

THE NORTHWEST EUROPEAN POLLEN FLORA, A NEW PROJECT

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In modern pollen analysis it has become clear that palaeological and phytogeographical interpretations are much enhanced by a detailed identification of pollen types. Frequently it proves impossible to key out the fossil types to species level, but identification of the pollen grains to taxa of the lowest possible rank is highly desirable. Some existing keys such as: Key to the N.W. European pollen types by Faegri and Iversen (1950, 1964) and Pollen and spore key by Nilsson and Pragłowski (1963) are not always sufficiently detailed. Keys treating special taxonomic groups are available such as: Chanda (1962) – Caryophyllaceae; Cercea u-Larrival (1959) – Umbelliferae; etc., but the number of these publications is restricted and without continuity. In order to fill the gap it was planned to start publishing the Northwest European Pollen Flora on a regular basis.

The title of this Flora suggests a competition with the World Pollen and Spore Flora, edited by Nilsson (1973) and distributed together with the journal Grana, by Almqvist and Wiksell, Stockholm. The WPSF, however, has a much wider scope with regard to the scientific background. It intends to give monographic studies of complete families, on world-wide basis.

On the other hand, the main goal of the NEPF is to produce a handy work to be of value for people looking at pollen grains of the Northwest European area. The editors intend to help people who want to identify their pollen grains as easy as possible and an identification as detailed as possible. In Western Europe we think to find these people in the first place among quarternary palynologists, but also among some aeropalynologists and a few melittopalynologists. Finally the series is thought to be of interest for taxonomists as well. Much emphasis is laid on the pollen keys and the pictures, whereas taxonomic position, evolution and phytogeography of the pollen types will be stressed to a lesser extend. Moreover, this Flora will also include comprehensive

descriptions of the pollen types and information on the pertinent literature.

The publication of the series is handled by Elsevier, Amsterdam and it will be distributed together with the journal Review of Palaeobotany and Palynology as a special supplement. Every time a family is ready, it will come out separately; for practical reasons it follows a special page-numbering independently from the page-numbers of the Review. The whole project is supported by the Royal Botanical Society of The Netherlands and publication finds place under the auspices of the Society. The arrangements with Elsevier and the Botanical Society have some consequences. In the first place the number of reprints is limited and they will not be distributed. Secondly it is the intention of the editors to publish every two years a book of ca 120 pages, containing all separate instalments published up to that moment. Finally, the book will be available for members of this Society for a reduced price.

Northwestern Europe as a special area has been chosen because material of this area is well represented in the herbarium of the Botanical Museum and Herbarium of the State University at Utrecht. The limits of the area have been chosen according to logic phytogeographic boundaries and in some cases according to political borders (fig. 1). The western and southern limits are phytogeographic boundaries. If the plants of the Mediterranean area and those of the high mountains should be included, this would have increased the number of taxa so much, that the project might never be finished within reasonable time. The eastern border is somewhat arbitrarily drawn, for the practical reason that only little material from Eastern Germany, Poland, and Russia is present in the herbarium of Utrecht. On the other hand we don't want to follow the limits too strictly. We certainly will look at pollen grains from plants of interest occurring just on the other side of the border.

Not all plants occurring in Northwest Europe will be included in the Flora and the choice will be made arbitrarily. It was decided that garden plants and adventitious plants will be excluded from the Flora. Introduced taxa are only listed if they have been established in a sizable part of the area. Neophytes, i.e. introduced plants which are completely naturalized will certainly be studied as they often play an im-

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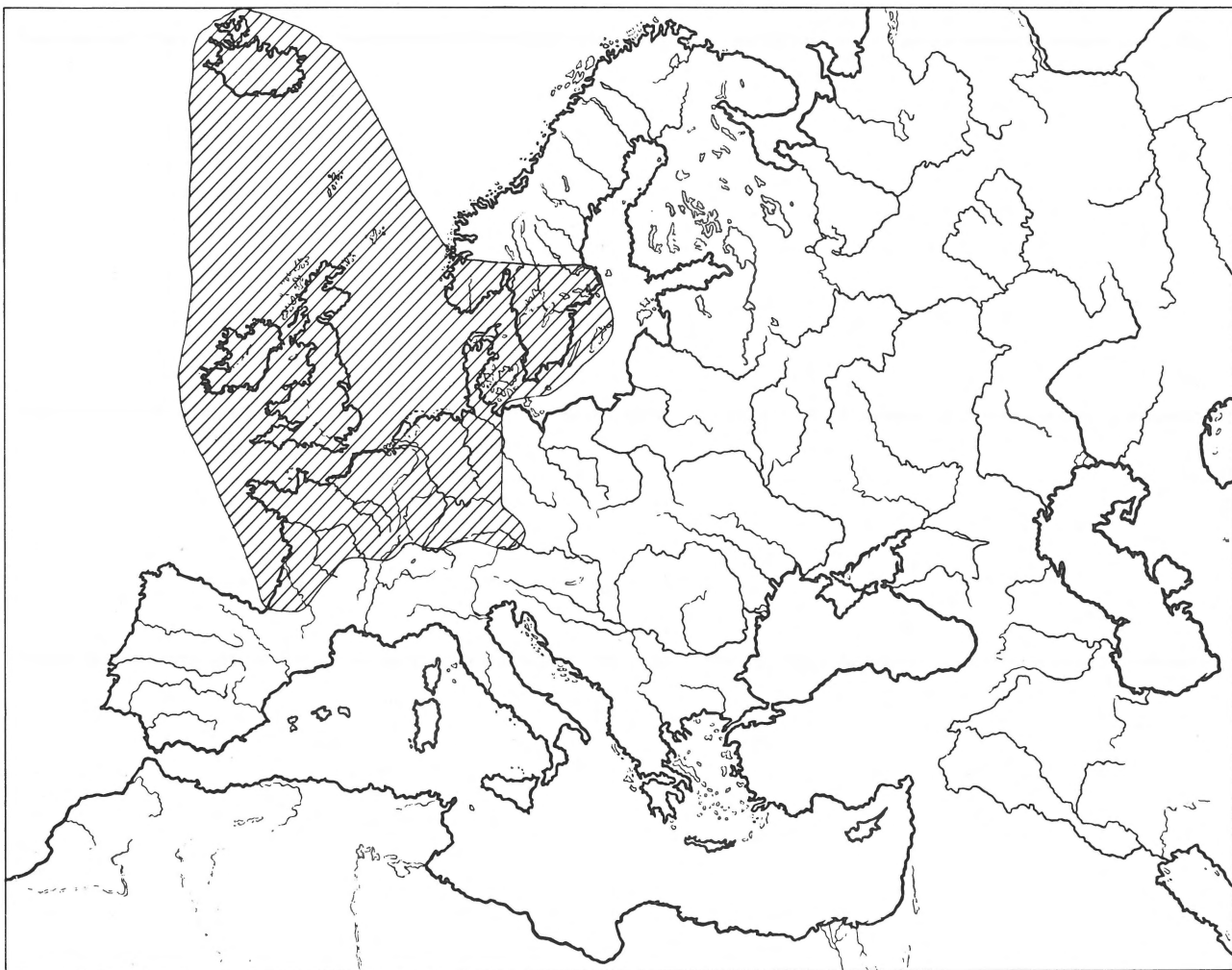


Fig. 1
Map of the Area dealt with in the Northwest European Pollen Flora (hatched)

portant role in the present vegetation (e.g. *Prunus serotina*)

The source of the plant material is primarily the herbarium of Utrecht, but also the "Rijksherbarium" at Leiden.

A question of interest may be the schedule for the whole project. The editors have in mind to finish it in ca 20 years, that is about 3 families per year. The families which have appeared up till now are: Caprifoliaceae and Primulaceae, Adoxaceae, Sparganiaceae and Typhaceae are next. Nearly completed manuscripts are available for Alismataceae, Solanaceae, Papaveraceae and Gentianaceae. Under study are Compositae (tubuliflorae), Dipsacaceae and Polygonaceae.

The editors hope that the project will fill the gap of discontinuity in studying pollen grains of Northwestern Europe and that the publication will be of great use to all palynologists working in this area.

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