

VII. AN ENIGMATIC SUPPRESSED BOOK BY LOTSY ON THE MONOCOTYLEDONS OF JAVA

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Among the numerous works of J.P. Lotsy Mrs. M.J. van Steenis-Kruseman (Fl. Mal. I, 1, 1950, 331a) cited 'Die Monocotylenflora von Java (1904)' a citation derived from the biography of Lotsy by W.A. Goddijn (Genetica 13, 1931, xiv).

It appears that after his stay in Java (1895—1900) Lotsy had decided to frame a work on the flowering plants of Java within the scheme 'Flore de Buitenzorg' initiated by Melchior Treub. He started this probably in Leiden in 1900 still working on it until 1905. It would represent volume 7 of Treub's work.

This was a major undertaking as appears from printed proofs (in final printing) of which there is a copy in the library of the Rijksherbarium. These cover pages — (part of the introduction) and pp. 1—528 and 529—544 (the latter in page proof stage, unfinished).

This work would represent a Flora of the Monocotyledones except the Orchidaceae, the elaboration of which was in the hands of J.J. Smith. The work would be supplemented by an Atlas as appears from a set of drawings prepared by a Mr. Roggeveen after photographs made from herbarium specimens, some of which were even already printed.

The title and text of the work was not in German, but in English: 'Monocotyledones of Java'.

The work rested solely on the records in the Rijksherbarium and Lotsy complained of the inadequate material there. He often copied descriptions from Hooker f.'s Flora of British India and Trimen's Handbook of the Flora of Ceylon. Some descriptions were even in Latin.

Lotsy had not too much trust in his endeavour and was well aware of the very preliminary nature of his compilation. In his introduction he wrote: 'Consequently this volume is one destined to disappear, the quicker it does so, the sooner its place is taken by a Flora based upon a study of living material, the better it will be. It has to be considered as a means to make it possible to prepare the writing of a Flora at Buitenzorg'.

There is a general key to the families which is extracted from Thonner's 'Anleitung zum Bestimmen der Familien der Phanerogamen' (1891).

The introduction was signed 'December 1903', but he was still working on it in 1905 as appears from his reference (p. 328) to another publication by himself of that date.

The work stopped halfway the Gramineae. It was printed by E.J. Brill, Leiden; who financed it is unknown. In the Introduction Lotsy thanked the Royal Academy for a sum of money which enabled him to have the drawings made.

In 1904 Lotsy had become lecturer in systematic botany and in 1906 he was nominated Director of the Rijksherbarium. There remains the question why he abandoned this great work that had required such large efforts.

It is most likely that this was caused by the arrival of S.H. Koorders who onwards of 1906 was stationed at the Rijksherbarium and charged with the composition of a 'Mountain flora of Java'. Koorders' ambitions, however, went much further and he had decided to enlarge his task towards the composition of a complete Flora of Java which resulted in the 'Exkursionsflora von Java'. Thus

this work would also cover the Monocotyledones and this might have induced Lotsy to conclude that his own work had become superfluous.