Article

From Biodiversity to Musketry: Detection of Plant Diversity in Pre-Industrial Peloponnese during the Flora Graeca Expedition

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Abstract: As the interest in natural, sustainable ecosystems arises in many fields, wild plant diversity is reconsidered. The present study is based on extant literature evidence from the journey of John Sibthorp (Professor of Botany, Oxford University) to Peloponnese (Greece) in pre-industrial time. In the year 1795, Peloponnese was a botanically unknown region, very dangerous for travellers and under civil unrest, in conjunction with a pre-rebellion period. Our study reveals approximately 200 wild plant taxa that were collected from Peloponnese localities in 1795, transported to Oxford University (UK), and quoted in the magnificent edition Flora Graeca Sibthorpiana of the 19th century. Moreover, these plants currently constitute a living collection in Peloponnese, confirmed according to updated data on the vascular Flora of Greece. The presented lists constitute a source of information for plant biologists, linking the past to the present, shedding light on the study of adaptive traits of wild Mediterranean plants and revealing the temporal dimension of natural history. Nowadays, increasing and thorough understanding of the considered plants’ functionality to abiotic and biotic environmental stimuli provides a new framework of sustainability and management options.

Keywords: archives; botanical collection; Greece; landscape; pre-rebellion period

1. Introduction

In the 18th century, travelers’ journey to Greece was also a journey through its history. The naturalists’ travels were explorations, linked to searching for specimens of natural history. The travelers’ observations became a way of identifying and revealing cultural and economic changes that have occurred over the last centuries. The botanical expeditions and the collections of specimens connected observations and descriptions with landscapes and environmental conditions; plants had been there for thousands of years, linked to the history and adapted to abiotic and biotic conditions of the localities [1–5].

John Sibthorp (1758–1796), Professor of Botany in the University of Oxford, decided to travel to unexplored areas of Greece, collecting and recording botanical specimens in the late 1780s and 1790s; at that time, Greece was an unknown region, very dangerous and difficult to visit owing to diseases, civil unrest, and bandit groups—known as armatoloi and klephts— that included illiterate peasants, artisans, and local clergy, together with the local notables and landowners in Peloponnese [6–8].

Sibthorp’s main interest was linked to plants known since the classical antiquity and mainly quoted in the texts of Dioscorides (1st century AD) [9–14]. During the first exploration from 1786 to 1787, Sibthorp was accompanied by the Austrian painter Ferdinand Lucas Bauer (1760–1826) as his draughtsman [6,7]; this was a time when travelers were accompanied by a professional artist, whose work supplemented their discoveries with visual evidence [15–18]. Actually, the magnificent, illustrated edition Flora Graeca Sibthorpiana (hereafter FGS), published from 1806 to 1840, contains botanical hand-coloured engravings that are important icons of the Mediterranean flora [7,19,20].

John Sibthorp and his companion undertook a second botanical expedition to the Levant from 1794 to 1795. During this journey, they arrived in Peloponnese (Morea is
the name used in their diaries and letters) on 26 February 1795 and visited numerous localities botanizing in a more or less largely unknown area, frequently hearing the firing of guns [6,15,21,22]. Those days, major parts of Peloponnese, electively ruled by semi-autonomous agas (persons of high rank or social position during the era of the Ottoman Empire [23]), were only nominally part of the Ottoman Empire [24,25].

Although substantial, revived research has been carried out on the content of FGS [7,8,20,26–30], the Peloponnese tour and the collected botanical specimens by Sibthorp in 1795 have received little attention [6] (pp. 164–169) [7] (pp. 144–146). The importance of studying local floras, historical and environmental conditions, distribution records, and species lists has been repeatedly stressed in the literature and awareness of this subject has recently been rising.

Plants collected during a pre-rebellion period (i.e., before the Greek Revolution of 1821) in Peloponnese correspond to “visual evidence” from a particular time (spring 1795), revealing regional plant species pool of this particular area, as well as physical, cultural, and aesthetic values of the natural environment. The main goal of this study was to study plants that have been recorded in Peloponnese in pre-industrial time, as functional components of a biodiversity, which, to the best of our knowledge, has not hitherto been published. A secondary goal of this study was to confirm the above-mentioned plant diversity in Peloponnese during the 21st century.

2. Materials and Methods

This research is based on our survey of written sources, i.e., books, travel reports, letters, diaries, plant catalogues, online published, and printed archives mainly linked to the “Flora Graeca” expedition in Peloponnese (Greece) in 1795 [6,7]. Two copies of FGS, i.e., a copy adorned the National Library of Greece since 1916 and another copy acquired by the Gennadius Library of Athens in 1967 were surveyed. Moreover, we studied the digitized published hand-coloured engravings and the original watercolours, together with the Mediterranean scenes that are freely available and accessible online via Digital Bodleian (https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections/flora-and-fauna-graeeca/, accessed on 9 October 2022). In addition, rigorous research of the Florae Graecae Prodromus [30] (hereafter Prodromus) housed in the Department of Botany at National and Kapodistrian University of Athens in Greece was carried out; it has to be noted that the Prodromus contains indexes of modern Greek vernacular names of plants (Index Nominum Graecorum, pp. 383–391), ancient Greek names of plants quoted in Dioscorides’ codex (Index Dioscoridem, pp. 392–404), and scientific names of plants (Index Generum et Synonymorum, pp. 405–422), as well as plant locality data [31]. Furthermore, two books were taken in consideration; the first by Robert Walpole (1781–1856, an English classical scholar with degrees from Trinity College at Cambridge in UK and Merton College at Oxford in UK, who travelled to Greece; his Memoirs including notes of various travelers’ diaries, among them Sibthorp’s and his companion [32] were first published in 1817) and the second by John Bacon Sawrey Morritt (1772–1843, who immediately after his BA degree from St. John’s College at Cambridge in UK, started on the travels described in his book that was first published in 1914; Morritt travelled over a considerable part of Peloponnese in 1795 [33]). A plant taxon was included in the results if there was a record in Prodromus stating locality data from Peloponnese. Information linked to the currently accepted plant nomenclature and distribution was derived from the Flora of Greece web (https://portal.cybertaxonomy.org/flora-greece/, accessed on 21 October 2022).

3. Results

3.1. Peloponnese Tour

In Figure 1, the Peloponnese tours followed by Sibthorp and Morritt in 1795 are depicted in red and green lines, respectively. Sibthorp and his colleagues travelled from the island of Zakynthos to the port of Skaffidia (Ileia County); their route included Pyrgos, Lalla, and Tripolis, passing through several villages. The tour continued to Palaiopisopoi,
ancient Tegea, and Arcadia. Next, they travelled to Argos and visited ancient Mycenae as well as Napoli di Roamin (Nafplion) in Argolida County. Then, they travelled to Korinthos and Patras, continued in Achaia County through villages, and proceeded to Ileia County again; from there, they followed different directions until they arrived in Kalamata (Messinia County). After Kalamata, they proceeded to Kutchuk Maina, Kardamili, Sparta (Laconia County), and Mystras; from there, they continued to Messini and Petallida and on 25 April 1795 they arrived at Zakynthos and, by ship, returned to England. Morritt’s journey started from Kalamata; he visited Kutchukmaina, Palaeocastro and ancient Thuria (Messinia County), Corone, Abia, and Kitreés and, through various villages, went to Kardamili/Cardamyla; he arrived by boat at Platsa and then continued to Oetylos, Marathonisi (ancient Gythium), and Mystras (Laconia County).

![Map of Peloponnese](https://d-maps.com/)

**Figure 1.** Map of Peloponnese (obtained by [https://d-maps.com/](https://d-maps.com/) accessed on 10 October 2021 and modified accordingly), showing two tours, i.e., by Sibthorp (red line) and Morritt (green line) in 1795. The red symbol A indicates the start of Sibthorp’s journey; red lines and arrows indicate locations and directions, respectively. In the insert, the map of Greece (blue) is presented and, in yellow, the Peloponese peninsula is indicated. The green lines and arrows indicate locations and directions of Morritt’s journey. The black-white dot indicates the capital of Greece, Athens (37.9838° N, 22.3726° E); the small black dots indicate the locations of cities: Patras (38.2466° N, 21.7346° E) and Tripolis (37.5101° N, 22.3726° E).

### 3.2. Plant Diversity in Pre-Industrial Peloponnese

Our study provides evidence for 183 plant taxa grown in pre-industrial Peloponnese, which had been collected during Sibthorp’s expedition, drawn and cited in *FGS* (Table 1). Moreover, 21 plants quoted in *Prodromus* and linked to localities of Peloponnese, but neither drawn nor cited in *FGS*, were found (Table 2). Although citations for *Opuntia ficus-indica* (L.) Mill., walnut (*Juglans regia* L.), and mulberries (*Morus nigra* L.) were found in the considered archival research concerning Peloponnese, these plants were neither drawn nor cited in both *FGS* and *Prodromus*. It should be mentioned that the botanist Sir James Edward Smith (1759–1828)—founder and first president of the Linnean Society of London—wrote the texts for the plants attested in *FGS* and *Prodromus* and excluded all species he regarded as not being part of the natural flora.
Table 1. List of plants found in Peloponnese and cited in *Flora Graeca Sibthorpiana* (FGS). First column: plant names quoted in the first edition of FGS (1806–1840). Second column: numerical register of hand-coloured engravings (plates) of plants cited in the first published edition of FGS. Third column: numerical register of the original watercolours by Ferdinand Bauer preserved at Oxford (MS. Sherard 241–245), digitized and electronically accessed via Digital Bodleian; whenever the picture of the original drawing was not digitally available, the digital hand-coloured engraving from the first printed edition is mentioned (Sherard 761 and 764). Fourth column: current scientific name.

| Plant Name Cited in FGS | Engraving | Watercolor | Scientific Name |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|
| Phillyrea latifolia     | 2         | 244: pl.2  | Phillyrea latifolia L. |
| Olea europaea           | 3         | 244: pl.3  | Olea europaea L. |
| Veronica glauca         | 7         | 244: f.66  | Veronica glauca Sm. |
| Veronica triphylllos    | 10        | 244: f.69  | Veronica triphylllos L. |
| Salvia triloba          | 17        | 244: f.158 | Salvia fruticosa Mill. |
| Salvia ringens          | 18        | 244: f.159 | Salvia ringens Sm. |
| Salvia sibthorpii       | 22        | 244: f.163 | Salvia virgata Jacq. |
| Morina persica          | 28        | 241: pl.28 | Morina persica L. |
| Crocus aureus           | 35        | 245: f.65  | Crocus flavus Weston subsp. flavus |
| Iris florentina         | 39        | 245: f.69  | Iris albicans Lange |
| Iris sisyrinchium       | 42        | 245: f.72  | Moraea sisyrinchium (L.) Ker-Gawl. |
| Schoenus macronatus     | 43        | 245: f.112 | Cyperus capitus Vand. |
| Saccharum ravennae      | 52        | 245: f.120 | Tripodium ravennae (L.) H. Scholz |
| Panicum repens          | 61        | 245: f.130 | Panicum repens L. |
| Briza minor             | 74        | 245: f.142 | Briza minor L. |
| Festuga littoralis      | 80        | 245: f.148 | Stipa capensis Thunb. |
| Bromus tectorum         | 82        | 245: f.150 | Bromus tectorum L. |
| Bromus rubens           | 83        | 245: f.151 | Bromus rubens L. |
| Stipa palteca           | 86        | 245: f.154 | Stipa palteca L. |
| Triticum junceum        | 99        | 245: f.166 | Elytrigia juncea (L.) Nevski |
| Valantia muralis        | 137       | 242: f.202 | Valantia muralis L. |
| Crucianella latifolia   | 139       | 242: f.204 | Crucianella latifolia L. |
| Plantago lagopus        | 144       | 244: f.182 | Plantago lagopus L. |
| Hypecoum imberbe        | 156       | 241: f.30  | Hypecoum imberbe Sm. |
| Anchusa tinctoria       | 166       | 244: f.33  | Anchusa tinctoria L. |
| Cerinthe aspera         | 170       | 244: f.37  | Cerinthe major L. |
| Cerinthe retorta        | 171       | 244: f.38  | Cerinthe retorta Sm. |
| Asperugo procumbens     | 177       | 244: f.44  | Asperugo procumbens L. |
| Lygeopsis variegata     | 178       | 244: f.36  | Anchusella variegata (L.) Bigazzi & al. |
| Primula vulgaris        | 184       | 244: f.175 | Primula vulgaris L. |
| Lysmachia linum-stellatum | 189    | 244: f.181 | Asterolimon linum-stellatum (L.) Duby |
| Plumbago europaea       | 191       | 244: f.196 | Plumbago europaea L. |
| Convulculus siculus     | 196       | 244: f.115 | Convulculus siculus L. |
| Campanula raetensis     | 213       | 243: f.178 | Campanula raetensis Sm. |
| Campanula drabifolia    | 215       | 243: f.180 | Campanula drabifolia Sm. |
| Viola gracilis          | 222       | 241: f.185 | Viola gracilis Sm. |
| Chironia maritima       | 237       | 244: f.9   | Centaurium maritimum (L.) Fritsch |
| Chironia spicata        | 238       | 244: f.10  | Schenkia spicata (L.) G. Mans. |
| Vitis vinifera          | 242       | 241: f.178 | Vitis vinifera L. |
| Herniaria macracarpa    | 252       | 242: f.125 | Herniaria incarnata Lam. |
| Eryngium multifidum     | 259       | 242: f.148 | Eryngium amethystinum L. |
| Bupleurum sibthorpiunum | 264       | 242: f.153 | Bupleurum falcatum subsp. cernuum (Ten.) |
| Echinophora spinosa     | 265       | 242: f.154 | Echinophora spinosa L. |
| Echinophora tenuifolia  | 266       | 242: f.155 | Echinophora tenuifolia L. |
| Arctedia squamata       | 268       | 242: f.157 | Arctedia squamata L. |
| Petcedanum obtusifolium | 277       | 242: f.175 | Selimum silafoiLium (Jacq.) Beck |
| Coriandrum sativum      | 283       | 242: f.170 | Coriandrum sativum L. |
| Pastinaca opopanax      | 288       | 242: f.176 | Opopanax hispidus (Friv.) Griseb. |
| Linum gallicum          | 303       | 241: f.160 | Linum tricymum L. |
Table 1. Cont.

| Plant Name Cited in FGS | Engraving | Watercoulor | Scientific Name |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------|----------------|
| Narcissus tazetta      | 308       | 245: f.73   | Narcissus tazetta L. |
| Amaryllis lutea        | 310       | 245: f.75   | Sternbergia lutea (L.) Spreng. subsp. lutea |
| Tulipa sibthorpiiana   | 330       | 245: f.79   | Fritillaria sibthorpiiana (Sm.) Baker |
| Ornithogalum arvense   | 332       | 245: f.97   | Gagea villosa (M. Bieb.) Sweet |
| Ornithogalum nanum     | 333       | 245: f.98   | Ornithogalum sibthorpi Greuter |
| Asphodelus ramosus     | 334       | 245: f.99   | Asphodelus ramosus L. |
| Anthericum graecum     | 336       | 245: f.101  | Gagea graeca (L.) Irmisch |
| Asparagus acutifolius   | 337       | 245: f.102  | Asparagus acutifolius L. |
| Hyacinthus romanus     | 340       | 245: f.105  | Bellevalia romana (L.) Sweet |
| Frankenia hirsuta      | 343       | 245: f.111  | Frankenia hirsuta L. |
| Erica arborea          | 351       | 245: f.118  | Erica arborea L. |
| Arbutus unedo          | 373       | 245: f.123  | Arbutus unedo L. |
| Arbutus andrachne      | 374       | 245: f.125  | Arbutus andrachne L. |
| Saxifraga media        | 376       | 245: f.128  | Saxifraga sempervivum K. Koch |
| Saxifraga rotundifolia | 377       | 245: f.130  | Saxifraga rotundifolia L. |
| Saxifraga cymbalaria   | 378       | 245: f.131  | Saxifraga cymbalaria Boiss. |
| Dianthus cinnamomeus   | 400       | 245: f.132  | Dianthus cinnamomeus Sm. |
| Silene nocturna        | 408       | 245: f.133  | Silene nocturna L. |
| Silene behen           | 416       | 245: f.134  | Silene behen L. |
| Silene italica         | 429       | 245: f.135  | Silene italica (L.) Pers. |
| Silene staticifolia    | 434       | 245: f.136  | Silene hupleurooides subsp. staticifolia (Sm.) Chowdhuri |
| Sedum tetraphyllum     | 448       | 245: f.137  | Sedum cepaea L. |
| Oxalis corniculata     | 451       | 245: f.138  | Oxalis corniculata L. |
| Cerastium pilosum      | 454       | 245: f.139  | Cerastium pilosum L. |
| Cerastium tomentosum   | 455       | 245: f.140  | Cerastium pilosum L. |
| Reseda alba            | 459       | 245: f.141  | Reseda alba L. |
| Euphorbia spinosa      | 463       | 245: f.142  | Euphorbia acanthothamnos Boiss. |
| Euphorbia leiosperma   | 465       | 245: f.143  | Euphorbia terracina L. |
| Myrtus communis        | 475       | 245: f.144  | Myrtus communis L. |
| Prunus prostrata       | 478       | 245: f.145  | Prunus prostrata Labill. |
| Pyrus aria             | 479       | 245: f.146  | Pyrus aria L. |
| Papaver somniferum     | 491       | 245: f.147  | Papaver somniferum L. |
| Cistus monspeliensis   | 493       | 245: f.148  | Cistus monspeliensis L. |
| Cistus canum           | 494       | 245: f.149  | Cistus canum L. |
| Cistus salvifolius     | 497       | 245: f.150  | Cistus salvifolius L. |
| Cistus guttatus        | 498       | 245: f.151  | Cistus guttatus L. |
| Cistus salicifolius    | 499       | 245: f.152  | Cistus salicifolius L. |
| Delphinium consolida   | 504       | 245: f.153  | Delphinium consolida L. |
| Anemone coronaria      | 514       | 245: f.154  | Anemone coronaria L. |
| Ranunculus millefoliatus| 521      | 245: f.155  | Ranunculus millefoliatus Vahl |
| Satureja juliana       | 540       | 245: f.156  | Satureja juliana (L.) Rchb. |
| Satureja graeca        | 542       | 245: f.157  | Satureja graeca (L.) Rchb. |
| Satureja capitata      | 544       | 245: f.158  | Satureja capitata (L.) Cav. |
| Nepeta nuda            | 547       | 245: f.159  | Nepeta nuda L. |
| Lamium maculatum       | 556       | 245: f.160  | Lamium maculatum L. |
| Stachys orientalis     | 560       | 245: f.161  | Stachys orientalis L. |
| Marrubium pseudodictamnus| 562      | 245: f.162  | Marrubium pseudodictamnus (L.) Benth. |
| Prasium majus          | 584       | 245: f.163  | Prasium majus L. |
| Bartsia latifolia      | 586       | 245: f.164  | Bartsia latifolia (L.) Cuatrec. |
| Antirrhinum pelisserianum| 591     | 245: f.165  | Antirrhinum pelisserianum L. |
| Antirrhinum chalepense  | 592       | 245: f.166  | Antirrhinum chalepense L. |
| Antirrhinum reflexum   | 593       | 245: f.167  | Antirrhinum reflexum L. |
| Scrophularia canina    | 598       | 245: f.168  | Scrophularia canina subsp. bicolor (Sm.) Greuter |
Table 1. Cont.

| Plant Name Cited in FGS | Engraving | Watercoulor | Scientific Name |
|-------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------|
| Scrophularia caesia     | 604       | 244: f.89   | Scrophularia heterophylla Willd. |
| Orobanche ramosa        | 608       | 244: f.93   | Phelipanche mutelii (F.W. Schultz) Pomel |
| Acanthus spinusus       | 611       | 244: f.95   | Acanthus spinosus L. |
| Bunias raphanifolia     | 612       | 241: f.33   | Rapistrum rugosum (L.) All. |
| Aubrieta deltoidea      | 628       | 241: f.49   | Aubrieta deltoidea (L.) DC. |
| Biscutella columnae     | 629       | 241: f.50   | Biscutella dudyma subsp. apula Nyman |
| Arabis verna            | 641       | 241: f.62   | Arabis verna (L.) R. Br. |
| Erodium romanum         | 654       | 241: f.182  | Erodium acule (L.) Bech. & Thell. |
| Erodium gruinum         | 656       | 241: f.184  | Erodium gruinum (L.) L'Hér. |
| Erodium malacoides      | 658       | 241: f.186  | Erodium malacoides (L.) L'Hér. |
| Geranium tuberosum      | 659       | 241: f.187  | Geranium tuberosum L. |
| Alcea ficifolia         | 663       | 241: f.166  | Alcea biennis Winterl |
| Hibiscus trionum        | 666       | 241: f.169  | Hibiscus trionum L. |
| Polygala verulosa       | 669       | 241: f.186  | Polygala venulosa Sm. |
| Ononis antiquorum       | 675       | 242: f.11   | Ononis spinosa subsp. diantha (Rchb.) Greuter |
| Anthyllis tetraphylla   | 681       | 242: f.17   | Tripodion tetraphyllium (L.) Fourr. |
| Orobus sessilifolius    | 692       | 242: f.27   | Lathyrus digitatus (M. Bieb.) Fiori |
| Lathyrus sativus        | 695       | 242: f.31   | Lathyrus sativus L. |
| Lathyrus grandiflorus   | 698       | 242: f.34   | Lathyrus grandiflorus Sm. |
| Vicia polypylla         | 699       | 242: f.35   | Vicia villosa subsp. varia (Host) Corb. |
| Vicia melanops          | 701       | 242: f.37   | Vicia melanops Sm. |
| Cytisus sessilifolius   | 705       | 242: f.41   | Podocythris caramanicus Boiss. & Heldr. |
| Coronilla emerus         | 710       | 242: f.46   | Hippocrepis emerus (L.) Lassen |
| Ornithopus compressus   | 714       | 242: f.50   | Securigera securidaca (L.) Degen & Dörfl. |
| Ornithopus scorpioides   | 715       | 242: f.51   | Ornithopus compressus L. |
| Hippocrepis unisiliquosa| 716       | 242: f.52   | Coronilla scorpioides (L.) W.D.J. Koch |
| Hedysarum caput-galli   | 723       | 242: f.59   | Hippocrepis unisiliquosa L. |
| Phasea baetica          | 727       | 242: f.63   | Onobrychis caput-galli (L.) Lam. |
| Astragalus incanus      | 732       | 242: f.68   | Erophaca baetica (L.) Boiss. |
| Astragalus aristatus    | 735       | 242: f.71   | Astragalus spruneri Boiss. |
| Biserrula plecinus      | 737       | 242: f.73   | Astragalus plecinus (L.) Barneby |
| Trifolium cherleri      | 745       | 242: f.81   | Trifolium cherleri L. |
| Trifolium rotundifolium | 747       | 242: p.747  | Trigonella rotundifolia (Sm.) Strid |
| Trifolium stellatum     | 750       | 242: f.86   | Trifolium stellatum L. |
| Trifolium clepeatum     | 751       | 242: f.87   | Trifolium clepeatum L. |
| Trifolium uniflorum     | 752       | 242: f.88   | Trifolium uniflorum L. |
| Lotus tetragonolobus    | 755       | 242: f.91   | Tetragonolobus purpureus Moench |
| Lotus edulis            | 756       | 242: f.92   | Lotus edulis L. |
| Lotus creticus          | 758       | 242: f.94   | Lotus creticus L. |
| Lotus hirsutus          | 759       | 242: f.95   | Dorycnium hirsutum (L.) Ser. |
| Trigonella corniculata  | 761       | 242: f.97   | Trigonella corniculata (L.) L. |
| Trigonella monspeliaca  | 765       | 242: f.101  | Medicago monspeliaca (L.) Trautv. |
| Medicago marina         | 770       | 242: f.106  | Medicago marina L. |
| Hypericum olympicum     | 772       | 241: f.171  | Hypericum olympicum L. |
| Hypericum hircinum      | 773       | 241: f.172  | Hypericum hircinum L. |
| Hypericum crispus       | 776       | 241: f.175  | Hypericum triquetrifolium Turra |
| Scorzonera laciniata    | 788       | 243: f.144  | Podospermum laciniatum (L.) DC. |
| Sonchus pircoides       | 793       | 243: f.166  | Reichardia pircoides (L.) Roth |
| Crepis rubra            | 801       | 243: f.157  | Crepis rubra L. |
| Hedy nymphoid cretica   | 813       | 243: f.132  | Hedy nymphoid rhagadiloidea (L.) F.W. Schmidt |
| Hypothyoeis minima      | 816       | 243: f.123  | Hypochoeris arachnoidea Poir. |
| Lapsana stellata        | 817       | 243: f.126  | Rhagadilus stellatus (L.) Gaertn. |
| Catanthemate lutea      | 821       | 243: f.129  | Catanthemate lutea L. |
| Carduus glycyanthus     | 826       | 243: f.196  | Jurinae glycyantha DC. |
In 1795, in western Peloponnesse, Salicornia fruticosa L. was observed growing near lake banks, Asphodelus ramosus L. near rivers, and Bromus rubens L. in between cultivated fields. Stands of Phillyrea latifolia L., Erica arborea L., Arbutus unedo L., Pistacia lentiscus L., vernal (spring) Crocus flavus West., and primroses (Primula vulgaris Huds.) in bloom—observed in early March 1795—were encountered. In the southern Peloponnesse (county of Messinia), black mulberry trees (Morus nigra L.) and prickly pear surrounded many villages. Moreover, they depicted fig trees (Ficus carica L.), grapevines, cotton, grains, corn, olive trees, Euphorbia exigua L., Euphorbia spinosa L., Lolium perenne L., and Orobanche ramosa L. Some regions produced flax and tobacco. In the eastern Peloponnesse, Quercus species, as well as corn, grains, grapevines, olive trees, fig trees, mulberry trees, and chestnut trees, had been detected. In the central Peloponnesse (county of Arcadia), they visited oaks’ forest; moreover, they observed a huge walnut tree (Juglans regia L.), Hyacinthus romanus L., and Hyacinthus spicatus Sm. in bloom. In addition, the presence of floating crystal-wort (Riccia fluitans L.) and Boletus (a genus of mushroom-producing fungi that comprises over 100 species) and the use of truffle were mentioned. Cultivation of pear trees with open blossoms (10 March 1795) and corns grown among the remains of cities and temples of the ancient Greek territories were detected.

John Sibthorp arrived in Peloponnesse bearing a mode of seeing, endowing the professorship of “Agriculture and Rural Economy” in the University of Oxford, thus the state of the agriculture in Peloponnesse attracted his attention in 1795; the cultivation of corn (Zea mays L.), cotton (Gossypium hirsutum L.), millet (Panicum repens L.), tobacco (Nicotiana tabacum L.), and wheat (Triticum junceum L. and Aegilops comosa Sm.) was detected.

| Plant Name Cited in FGS | Engraving | Watercolor | Scientific Name |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|
| Cnicus acarna            | 827       | 243: f.94  | Picnomen acarna (L.) Cass. |
| Onopordum elatum         | 833       | 243: f.87  | Onopordum tauricum Wild. |
| Onopordum tauricum       | 833       | 243: f.89  | Cynara cardunculus L. |
| Carlina lanata           | 836       | 243: f.82  | Carlina lanata L. |
| Carlina corymbosa        | 837       | 243: f.83  | Carlina corymbosa subsp. graeca (Heldr. & Sartori) Nyman |
| Acarna cancellata        | 839       | 243: f.85  | Atroctylos cancellata L. |
| Carthamus lanatus        | 841       | 243: f.118 | Carthamus lanatus L. |
| Carthamus caeruleus      | 843       | 243: f.120 | Carthamus caeruleus L. |
| Stachelina chamaepeuce   | 847       | 243: f.90  | Ptilostemon chamaepeuce (L.) Less. |
| Senecio trilobus         | 869       | 243: f.65  | Senecio trilobus L. |
| Bellis annua             | 876       | 243: f.22  | Bellis annua L. |
| Chrysanthemum coronarium | 877       | 243: f.58  | Glebionis coronaria (L.) Spach |
| Anthemis cota            | 880       | 243: f.35  | Anthemis alissima L. |
| Anthemis alissima        | 881       | 243: f.36  | Anthemis alissima L. |
| Achillea acytiaca        | 892       | 243: f.51  | Achillea taugteae Boiss. & Heldr. |
| Centaurea benedicta      | 906       | 243: f.114 | Centaurea benedicta (L.) L. |
| Centaurea acytiaca       | 907       | 243: f.102 | Centaurea acytiaca Sm. |
| Centaurea melitensis     | 909       | 243: f.104 | Centaurea melitensis L. |
| Centaurea collina        | 914       | 243: f.109 | Centaurea solonitana Vis. |
| Centaurea galactites     | 919       | 243: f.115 | Galactites tomentosus Moench |
| Filago pygmaea           | 921       | 243: f.28  | Filago pygmaea L. |
| Orchis undulatifolia     | 927       | 245: f.58  | Orchis italica Poir. |
| Orchis papilionacea      | 928       | 245: f.59  | Anacamptis papilionacea subsp. aegaea (P. Delforge) L. Lewis & Kreutz |
| Ophrys fusca             | 930       | 245: f.61  | Ophrys fusca Link |
| Pistacia terebinthus     | 956       | 242: f.4   | Pistacia terebinthus L. |
| Atriplex halimus         | 962       | 245: f.18  | Atriplex halimus L. |
Table 2. List of plants found in Peloponnese and cited in Prodromus. First column: plant names alphabetically presented according to the name given in archives, which are quoted in Prodromus, but not referred in FGS. Second column: numerical register of volume and page, respectively, in Prodromus. Third column: current scientific name.

| Plant Name Cited in Prodromus | Volume, Page | Scientific Name |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Castanea sativa               | 2, 242       | Castanea sativa Mill. |
| Corylus spp. (hazel)          | 2, 244       | Corylus avellana L., C. colurna L. |
| Euphorbia aphis              | 1, 326       | Euphorbia aphis L. |
| Ficus carica                 | 2, 268       | Ficus carica L. |
| Fraxinella                   | 1, 271       | Dictamnus albus L. |
| Globularia alypum             | 1, 78        | Globularia alypum L. |
| Leontice altaica             | 1, 234       | Gymnospernum peloponnesiacum (Phitos) Strid |
| Leontice chryseogonom         | 1, 234       | Bongardia chryseogonom (L.) Spach |
| Leontice leontopetalum       | 1, 234       | Leontice leontopetalum L. |
| Lolium                       | 1, 70        | Lolium perenne L., L. subulatum Vis., L. temulentum L. |
| Imperatoria                  | 1, 199       | Imperatoria ostruthium L. |
| Loranthus                    | 1, 242       | Loranthus europeus Jacq. |
| Urtica                       | 2, 233       | Urtica dioica L., U. pilulifera L., U. urens L. |
| Quercus spp.                 | 2, 239       | Quercus aegilops L., Q. coccifera L., Q. ilex L., Q. pubescens Willd. |
| Pinus                        | 2, 242       | Pinus pinea L. |
| Rubus spp.                   | 1, 349       | Rubus sanctus Schreb., R. canescens DC. |
| Salicornia                   | 1, 1         | Salicornia fruticosa L., S. perennis Willd. |
| Satyrium                    | 2, 215       | Satyrium L., Orchis sp. |
| Scilla                      | 1, 237       | Scilla nivalis Boiss., S. messeniaca Boiss., S. pneumonanthe Speta |
| Viola                       | 1, 145       | Viola scorpiaroides Coss., Viola graeca (W. Becker) Halácsy |
| Nymphaea                    | 1, 360–361   | Nymphaea alba L. |

4. Discussion

Professor John Sibthorp and his colleagues visited Greek territories twice in pre-industrial time, i.e., 1786–1787 and 1794–1795, and collected wild plants grown under natural conditions [7,16,34]. It was an outstanding achievement, considering the duration, the collections of specimens of plants from which “a legacy of 2462 pressed specimens are still preserved in the Sibthorpian Herbarium” [35] (Figure 2), and the geographical coverage, during the above-mentioned botanical expeditions. Moreover, a number of specimens found in Kew are of considerable importance as supplementing Sibthorp’s collection at Oxford [36]; these specimens have been published [36] according to the sequence of plants cited in Prodromus [30].
The revived interest in FGS is partially due to recent publications [22,28,37–39], but mainly to biodiversity issues raised under the threat of climate change, which gives another dimension to the whole achievement. Moreover, exhibitions dedicated to the concept and the content of Flora Graeca Sibthorpiana contributed to public awareness, e.g., in Oxford entitled “Painting by numbers” (Bodleian Library, 29 – 9 July 2017, https://treasures.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/treasures/flora-graec... accessed on 9 May 2017) and Athens entitled “Flora Graeca” (Gennadius Library, 8 March–4 July 2016, https://www.ascsa.edu.gr/events/details/flora-graec... exhibition, accessed on 8 March 2016).

In Table 1, we compiled a list of 183 wild plants cited in FGS and located in Pelo...
the Americas and found among the few cultivated species in isolated valleys in Peloponnese in pre-industrial time, might be attributed to the Venetian occupation of Peloponnese (1688–1715); during that period, when the area was dependent on the European market, plants might have been a product of cross-cultural communication between the conquerors and conquered [66–70].

Sibthorp’s expedition in Peloponnese contributed to our understanding of botany in the field and revealed the diversity of plants grown in their habitats, in pre-industrial time. Historical time was linked to a gradually known plant diversity, as locations were explored and knowledge about the natural fertility of the land increased. However, anthropogenic pressure maintained by human activities, grazing, and fires in Peloponnese added to environmental stresses and caused profound transformation in the natural landscape, reducing the distribution of indigenous plants and enhancing a widespread concern about the extent of habitat and species loss [71–76]. This means that whatever effort can be made to study, maintain, and protect the diversity of ecosystems in this region is closely connected to a sustainable future, via the preservation of numerous plant taxa cited in the monumental FGS and Prodromus. Nowadays, Oxford Botanic Garden in UK (where visitors can enjoy the full sensory experience of walking through an aromatic Mediterranean landscape while learning about the work of Sibthorp and Bauer and its important botanical and horticultural legacy [35]) and Diomedes’ Botanic Garden in Greece (due to the fact that administration of Diomedes’ Botanic Garden is directly linked to the staff of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens in Greece, this Garden has also been used for relevant, educational programs [37]) contain living collections of Mediterranean plants cited in FGS, which may be perceived as celebrations for Flora Graeca expeditions and FGS [35,37]. However, a larger number of plants quoted in FGS and Prodromus may be introduced and cultivated in the above-mentioned botanic gardens and/or the network of botanic gardens in Greece, in order to detect the diversity and the life-cycle of wild plants within the context of the seasons, floral colours in Mediterranean ecosystems, and collection and deposition of seeds in seed-banks. As such, botanic gardens can be used as common gardens, where researchers can conduct unmatched comparative research studies of plant ecophysiology, morphology, anatomy, and responses to climate change [77,78]. It is worth mentioning that Sibthorp introduced new species into English horticulture; moreover, he returned to Oxford from his eastern Mediterranean explorations with seeds, bulbs, and corms for the Botanic Garden, but few details of these collections have survived, and the plants and any knowledge about their propagation have been lost through many routes [7] (p. 180) and neglected [79] (p. 102).

This work provides a novel and valuable insight into the development of early plant environmental biology and is an important element of timelessness aspects of botany [80,81]. The study of plant diversity in Peloponnese peninsula, during the pre-rebellion period in Greece, tracing long-term changes in the region, is also a reminder that nature is often a repository at which nations look when crafting their identity.

5. Conclusions

The interest in archival material has been revived on account of research for a biodiversity threatened by climatic change. In this context, our research gives prominence to approximately 200 wild plant taxa found in Peloponnese (Greece)—most of them quoted in the magnificent edition Flora Graeca Sibthorpiana of the 19th century—and few cultivated introduced plants, all grown under ambient conditions and exposed to environmental stresses of the eastern Mediterranean during the pre-rebellion period, representing plant environmental issues in pre-industrial time, which have not hitherto been published.

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