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Helianthemum marmoreum (Cistaceae), a new species from the Central Balkans

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ABSTRACT *Helianthemum marmoreum* is described as a new species from the central part of the Balkan peninsula (R. Macedonia). It inhabits rocky marble and limestone slopes and pastures at moderate altitudes of 240–1400 m. The closest relative is *H. hymettium* which is endemic to southern Greece.

KEY WORDS: *Helianthemum* (Cistaceae), new species, taxonomy, endemic, Balkan peninsula

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INTRODUCTION

The genus *Helianthemum* Miller comprises ca. 110 taxa (at species and subspecies level) which are mainly distributed in N Africa, Europe, W & C Asia. The greatest numbers occur in the W Mediterranean, particularly the Iberian Peninsula where 24 species and 20 subspecies have been recorded (LOPEZ-GONZALES, 2005). In comparison to the Iberian Peninsula, the Balkans has significantly fewer taxa with about half the number and only a few endemics.

According to PROCTOR & HEYWOOD (1968), GREUTER *et al.* (1984), PAPANICOLAOU & KOKKINI (1989) and TAN *w/* IATROU (2001), *H. hymettium* BOISS. & HELDR. is an endemic of southern Greece, occurring in Sterea Ellas (Attikis), Peloponnisos and Kriti. The *locus classicus* is Mt Hymettus (Imittos) above Athens. The first indication of an interesting *Helianthemum* in Macedonia in the central Balkans was provided by JURIŠIĆ (1923) in his statement “*Helianthemum spec. ?* (sub. *Helianthemum canum* Dunal., In Pletvar” where, as recorded later, grew only *H. hymettium*. The distribution of *H. hymettium* in Macedonia was reported on few occasions and by several

authors including BORNMÜLLER (1925), HAYEK (1925), SOŠKA (1933, 1938, 1939), MICEVSKI (1970, 1995) and MATEVSKI & KOSTADINOVSKI (2007). BORNMÜLLER (1925) even noted that the record of *H. hymettium* in the gorge of the river Raec in the vicinity of Drenovo (central part of R. Macedonia) represents the northernmost distribution of the species. Thus according to current taxonomic and floristic knowledge, *H. hymettium* has two disjunct distributions in the Balkans. One part of its range is in southern Greece (Attikis, Peloponnisos and Kriti), whilst the second is in Macedonia, there being no populations in between (see Fig. 1–3). However, in most publications the existence of *H. hymettium* in Macedonia is ignored and the species is reported as an endemic of Greece (PROCTOR & HEYWOOD 1968; GREUTER *et al.* 1984; PAPANICOLAOU & KOKKINI 1989; TAN *w/* IATROU 2001). This situation led us to question the status of *H. hymettium* in Macedonia and in this paper we examine chorological and taxonomical evidence with the view of determining whether the species also occurs in the central Balkans or whether the Macedonian populations have been erroneously identified.

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