PREFACE

The last and only Flora to cover Turkey was Boissier's *Flora Orientalis* (1867-1888). Although this monumental work provides as good a foundation as any major Flora of its period, an enormous amount of herbarium material has accumulated since Boissier's time and a great many new species have been described. Our understanding of the Turkish flora has been hampered up to now by the lack of synthesis of all this activity. This is demonstrated by the extreme inaccuracy, as far as Turkey is concerned, of many published distribution maps.

Turkey has for several reasons a particularly interesting flora: (1) it is the meeting place of three phytogeographical regions, the Euro-Siberian, Mediterranean, and Irano-Turanian regions, whereas only the first two are represented in the other Mediterranean peninsulas; the Turkish flora is therefore exceptionally rich; (2) Anatolia forms a bridge between Southern Europe and the flora of South-West Asia, and has apparently served as a migration route, particularly for the penetration of Asiatic elements into South Europe; (3) many genera and sections have their centre of diversity in Anatolia, so that their revision in this area leads to a better understanding of their taxonomy elsewhere; (4) species endemism is high – on the evidence of the present volume 20-25 per cent; this factor is presumably connected with the climatic and topographical diversity of the country, and the limited extent of Pleistocene glaciation; (5) many cultivated plants (crop plants, fruit trees, ornamentals) and plants that are weeds in Europe appear to have had their wild origin in Anatolia and adjacent areas; the arid areas produce numerous fodder plants of potential economic importance.

For these reasons, the time seems ripe to produce a *Flora of Turkey*, concurrently with the *Flora Europaea* and K. H. Rechinger's *Flora Iranica*. This should provide a sound basis for further research when more material and biosystematic data become available. We have made no attempt to solve all our taxonomic problems; many species are still only known from single gatherings and their status or affinities must remain in doubt until they are collected again. By drawing attention to such cases we hope to spotlight taxonomic problems that need further study. If time were no object, this might have been a more comprehensive volume. It has been essential, however, not to be deflected from our main purpose – the steady progress of the Flora within a limited period of time. The work is planned to appear in eight volumes at approximately two-yearly intervals. Volume 2 will include *Caryophyllaceae*, *Illecebraceae*, *Portulacaceae*, *Chenopodiaceae*, *Amaranthaceae*, *Tamaricaceae*, *Frankeniaceae*, *Droseraceae*, *Elatinaceae*, *Hypericaceae*, *Malvaceae*, *Tiliaceae*, *Linaceae*, *Oxalidaceae*, *Balsaminaceae*, *Geraniaceae*, *Zygophyllaceae*, *Rutaceae*, *Aquifoliaceae*, *Rhamnaceae*, *Celastraceae*, *Aceraceae*, *Staphyleaceae*, *Vitaceae* and *Anacardiaceae*, and Volume 3 *Rosaceae* and *Leguminosae*. The editor will be glad to hear from botanists who would be interested in revising genera for Volume 3 and later volumes.

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