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Introduction

As a librarian to the Department of Botany of the Hebrew University I became aware of the need for a comprehensive bibliography of the botanical research of the Middle East. Forming the land bridge between three continents, the region under survey streches from the southern tip of the Arab Peninsula to the Caspian and from the western border of Egypt to Afghanistan. It comprises the political units of Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, the Gulf States, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Thus the term Middle East supersedes some of the rather vague and fluctuating appellations like Orient, Levant, Near East, and other used in older literature. As a result of historico-political development most of the regional research was carried out by foreigners and relevant publications are dispersed in a world wide range of periodicals in any number of languages with a predominance of English, French and German. Therefore, retrieval is exceedingly difficult and time consuming. From the outset we endeavoured to encompass all botanical subjects. However, in the course of compilation the bibliography became markedly slanted towards floristics, taxonomy and phytogeography. The bibliography includes printed material only! unpublished theses and mimeographed reports were omitted. The style of quotation follows American Library Association cataloguing rules and abbreviations of periodicals' names are in accordance with the standards of the World List of scientific periodicals and those adopted by the Botanico-Periodicum-Huntianum "B-P-H". The Roman alphabet is used throughout. Quotations in languages written in a different script are transliterated or rendered in translation, provided the source material offers a foreign language summary or title translation.

Method of compilation

We set ourselves the task to achieve the widest possible coverage of the subject by exhaustive perusal of the very good, yet far from complete collection of floristic and relevant phytogeographical works in the Library of the Department of Botany of the Hebrew University. This implies study of reference lists appended to the texts, of standard bibliographical works, the search and assembling of relevant subject bibliographies and bio-bibliographies published in periodical literature. For the literature of the last thirty years we relied on direct searching in the almost complete periodical file. As a stepping stone we used the regional periodicals, publications concerned with plant geographical topics and journals issued by institutions engaged in regional investigations and the geographical indexes of abstracting journals. Although literature from neighbouring countries is not too well represented in the Library and not always listed in international indexes, we believe we covered the ground by using bibliographical lists of articles in the international press in which authors quoted their papers published in local and vernacular serials.

The main entry section of the bibliography is arranged in alphabetical order of authors' names with co-authors' names cross-referenced to the first author. This section covers the material appearing up to and including 1982.

In order to allow a wider scope of literature search, the main entry section is supplemented by geographical, chronological and subject indexes. In these indexes, authors' and co-authors' names are listed in alphabetical and chronological order under the respective headings and allow easy reference to the main entry section. If the author or authors published more than once in the same year, the fact is marked by letters (a, b) inside the parentheses of the publication date.

Geographical index

The names of the middle eastern countries as enumerated above were chosen as subject headings with the exception of Gulf States, Yemen and Saudi Arabia, which are listed together under Arab Peninsula. On the other hand, Sinai, Armenia, the Island of Socotra, and some others were given separate headings. We further added countries outside our scope like Sudan, Libya, Aegeis, Cyprus and Crete as well as the Red Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Arabian Sea. Aware of the fact that one cannot easily press natural phenomena like floras and vegetations into fluctuating political frontiers, we also introduced more general geographical concepts like Middle East, North Africa,

South West Asia, Asia Media, Mediterranean Basin and Eastern Mediterranean. In those cases in which the title of a paper mentions more than three countries, the item is indexed under the wider category. In this connection we decided to leave the historical name Palestine for the region of the British Mandate covering both Israel and Jordan.

Chronological index

A chronological analysis of the bibliographical material reflects the interrelationship between historical events and scientific exploration of the region and also allows a glimpse into the development of plant science in general. The history of the botanical research is divided into four distinct periods.

The pre-scientific era. — The first treatises on natural history and the first compendia of medical plants written between the years 300 B.C. to about 200 A.D. describe, of course, native plants of the Eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor. These texts, translated, edited and commented upon remained valid botanical references for about 1500 years, since nature study by direct observation had fallen into abeyance and was replaced by comparing ancient texts.

The age of voyage and discovery. — This period stimulated the rediscovery of the Old World, despite the hazardous land route and hostility of its population. Two plant collecting missions visited middle eastern countries in the 16th century and a third, ill fated expedition followed after a lapse of almost 200 years. Expeditions and lone travelers set out for manifold purposes — religions, political, military, geographical or just for adventure's sake, but plant collecting and description of landscapes were always included in the program. We, therefore listed a number of travelogues which contain useful botanical information.

Floristic and systematic research received its greatest impetus through the fundamental work of Charles de Linné (1707-1778) whose classification system provided the botanist with the required instrument. At about the same period the development of graphic techniques came to the aid of the botanist. Crude wood cuts were replaced by plant portraits, executed in hand coloured gravures — the beginning of the 19th century produced some of the most sumptuously illustrated floristic works of the region under survey.

The 19th century. — The technical achievements and European political penetration opened new avenues in regional exploration. A great number of local floras as well as monographic works on plant families and genera native to the region concerned saw the light of print. This era of stock-taking and surveying of the plant world reached its culmination with the publication of Edmond Boissier's "Flora Orientalis" (1867-1888). Towards the end of the 19th century the development of physical and chemical science led to a shift of interest from purely descriptive to structural and functional aspects.

The latest period. — From 1930 or so, we witness dramatic changes both on the scientific an on the political level. Regional research became more and more involved with the specific ecological and physiological questions posed by conditions prevailing in the area. On the other hand, in the last few decades the countries under survey have developed national scientific institutions and the number of locally appearing publications is on the increase. This means that regional explorations are slowly passing from the hands of the foreign to the native born scientist.

Subject index

Subject headings were chosen rather pragmatically as dictated by the material on hand, although we loosly and somewhat inconsistently followed the headings of the section "Botany" in Dewey's Decimal Classification. However, we arranged the headings in alphabetical and not in hierarchical order. Thus, for instance, taxonomic treatment of higher plants is classified under Phanerogams with subdivisions into plant families. In the case of cryptogamic botany we refrained from subdivisions into families; rather, relevant references are found under the headings: *Pteridophyta, Bryophyta, Lichenes, Algology,* and *Mycology.* Under the latter two headings we listed papers

dealing with all aspects of algal and fungal biology together (i.e. taxonomical, ecological, physiological, etc.).

The subjects *Physiology* and *Ecology* have no subdivisions but there are separate headings for Photosynthesis, Mycorrhiza, and Water relations; the latter includes Arid zone research. Dendrology and forest botany form a very large section. We largely excluded Agriculture and Pharmacology but admitted Weeds and pastures. We also added a number of marginal topics on account of their regional importance, such as Archaeology and History, Travels and expeditions, and Biblical botany, which is incomplete.

We hope the bibliography will prove an adequate instrument for the student of Middle Eastern Botany. At this juncture we feel obliged to point out some of its weaknesses. Russian, Arabic, Persian and Turkish literature are not sufficiently represented. We also have our doubts in view of what has been said before, whether we did justice to physiological and genetic research. Regional connection is obvious in publications dealing with floristics, taxonomy, plant geography or ecology, but far more difficult to establish in genetics or physiological subjects. We tried to include only those papers which have a direct regional interest and omitted those dealing with general problems even if the experimental work was carried out with local plant material.

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