

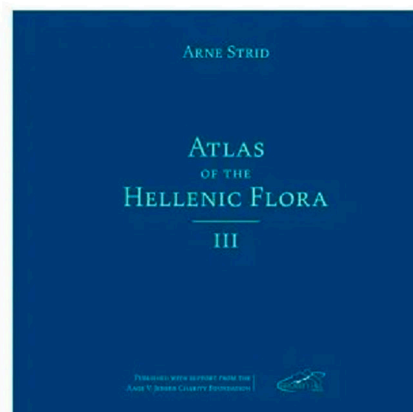
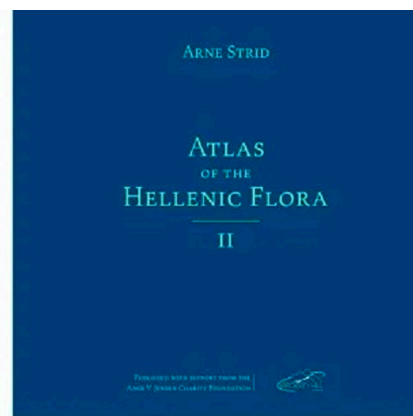
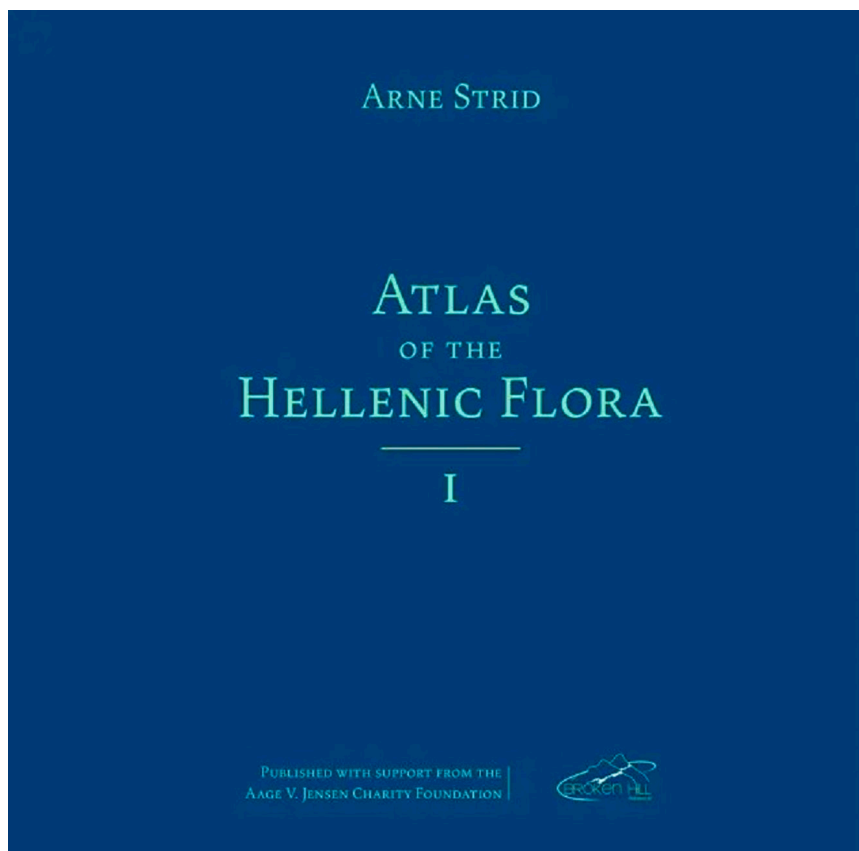
**BOOK REVIEW****Vladimir Vladimirov<sup>1,2</sup> & Ana Petrova<sup>1</sup>**<sup>1</sup> Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research,  
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Acad. Georgi  
Bonchev Street, Bl. 23, 1113 Sofia, Bulgaria<sup>2</sup> Botanical Garden, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences,  
Sofia, Bulgaria

Arne Strid. 2024

**Atlas of the Hellenic Flora**Broken Hill Publishers Ltd, Nicosia, Cyprus. 3-volume set.  
2138 pp. Hardback. ISBN: 978-9925-35-025-4; 978-9925-  
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Botanical studies in Greece have a long history, perhaps the longest, considering that Theophrastus is widely recognised as the first botanist and the founder of botany. Since then, many botanists have contributed to the study of plant diversity in this country. Undeniably, the author of this Atlas, Prof. Arne Strid, is one of the most prominent of them.

The current Atlas of the Hellenic Flora comprises three volumes, weighing more than 10 kg altogether! The first two volumes present 5 618 distribution maps, which have been generated from the Flora Hellenica Database. The latter is a huge but rewarding effort, started in 1989 and now containing over 1 052 000 geo-referenced records! More than 40% of the data was critically



evaluated and uploaded by the author of the Atlas, but around 40 other people also contributed to the generation of this huge data set. It should be underlined that recording the data from herbaria and botanical literature is not a simple technical job, but requires a very thorough knowledge of the flora and geography of the given region. In the case of the Flora Hellenica Database, particular attention has been paid to data validation so that possible errors are minimized.

The third volume includes a list of excluded species and taxonomic comments, Flora Hellenica bibliography, 268 colour plates (about 60% of the Greek species are illustrated), and an Index of scientific names.

Taxonomy and nomenclature follow the principles adopted by the author in the Atlas of the Aegean Flora published in 2016. In preparing this edition, the most authoritative (not necessarily the most recent) monographs, taxonomic revisions and Floras available have been followed. It is particularly valuable that in the preparation of the Atlas, the author also drew on his considerable knowledge and experience of the Greek flora, both from field studies and from herbaria and the experimental gardens.

Maps are arranged alphabetically according to family, genus and species, within the three major taxonomic groups – vascular cryptogams, gymnosperms and angiosperms. Although the individual maps occupy little space, in fact, they are full of information! For each species a dot-distribution map is presented. A sequential number appears in the upper right-hand corner. A vertical bar on the right-hand margin of the map provides the altitudinal distribution range of the taxon. A horizontal bar on the upper margin details the flowering period for the taxon. Just below this bar is provided information about the status of the taxon (e.g. native, alien), chorotype (with a black-dot indicating endemics to Greece), life form, and basic type of habitat. Moreover, in the lower left-hand corner, a small text box provides the most essential information for each taxon – taxonomic name, habitats, general distribution,

and very concise morphological description with emphasis on diagnostic characters.

The inclusion of two photographs of the author in the introductory part to the first volume is particularly exciting and revealing. The photo on the left is from the foothills of Olympus Mts and is dated 12 May 1974. It shows a young man, with an interesting plant behind his back – *Jankaea heldreichii*, and with a figure that demonstrates determination to climb the mountain and achieve much. On the right is a photo of the same man from the top of Mt. Mitikas (2918 m) on 24 July 2019. The broad smile and noble appearance undoubtedly speak of the satisfaction with the results achieved and the pleasure of studying the Greek flora for almost 60 years, spending extensive time in the field and in person studying how “things happen” in reality.

The present Atlas will certainly stimulate further research on the Greek flora. The database and the present maps are an excellent basis for many in-depth analyses of the plant diversity in the country. The latter will be important for better understanding of this diversity and of species distribution patterns, as well as for the protection of the most vulnerable species and centres of biodiversity in Greece.

The Atlas is of great importance not only to explorers of the Greek flora, but also to botanists from all neighbouring regions, such as the entire Balkan Peninsula and Asia Minor. The author and those who contributed to this work deserve respect and admiration!