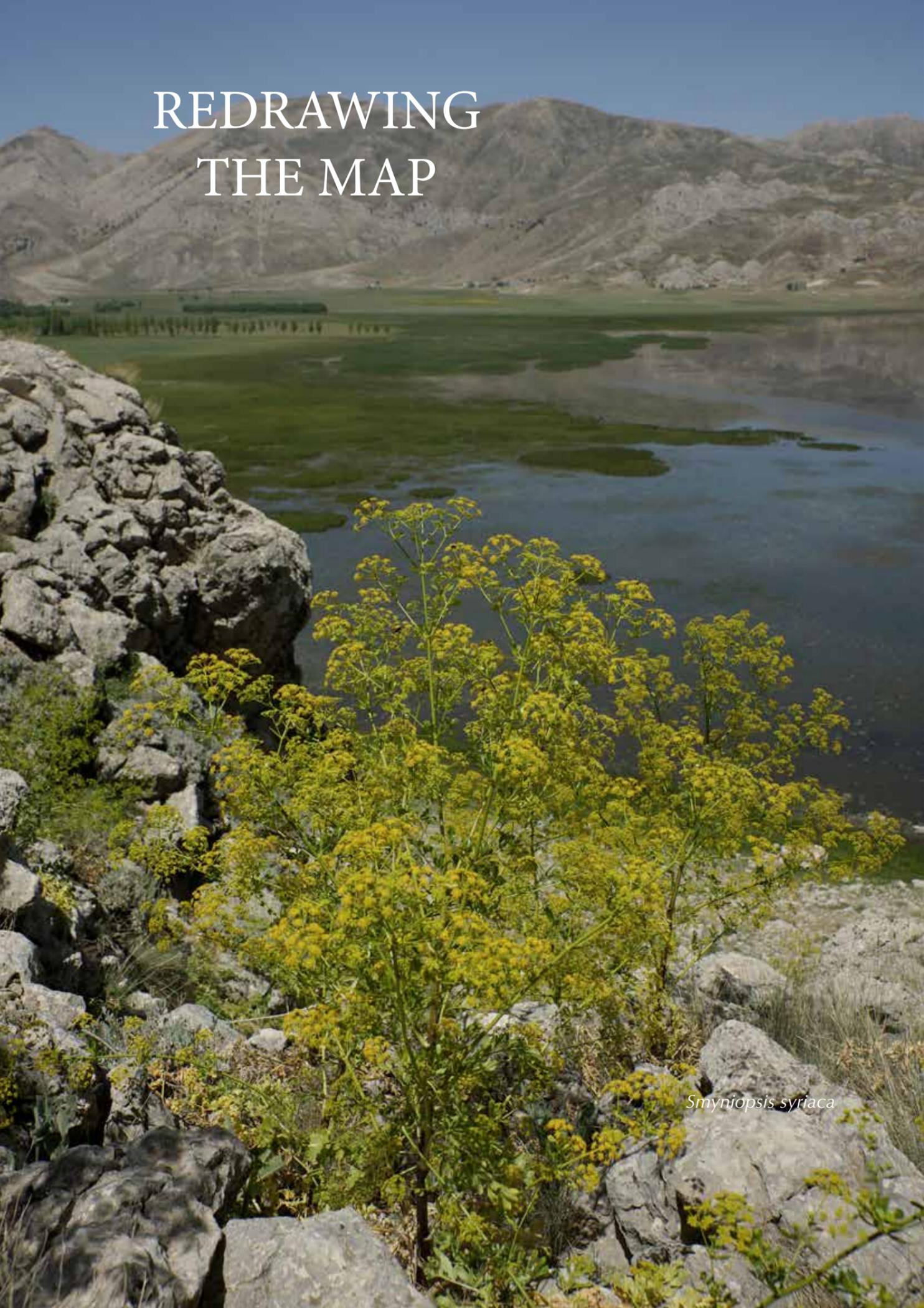


REDRAWING THE MAP



Smyniopsis syriaca



Glaucium leiocarpum

Free at last, I was able to get out into the hills again. As Basak hinted last week, this season is rather early and dry, but that is not necessarily a bad thing, as now one tends to find different things, some of which must have been right under one's nose in the past, but somehow evaded detection. Two visits yielded very different things, and both had the satisfaction of extending the range of plants in Turkey and adding new species to the list for Lycia. Heading out to the big Girdev Lake it was hard to not notice the huge clumps of garish scarlet *Glaucium leiocarpum* that coloured the rocky roadside. Indeed, the drier inland areas are now bursting with colour including wonderful stands of *Verbascum lasianthum* and many of its confusing cousins. At the lake I had been told of a couple of interesting plants, one was the rather rare *Lamium bilgiliti*, with only flowering plant wedged in a crevice high up. Fortunately, I was able to squeeze and 'chimney' my way up between the rock slabs and with some contortions set up the tripod for a shot or two.

All around these grew a much larger plant that I had seen two weeks earlier (at Termessos), an impressive umbellifer that for now we'll



Lamium bilgiliti



Butomus umbellatus



Glaucium alakirensis



Verbascum lasianthum



Stellaria persica

call *Smyrniopsis* af. *syriaca/aucheri*. Neither species is supposed to occur within 600 kms of my location but given the size of Turkey and the number of botanists it is not surprising things slip through the net. They looked wonderful with the reflected lake behind and were a buzz with bees. It was down by the lake that I found the rather delicate *Stellaria persica*, I agree not the showiest of plants, and I hurriedly took photos and only realised what it was when I reviewed the flora back home. The nearest cited location for this plant is Van about 1500 kms away! There was no doubt as to its identification, and it is perfectly possible for aquatic plants to be carried on the feet or feathers of migrating birds and be spread this way. The showier *Butomus umbellatus* was also very common along with masses of crowfoot to the background honks of coots and shriller cries of grebes.

My second outing took me past wonderful floriferous domes of *Astragalus gymnolobus*, whose sweet honey scent drifted on the warm morning air. And sweet scent was not what I was expecting with the next little gem I noticed. Somehow, I had failed to see the many neat rosettes of *Glaucium alakirensis* that grew in one area of stony slopes I had visited a few times before. But here they were and many of them.



Saponaria pumilio





Acanthus hirsutus



Ornithogalum platyphyllum

This species was previously thought to be confined to a few plants in the Alakur Valley (after which it is named) so not only their range, but their population had just increased several fold. More surprising, was the soft perfume that emanated from the apricot flowers. No need for blazing orange to attract pollinators when instead, you have that. They often grow on very unstable areas, and it is possible populations come and go.

On the highest stony slopes were big mounds of *Saponaria pumilio* beset with pink eyes and beyond lay an area of steppe, grasslands and marshy patches, where big stands of spiny *Carduus nutans* coloured the slopes. Another well-armed plant: *Acanthus hirsutus* was extremely common in places, mingling with tumbling masses of *Vicia cracca*. Slender *Asyneuma rigida* swayed in the meadows and around a pond hefty *Ornithogalum platyphyllum* sprinkling the sedges with blinding white stars. The latter grew with the graceful stems of *Gladiolus kotschyanus*, yet another surprising plant that typically occurs only in eastern Turkey but was clearly alive and well in the west too. What else remained to be discovered would have to wait, my camera batteries were nearly flat and so was I, it was time for dinner and sitting down to watch my beloved Chelsea win the Champions League cup final.

Gladiolus kotschyanus



Carduus nutans

