

**IN MEMORIAM****Elli Stamatiadou (1933–2015)**

Elli Stamatiadou passed away on 1 May 2015 after a serious illness. She was the chief curatorial assistant of the Goulandris Natural History Museum, from 1965 to 2009 and the greatest contributor to the Museum's botanical collections, both in quantity and outstanding quality. We can certainly state that in Greece she was one of the most visible and respected plant-collectors of her day.

Elli was born on 1 April 1933 in the village of Apikia on the island of Andros in the northern Kiklades. After completing high school she moved to Athens with the plan of studying physical education at the University of Athens. However, marriage to Yiannis Stamatiadis in 1953 and work at the publishing house of Ioannis Passas (producer of the well-known “Helios” encyclopaedia) followed. In 1963 her husband, a qualified electrician, took part in the restoration and renovation of a large 19<sup>th</sup> century residence in Kifissia, north of Athens where he became director of technical services. This building eventually opened to the public as the Goulandris Natural History Museum, founded in 1964 by Angelos and Niki Goulandris.



**Fig. 1.** Elli on fieldwork (her *forte*), changing her plant-presses on Mt Tsoumerka, S Pindos.



**Fig. 2.** Elli with a good day's harvest at Metsovo, N Pindos.

Elli joined the staff of the Museum a year later, in 1965. She and her husband were thus among the first staff of the museum which was still closed for the preparation of display collections and extensive reconstruction for exhibition galleries, herbarium and library. Her work did not involve plants at the beginning. As it happened, during an excursion to Mt Taigetos she realized her tremendous interest in the plants of Greece and wanted to be a botanical-collector. Following the guidance and training of several eminent botanists including William Stearn (London), Peter Davis (Edinburgh) and Karl Heinz Rechinger (Vienna) she

quickly amassed more than 23,000 excellent and well-prepared specimens from all over the country. No mountains on the mainland nor travel to remote Greek islands daunted her, her last specimen was numbered at 23,705. Elli also participated in excursions with professional botanists, e.g., Werner Greuter (Berlin), Arne Strid (Copenhagen) and Karl Heinz Rechinger but she fiercely maintained an independent serial numbering for her collections, stating that she did not wish to be known as the *et al.*... Her printed labels bore the names of very few co-collectors, among them Elizabeth Georgiadou, N. Post and Claus Baden.

Elli's collections included type material. The list presented is not comprehensive and as work on the Greek flora continues, there will certainly be name changes:

- Allium amphipulchellum* Zahar. = *Allium flavum* subsp. *tauricum* (Rchb.) K. Richt.  
*Allium dilatatum* Zahar.  
*Allium macedonicum* Zahar.  
*Armeria icarica* J.R. Edmondson  
*Centaurea prespana* Rech. f.  
*Dianthus stamatiadae* Rech. f.  
*Lithospermum goulandrionum* Rech. f. ≡ *Buglossoides goulandrionum* (Rech. f.) Govaerts  
*Noccaea zaffranii* F.K. Meyer ≡ *Thlaspi zaffranii* (F.K. Meyer) Greuter & Burdet  
*Onosma epiroticum* Teppner = *O. heterophylla* Griseb.  
*Ornithogalum brachystylum* Zahar.  
*Ornithogalum costatum* Zahar. = *O. gussonei* Ten.  
*Ornithogalum exaratum* Zahar.  
*Ornithogalum gracilipes* Zahar. ≡ *O. fimbriatum* Willd. subsp. *gracilipes* (Zahar.) Landström  
*Ornithogalum graecum* Zahar. var. *graecum* = *O. exscapum* Ten.  
*Ornithogalum graecum* Zahar. var. *ciliolatum* Zahar. = *O. collinum* Guss.  
*Ornithogalum prasinantherum* Zahar.  
*Ornithogalum sandalioticum* (Torn. & Garb.) Zahar. (incl. in *O. exscapum* by Landström)  
*Ornithogalum sphaerolobum* Zahar.  
*Peucedanum lavrentiadis* subsp. *multicaulis* Strid & Papan. ≡ *P. stridii* Hartvig, *Dichoropetalum stridii* (Hartvig) Pimenov & Kljuykov  
*Peucedanum vourinense* (Leute) Hartvig  
*Potentilla geoides* subsp. *longisepala* Strid ≡ *Drymocallis longisepala* (Strid) Kurtto & Strid  
*Potentilla goulandrii* Rech. f. = *Potentilla tridentula* Velen.  
*Silene intosa* Greuter & Melzh.  
*Verbascum spathulisepalum* Greuter & Rech. f.  
*Veronica stamatiadae* M.A. Fischer & Greuter

*Dianthus stamatiadae* (from Stena Portas, Kozani) and *Veronica stamatiadae* (from the island of Ro in the Kastellorhizo island group) are still represented today in ATH, W and the private herbarium of Strid, only by her collections.

Elli made two publications, both in the Museum's own journal:

Zahariadi, C., Stamatiadou, E. & Dima, A. 1982. Geographical distribution of species of *Ornithogalum* (*Lilia-ceae*) in Greece, including two new taxa. – *Ann. Mus. Goulandris*, 5: 131-162.

Snogerup, S., Snogerup, B., Stamatiadou, E., von Bothmer, R. & Gustafsson, M. 2006. Flora and vegetation of Andros, Kiklades, Greece. – *Ann. Mus. Goulandris*, 11: 85-270.

She retired in 2003 after 38 years' service but continued working voluntarily in the herbarium until 2009, thus serving the cause of botany at the Museum for 44 years. She still continued to come in thereafter to curate her collections, in-between caring for her husband who by then was in ill-health.

Professor Peter H. Davis (of *Flora of Turkey* fame) gave her his highest accolade. Unfamiliar with the complexities of declension of Greek names and that a woman takes her husband's or father's name in the genitive, Peter had not realised Stamatiadou is the genitive of Stamatiadis. He thought that the genitive ending of -ou, is a legitimate form of a masculine surname or that it was a transliteration as in the case of Niki Goulandris. When confronted with the specimens of *Gladiolus* collected by Elli from the East Aegean Islands, he exclaimed

and I quote, “the collector, E. Stamatiadou, he must be a man!”. Those Gladioli had corms attached to a depth of >30 cm and Peter realized that to dig them up as complete specimens in hard *terra rossa* indicated great perseverance and stamina, qualities at odds with Elli’s very petite frame (she was hardly 160 cm tall).

Yannis, her husband, had passed away a couple of years ago. Daughter Hariklia did not work at the Museum but son Stamatis became a soil microbiologist and developed the Soil Ecology and Biotechnology Laboratory, thus continuing his parents’ association with the Museum.

From Kiki Dimas we learn that peonies were Elli’s favourite plants. She collected living material of all Greek taxa and planted them in the Museum’s garden, caring for them like her own children. The collections were the basis and source-material of the illustrations prepared by Niki Goulandris, which were later published in a beautiful work, *Peonies of Greece*.

I wish to express my thanks to Kiki Dimas, Vasso Kousoula and Dionysis Mermygkas for providing insights on Elli, their good colleague. The photographs, taken in 1989, will tell you more about her.

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