

PTERIS VITTATA L. THE CORRECT NAME FOR
•PTERIS LONGIFOLIA•.

por G. J. De Joncheere (2)

It was in May 1964 that the writer revisited Mallorca in the company of Prof. T. Reichstein (1) of Bâle, in order to obtain some fresh material of *Asplenium majoricum* Lit., this elusive endemic of the island Mallorca, but meanwhile the object of intensive study.

When staying in Soller, it was a great pleasure to renew my acquaintance with Señor J. Orell y Casanovas, the assiduous collector and botanist of the island, who had originally rediscovered the locality of *A. majoricum*, thus bringing back Litardière's publication to life again.

Apart from expressing my gratitude here for the valuable advice we received from Mr. Orell at the time, thanks are also due to him for showing Prof. Reichstein and myself *Pteris longifolia* L., growing on a wet stone wall in the vicinity of Deyà. An extensive article about this very interesting find was given by Mr. Orell in Boletín Soc. Hist. Nat. Baleares VII (1961): 77, and it is gratifying that by Mr. Orell's astute search, the existence of this rare fern in Mallorca has been definitely confirmed.

At the time, the writer had collected *Pteris longifolia* from Madeira and from Positano/Italy and there is no doubt that the Mallorca plant is conspecific with the Macaronesian and Italian plants. Mr. Orell's find therefore is an interesting link in the scattered relic localities of *Pteris longifolia* in the Mediterranean region.

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- (1) Profesor T. Reichstein, Instituto de Química Orgánica, Universidad de Basilea, Suiza. Fue Premio Nobel, de Química el año 1950.
Este Profesor, especialista en helechos ha visitado Mallorca en dos ocasiones, en mayo de 1964 y en marzo de 1966.
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However, already then the observation was made that very probably the name *Pteris longifolia* is not correct. In this respect Fiori's reference — when treating this fern in his *Flora Italica Cryptogramma V* (1943): 281 as *Pteris longifolia L. var. vittata Nic.* — to an article of Hieronymus in *Hedwigia LIV* (1914): 283 is important, as the latter author is of the opinion that the European material should be treated as a separate species, i.e. *Pteris vittata L.*

It should be explained here that Linné described two closely related species in his *Species Plantarum*: *Pteris longifolia* and *Pteris vittata*. The first named species was based by him on Plumier, i.e. on American material, whereas the second species was described by Linné from Chinese plants.

After having been in Florida/U.S.A. myself in the meantime, the opinion was formed that indeed there are two species, as Hieronymus advocated. Collections were made by me of the wild *Pteris longifolia L. var. bahamensis (Agardh) Hier.* and also of *Pteris vittata L.*; an escape from cultivation in Florida. There was a good opportunity to compare the two species and ten deserve species - status.

Hieronymus remarks, that geographically the two species are well separated: both cover a large area, but *Pteris longifolia L.* is endemic to the New World, whereas *Pteris vittata* is an Old World species.

The best way to distinguish between them is the articulation of the pinnae to the rhachis with *Pteris longifolia*; in *Pteris vittata* the pinnae are non-articulate and the very short stalk of the pinnae is even descending down the rhachis for a short distance; there are more constant differences which however need not be repeated here.

The plant from Mallorca — and in fact from the Mediterranean region generally — should therefore be called *Pteris vittata L.* This view is also accepted in the *Flora Europaea I* (1964), the new standard-work on the nomenclature of European ferns.