

Project Update: February 2014

Last week (27th -31st January 2014) the project team (Kaan HÜRKAN, Sramko Gabor and Löki Viktor) visited Museum of Natural History Vienna Herbarium (W) and Vienna University Herbarium in Austria. It was a nice experience for us because of the significant collections of Orchids in both Herbaria. Here are some details about the Herbarium.

The Herbarium of the Natural History Museum in Vienna (W) was established in 1807. Current holdings in NHMW are of approximately 5.5 million plant specimens.



Fig 2. Significant collections of Orchid in Herbarium W.

Our second stop was University of Vienna Herbarium (WU) includes with 4.5 million plant samples. The estimate sheets we photographed there are about 500. Below you may find some information about the Herbarium.



Fig 1. The project team is in Natural History Museum in Vienna.

The herbarium is especially rich in types (the plant specimen to which the scientific name of that species is attached) with around 200,000 type specimens. Although one sixth of the collection was destroyed during the Second World War, the herbarium is ranked amongst the top five botanical collections in the world. In this Herbarium we photographed about 700 sheets from Turkey (the exact count of sheets will be shared after importing data to database) and it took 3 days to search out all Orchid sheets.



Fig 3. Herbarium W.

The foundation of this collection of dried plant specimens dates back to the year 1879 when the then Director of the Botanical Museum, Anton KERNER von MARILAUN (1831 - 1898), had begun to acquire herbarium material for the installation of an institute's new herbarium (WU). This had become necessary, as the entire collection had been transferred to the newly built Natural History Museum Vienna (W). To accelerate the installation, KERNER had created the well-known exsiccata series "Flora exsiccata Austro-Hungarica" (duplicates still



available for exchange!) with very instructive labels which had been issued also in book form (Schedae ad floram exsiccata Austro-Hungaricam). The new herbarium grew rapidly and in 1889 it contained already 80.000 specimens. Due to gifts and bequests (e.g., herbaria of A. KERNER: integrated in the main herbarium, K. KECK: still kept as separate entity) as well as by the activities of collecting expeditions it soon approached considerable size and importance. KERNER was followed as the institute's director by Richard von WETTSTEIN who also has left his herbarium to the institute. Today the herbarium of the Institute of Botany is estimated to contain about 1,400.000 specimens covering all plant groups worldwide. Further details can be found in the printed version of the Index Herbariorum ed. 8 (HOLMGREN & al., 1990).

Fig 4. The Herbarium of University of Vienna (WU).

With both these Herbaria we increased our dataset to 4500 sheets. We would like to thank to Dr Ernst Vitek (the curator of Herbarium W) and Dr Walter Till (the curator of Herbarium WU) for their precious help and hospitality. In the following weeks we are going to visit Istanbul University Herbarium and Ankara Hacettepe University Herbarium.