



## *Legousia snogerupii* (Campanulaceae), a new species from southeastern Kiklades, Greece

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### Abstract

*Legousia snogerupii* (Campanulaceae) from the islands of southeastern Kiklades, Greece is described as a species new to science and illustrated by photographs. It bears some morphological similarity to and had previously been confused with *L. speculum-veneris* which is absent from the area. Its affinities are, however, closer to *L. pentagonia*, rather common in the Kiklades. Morphological characteristics and information on ecology and distribution are provided and the three taxa compared.

### Introduction

In the spring of 2012 a botanical investigation was made by G. Sfikas of some small uninhabited islets in the Kiklades. On 7 April, he visited Ofidoussa to the west of Astipalaea (Nomos Dodekanisou, Eparchia Kalimnou). The floristic (phytogeographical) region Kiklades, used here and in subsequent mention, is as defined for the *Flora Hellenica* project (Strid & Tan 1997). Thus not only the C Aegean islands (Kiklades proper) are included but also some islands on the western fringe of the Dodecanese. The results of these island visits have not been completely evaluated by Sfikas, and this work has been deferred to a later date. Suffice it to mention that a species of *Legousia* was found which attracted by its unusual flower colour. Sfikas sent photographs and plant samples to Kit Tan at Copenhagen for identification. Unknown to him, the plant had already been collected on the island by H. Runemark and B. Nordenstam, more than fifty years earlier, on 12 May 1960. Runemark, professor of botany at the University of Lund, identified the specimens first as *Legousia pentagonia* (L.) Druce (1908: 46) but later considered them to be *L. speculum-veneris* (L.) Chaix (in Villars 1786: 338), thus indicating that even for an experienced taxonomist, some degree of uncertainty had existed before coming to a taxonomic conclusion.

In late May 2014, B. Biel visited the northeastern part of the island of Amorgos (Nomos Kikladon, Eparchia Thiras) which lies ca. 41 km NW of Ofidoussa and found the same species. The plant caught his attention by virtue of the unusual corolla colour, which was almost a *Myosotis*-blue instead of deep violet-purple as frequent in Greek members of the genus. The habit was lax with long, flexuous, erect-ascending or completely prostrate stems depending on whether the plants were growing in open phrygana or shaded *Quercus* scrub. He realized that the plant possessed a combination of other characters which were not met with in any currently known taxon. No other species of *Legousia* was noted to occur in the direct vicinity. We decided to name our plant *Legousia snogerupii* to commemorate Prof. Sven Snogerup (1929–2013) who, since 1957, had contributed tremendously to the floristic exploration of the Aegean area particularly the Kiklades, in collaboration with Prof. Runemark and others from the Lund school. His joint-collection with Runemark is designated as the holotype. Although grown in cultivation, the plant prepared as a voucher specimen does not differ greatly from other plants collected in the wild except that it is more branched at the base.

isolated populations on the southeastern Kikladean islands at altitudes from sea level to 650 m and has not been noted on mainland Greece or Anatolia. The discovery of new populations on neighbouring islets would necessitate extensions to the distribution, but it is very likely that *L. snogerupii* remains restricted to the southeastern Kiklades (Fig. 5) and can be considered an Aegean endemic. According to Damboldt (1978: 85), some collections from Turkey show a combination of characters which may indicate hybridization between *L. pentagonia* and *L. speculum-veneris*. However, the distinguishing features of *L. snogerupii*, viz., the lax habit with slender flexuous stems, always solitary flowers, and particularly the sky-blue and white corollas — these are unique and unlikely to be of hybrid origin as they do not exist in *L. pentagonia* or *L. speculum-veneris*. Without following IUCN threat categories (IUCN 2011) it is obvious *L. snogerupii* is neither threatened nor endangered on these outlying islands situated far from the regular tourist track.

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