studies. A pre-digitisation process has already been started, attempting, at first step, to verify which collections are published in any of Zaganiaris' floristic studies. Our preliminary results have shown that 2035 specimens are deposited in TAU, representing plant species of 112 families. Among them, 457 specimens correspond to records published in "Herbarium Macedonicum". The ongoing digitisation process comprises: a) checking and updating nomenclature of all specimens, where necessary, b) extracting and abstracting label information, c) recording the collection locality of the specimens; the coordinates of the different regions will be defined by a graphical display software (e.g. "Google earth"), while older toponyms, some of which are Serbian or Turkish, will be matched to current toponymy, d) creating digital high-resolution images of all Zaganiaris' specimens. All the above information will be incorporated to a large biodiversity database, such as "Global Biodiversity Information Facility" (GBIF).

KEYWORDS: Zaganiaris, TAU Herbarium, Greece, historical collections