NOTICES OF PUBLICATIONS[*]

by WERNER GREUTER

General Topics

1. **Juan Antonio DEVESA ALCARAZ & José Sebastián CARRIÓN GARCÍA – Las plantas con flor.** Apuntes sobre su origen, clasificación y diversidad. – Universidad de Córdoba, Córdoba, 2012 (ISBN 978-84-9927-108-8). 522 pages, numerous colour illustrations, drawings, graphs, tables; hard cover.

A university teacher who wants to introduce students to the diversity of flowering plants, and has the ambition to present the information in the most modern classificatory frame available, faces a problem. Classifications keep changing so rapidly that it has become all but impossible for textbook writers to keep up. Every now and then a volunteer emerges to fill the growing gap and write a new manual. This has now happened for the benefit of Spanish teachers.

This book is written for use, and will be found useful, by teachers and students alike – those at a Spanish university, that is. Latin Americans will likely be frustrated when they fail to find their native families treated, as the book, basically, limits itself to families indigenous to the Iberian Peninsula – but then, let New World botanists write their own textbooks.

One of the salient traits of the volume is good and plentiful illustration; another is the extent to which aspects of the past are built into it, on two quite different levels. First, there is a substantial, well researched and well written chapter on the history of angiosperm classification, from classical Greece to the present day. Second, the fossil record is presented in unusual and commendable detail, to serve as a complement and counterpoint to the molecular studies on which the adopted classification has been built – which, to no one's wonder, is APG III. Let me add, to the credit of the authors, that they do not fail to mention – dispassionately even – the more popular and strikingly plausible former families that fell victim to merger, such as *Dipsacaceae* and *Valerianaceae* now sunk in *Caprifoliaceae.*

I miss but one relevant aspect, which has been totally neglected. No reference whatever is made to the rules that govern the choice and use of names. In one place I found the *International Code of Nomenclature* mentioned under its now obsolete "botanical" title, but it is not even cited among the literature. Students will wonder where the ranks and rank-denoting terminations come from, and why "Comelínidas", designating an informal grouping of orders, is in Spanish but the similar looking *Magnoliidae* (a subclass, equivalent to angiosperms) in

[*] Please send all items for announcement or review directly to the column editor: Prof. W. Greuter, Herbarium Mediterraneum, Orto Botanico, Via Lincoln 2/A, I-90133 Palermo.

Latin. Mind you, I am not blaming the authors for their choice of names: that criticism, for which there is justification in many cases, must be addressed to Chase & Reveal who cared for the nomenclature used in APG III. Devesa and Carrión just copied to the letter what the said authors propose – so slavishly that even an obvious typo such as *Ginkgooidae* (for *Ginkgoidae*) went uncorrected. W.G.

Dicotyledons

2. **Peter MOORE & Melvyn JOPE – The *Cyclamen* of Greece.** A guide to the species of cyclamen growing in Greece. – The Cyclamen Society, London, 2011 (ISBN 978-0-9537526-3-8). 40 pages, 57 colour photographs, map; paper.

This pamphlet has been highly praised for the beauty and quality of its illustration, a praise well deserved. I am less favourably impressed by the text. Probably I was misled by the subtitle and expected too much. This is in no way a "guide to species", it is but a pleasant and stimulating companion on a spring or autumn tour of Greece. There is no clear structure, not even a consistent attempt at defining or comparing taxa, let alone a formal treatment of them or an identification key. Indication of distribution is so vague as to be useless for practical purposes. Some photographs show the variation of leaf pattern and shape – valuable information indeed, but unsuited to distinguish taxa: rather, it might in some cases shed doubt on their distinctness. An interesting feature mentioned in the text and illustrated is the different way in which the pedicels ("stems") of autumn-flowering species coil after flowering: basipetally from the top in *Cyclamen hederifolium* but acropetally from the base or middle portion in *C. graecum* (and presumably, to judge from the picture, *C. confusum*). I had not noticed this difference before, and its mention is so discretely hidden in the text that I all but missed it – which would have been a real pity.

The authors are keen and knowledgeable amateur botanists, and it would be inappropriate to judge their booklet severely. Take it for what it is, forgetting the unfortunate subtitle, and enjoy it. Also, take heed of their concluding statement, following after the chapter on cyclamen growing: "there is no need to collect [cyclamens] from the wild as it is very easy to obtain a wide range from reputable nurseries". W.G.

3. **Rosa Maria LO PRESTI – Geological vs. climatological diversification in the Mediterranean area: Micro- and macroevolutionary approaches in *Anthemis* L. *(Compositae, Anthemideae)*.** – Logos, Berlin, 2010 (ISBN 978-3-8325-2688-7). [3] + 182 pages, 2 drawings, maps and graphs (some in colour), tables; paper.

Lo Presti's PhD thesis is devoted in its entirety to the study of systematics and evolution of the genus *Anthemis,* of which in its time her tutor, Christoph Oberprieler, had made the North African representatives the subject of his own thesis. Much has changed since then, for the better or worse: it is no longer accepted that you write your dissertation just on the alpha-taxonomy of a group, not even when anatomy and micromorphology are part of your arsenal. You have to use DNA sequencing, AFLP and lots of computer-based numerical analyses as your weaponry. This is what Lo Presti was asked to do, and did with great skill and excellent success.

There are some genuinely remarkable aspects to this thesis. Contrary to her boss and mentor she did not confine herself to a modest if highly critical geographical subset of species but covered the genus as a whole – or rather: two genera, as her work confirmed the recently reasserted distinction of

Cota from *Anthemis*. While her revision cannot claim to be a monograph, at least it includes a synopsis in its own right: an enumeration of all recognised species and subspecies of both genera (as Appendix 1), and even, for *Anthemis* alone, a dichotomic key for their identification (App. 6).

Apart from the Appendices, general introduction and discussion, summary, and comprehensive reference list, the thesis consists of three chapters conceived as independent units, all of which have also been published as research papers in international journals: (1) Lo Presti & al.: A molecular phylogeny and revised classification of the Mediterranean genus *Anthemis* s.l. *(Compositae, Anthemideae)* based on three molecular markers and micromorphological characters (in Taxon 59: 1441-1456. 2010); (2) Lo Presti & Oberprieler: Evolutionary history, biogeography and eco-climatological differentiation of the genus *Anthemis* L. *(Compositae, Anthemideae)* in the circum-Mediterranean area (in J. Biogeogr. 36: 1313-1332. 2009); and (3) Lo Presti & Oberprieler: The central Mediterranean as a phytodiversity hotchpotch: phylogeographical patterns of the *Anthemis secundiramea* group *(Compositae, Anthemideae)* across the Sicilian Channel (in J. Biogeogr. 38: 1109-1124. 2011). The above-mentioned synopsis and key, however, can only be found in the thesis itself.

The amount of data Lo Presti has used and produced is all but incredible, especially if you think of the time and labour involved. According to her criteria, *Anthemis* consists of 154 species (one unnamed) and 12 additional subspecies, *Cota* of 37 species plus one subspecies. Of no less than ¾ of these she has managed to isolate the DNA, amplifying and sequencing three markers: one of nuclear mitochondrial DNA, two of chloroplast DNA. For her phylogeographical study (the 2nd paper) she has produced georeferenced label data for well over 4000 specimens, most directly from herbaria but some from literature, for all of which she procured the bioclimatic parameters for numerical processing (I will spare you the details). Also, perhaps chaperoned by her brother who is a computing expert, she familiarised herself with the full range of algorithms that are coming into use for cladistic and phylogeographical analyses. And I could go on and on.

What, then, are the results? Personally I still consider phylogeography, and especially time-scaled cladograms or chronograms, as sort of a black art rather than science – often interesting, thought-provoking even, but not to be firmly relied upon. In that I may be prejudiced, and I don't mind your thinking so. This being said, Lo Presti's opinions are plausible enough, and presented with the appropriate caution. The cladograms she generated raise as many new questions as they help solve, which is not unusual; but they do help clarify the boundaries between *Anthemis* and *Cota,* the molecular results being backed by fruit anatomy. A certain number of *Anthemis* species are now to be placed in *Cota,* and two that had been recently transferred to *Cota* (mea culpa!) wander back to *Anthemis.* The five (not six!) necessary new combinations, listed here as such, were first made in Taxon (59: 1455. 8 Oct 2010; the Dissertation's date of effective publication is 22 November – Oberprieler in litt.). Another convincing conclusion, well supported by morphology, is the segregation of four Caucasian *Anthemis* species as a new, independent genus – here left unnamed but, in Taxon (l.c.), described as *Archanthemis.*

The text is concise, elegantly written in impeccable English. Most readers will deplore the need to use a magnifier to read many of the tables and graphs, excessively reduced in scale to fit the book's A5 format. A pity, too, that the title chosen is so unattractive, not only inadequate semantically but failing to highlight the main merits of the work. W.G.

Monocotyledons

4. Spuros TSIFTSÊS, Iôannês TSIRIPIDÊS & Kôstas BIDAKÊS – Orhidées tou Ethnikoú Párkou Oroseirás Rodópês Orchids of Rodopi Mountain-Range National Park. – Foreas Diaheirisês Oroseiras Rodopês, Mesohori (Dramas), 2012 (ISBN 978-618-80276-0-2). 197 pages, numerous colour photographs and maps; cloth with dust cover.

The Greek National Park of the Rhodopi Mountains covers a surface area of over 1700 km^2, mainly in north-easternmost Greek Macedonia, just extending into Thrace, and bordering with Bulgaria. It is a forlorn country, very thinly settled and with few access roads, which in its higher parts is covered with dense, seminatural to primeval forest. Botanically it is notable as hosting the most southerly outpost of genuine Central European Norway spruce forest, along with woods of birch and grey alder and a host of undergrowth species similarly rare or absent further south. In terms of its ecology and the beauty of its pristine landscape it is certainly a jewel, worth every effort to keep it unscathed. For the present purpose, the area has been expanded toward the south and west to include the Falakron massif.

The book can be divided into unequal halves. The first, introductory portion, up to page 45, describes the physical and biological environment, with emphasis on the vegetation. The second, central part is devoted to the orchid family, the description and illustration of the 59 taxa (species and subspecies) known from the area being preceded by general chapters, for a lay readership, on orchid systematics, evolution, and morphology. Typically, the descriptive portion devotes two pages to each species (*Orchis militaris,* with two additional pages, is the exception): one full-page photograph showing a flower or flowers in close-up, faced with the text, two smaller photographs of habit and/or detail, a "distribution map" and a scale showing the flowering period. Taxonomy and nomenclature are ultra-modern, accepting several recently described taxa (species and subspecies) and forefront generic delimitations (not only the molecular-based reshuffling of former *Orchis* but also the merger of *Nigritella* with *Gymnadenia* and of *Listera* with *Neottia* are taken on board).

A few words on the authors are appropriate, if only to dispel the suspicion that they be newcomers and/or amateurs. Nope. All three are real professionals, with an academic training and degree. Spyros Tsiftsis completed his PhD thesis in 2009, at Thessaloniki University, on the orchids of E Macedonia, and has since published a number of papers on the subject in international journals; Iannis Tsiripidis's PhD thesis of 2001, presented to the same university, dealt with the beech forests of the Rhodopi Mountains. Together they wrote the book's fully bilingual (Greek and English) texts. The third author, Kostas Vidakis, graduated in forestry at the Technological Educational Institute at Kavala and has since become a professional wildlife photographers; the photographs are his.

One might wonder why it was the orchid family that was chosen to illustrate the natural riches of the Rhodopi National Park. Contrary to what the authors claim, it is rather poorly represented in that area. Orchids are much more plentiful and diverse in southern Greece and at low altitudes. Only 6 of the c. 100 *Ophrys* currently accepted taxa (species and subspecies, discounting hybrids) reported for the country are present in the Park. Of the 18 recognised genera treated in the book, the most diverse are *Anacamptis, Epipactis* and *Orchis* (what is left of it), with 8 taxa each. Most of the species are well known and widespread, at least when their total area is considered. Yet there are valid reasons for the choice of the book's subject, beyond the obvious one: that orchids are always perceived as exotic and

fascinating, bound to attract a wide readership. It is a fact that N Greek orchids have received disproportionately low attention so far, with the result that species new to the national flora keep turning up. Also, four northerly species appear to have their southernmost and only Greek occurrences within the area of study: *Neottia (Listera) cordata* in the Rhodopi range; *Orchis militaris, Gymnadenia (Nigritella) rhellicani* and *G. odoratissima* on Mt. Falakron (actually the last named, discovered but recently, is not included in the book). Finally, some of the species treated are Balkan endemics of rather limited general distribution, to name: *Dactylorhiza cordigera, D. macedonica, Gymnadenia frivaldii,* and three of the *Ophrys* microspecies.

On the whole there is little to criticise, just some relatively minor points. Figure captions are inadequate or (e.g. for the landscape and vegetation photographs of the introductory chapters) altogether lacking. The "distribution maps", as such, are a laugh: each map, without exception, shows a single locality dot – hopefully designating the place where the pictures were taken, although this is not made explicit. More worrying is the fact that at least two of the photographs were transposed (the close-ups supposed to illustrate *Anacamptis coriophora* subsp. *coriophora* and subsp. *fragrans*); that the plant shown under the name *Orchis pauciflora* appears to be *O. provincialis;* and that identification of the pictures of *Ophrys epirotica* and the three *Serapias* taxa is at best doubtful.

Apart from these imperfections the book is a jewel: elegantly produced, artfully illustrated, beautiful in every respect. It is surprising that in a time when Greece, economically speaking, is sailing in rough seas it has been possible to publish such a book, be it with a substantial contribution from the European Union. Let us take it as a sign, that the world of politics and finance is more open-minded toward the domains of learning, education, even sheer aesthetics, than its general reputation has it. W.G.

Floras

5. Peter SCHÖNFELDER & Ingrid SCHÖNFELDER – Die Kosmos-Kanarenflora. Über 1000 Arten und 60 tropische Ziergehölze. Kosmos, Stuttgart, 2012 (ISBN 978-3-440-12607-3). 319 pages, 922 colour photographs, drawings, graphs and maps, key and further drawings on 2 extra sheets and cover inside; laminated boards.

As mentioned in the preface to the book, this is the third edition to appear under the same title and authorship (an information that is conspicuously absent from the publisher's imprint). The first edition was published in 1997 (see OPTIMA Newslett. 32: (10-11). 1997); the second, of 2005 (not seen), appears to be no more than a new printing, perhaps with minor corrections. The present, third one, on the contrary, differs substantially. Many of the former photographs have been replaced and new ones added, increasing the total number from 602 to 922. There has been a parallel raise in the number of species considered, from 898 (850 wild, 48 cultivated ornamentals) to 1060 (1000 + 60, respectively) – figures that, as noted in my former review, are subject to some caution. Another change of note is the replacement of the minute drawings illustrating the family key by 77 small but informative colour photographs.

As the number of pages did not change, one may wonder how the additional information has been squeezed in. For the photographs, the answer is clear: there are, on average, more images per page, with corresponding reduction in size. As the resolution of the originals has improved concurrently and the page layout is handled more flexibly than before, the reduction does not result in appreciable quality loss. Fortunately, the

text, was not condensed by use of smaller print but rather by editorial cropping of unessential phrases and downgrading of some species treatments to the level of notes, with omission of their distribution map.

Due to improved coverage, the new edition has added merit as compared to its predecessor. If you own ed. 1 (or 2), and have used it to your satisfaction, you may still want to consider the purchase of the present, again moderately priced version. W.G.

6. Santiago CASTROVIEJO † (gen. ed.), S. TALAVERA, C. ANDRÉS, M. ARISTA, M. P. FERNÁNDEZ PIEDRA, M. J. GALLEGO, P. L. ORTIZ, C. ROMERO ZARCO, F. J. SALGUEIRO, S. SILVESTRE & A. QUINTANAR (vol. ed.) **– Flora iberica.** Plantas vasculares de la Península Ibérica e Islas Baleares. Vol. **XI,** *Gentianaceae-Boraginaceae*. – Real Jardín Botánico, Madrid, 2012 (ISBN 978-84-00-09415-7, volume; 978-84-00-06221-7, set). XLVIII + 672 pages, map, 124 plates of drawings; cloth with dust jacket.

To my mind, *Flora iberica* is and remains unchallenged as the best designed, most carefully edited, most detailed and informative among modern critical Floras. Users who do appreciate its qualities will easily concur with my assessment, but few will be aware of the complex, keen effort behind the stage that is needed to achieve such result. To truly appreciate that fact you have to be familiar with co-operative projects of a comparable size, and with the difficulty of having them funded over a thirty-year period. Carlos Aedo's most readable preamble gives us the essential facts. The Flora Iberica Programme consists of 4 research teams in as many Spanish cities, with additional participation from 14 committed university departments. Funding for the ninth triennial project phase (2011 to 2014) has just been granted by Spain's Research Ministry (congratulations!). So far, 17 volumes have been published over a period of 26 years, almost exactly one every 1½ years. In parallel to the publication proper, three major correlated databases have been designed, implemented and kept running: the *Flora iberica* database, which permits online consultation of the published volumes in pdf format, also providing for posting updates and offering to the contributors the opportunity of online editing and data sharing; *Anthos,* a reference system holding 1.3 million georeferenced locality data from herbaria and literature, able to generate distribution maps for individual taxa, and also including information on chromosome counts and vernacular names; and *Phyteia,* said to be an inventory of legal protection norms for plant species (but not currently available for consultation under the cited Web link). Indeed an impressive – and by no means exhaustive – scenario!

Work on volume 11 (as for vol. 9, yet to come) started as long ago as 1997, which, the preamble claims, ensures *eo ipso* that its scientific standard is particularly high. It is by and large the product of the project team in Sevilla, where 9 out of 10 volume editors and 10 of 19 text authors are based, who wrote the treatments for 64 of the 76 genera. If the volume is to have its hero, it can be no other than Benito Valdés, who authored the accounts for more than half of the *Boraginaceae* species, including the two largest and arguably most difficult genera, *Myosotis* (20 species) and *Echium* (19). The next most important genera, this time, are *Solanum* (18), *Convolvulus* (15), *Gentiana* (13), *Centaurium* (11), and *Cuscuta* (9).

Nine families are included, one of which large *(Boraginaceae),* three of medium size *(Convolvulaceae, Gentianaceae, Solanaceae),* and 5 small *(Apocynaceae, Asclepiadaceae, Hydrophyllaceae, Menyanthaceae, Oleaceae)*. Family delimitation is pleasurably traditional, with *Asclepiadaceae* kept separate from *Apocynaceae* and *Hydrophyllaceae* distinct from *Boraginaceae* in which

Heliotropium still finds its place. Generic definitions tend to be on the narrow side, with *Gentiana, Gentianella, Gentianopsis* and *Comastoma, Buglossoides* and *Aegonychon, Lithodora* and *Glandora, Cynoglossum* and *Solenanthus* (but not *Pardoglossum*) treated as independent. Concerning *Lithodora* and *Glandora,* I take exception to the suggested etymology (and consequent pronunciation) of the names. It makes little sense to derive the second word element, *-dora,* from δορά (skin). The obvious meaning is gift (δώρον), used adjectivally as in classical Θεόδορος and Θεοδώρα, gift of God (note the shift in stress, between masculine and feminine), the intended signification of *Lithodora,* the name of a very decorative chasmophytic shrublet, being: gift of the rock. The stress is to be placed on the penultimate syllable *(Lithodóra, Glandóra).*

Four volumes (9, 16, 19, and 20) are still to come, 2018 being the target date for completion. Publication of vol. 9 and 20 is said to be imminent, but the two largest families, *Compositae* and *Gramineae,* have been left for the end – in view of their size, they will presumably each form a twin volume, same as *Leguminosae.* These monster families will present a major challenge for editors and project teams, but hopefully not a stumbling block. We wish them energy, good health, and generous funding, and can assure the funding agencies that every Euro they have spent and will spend on this project is money well spent! W.G.

7. Gabriel BLANCA, Baltasar CABEZUDO, Miguel CUETO, Concepción MORALES TORRES & Carlos SALAZAR (ed.) – **Claves de la flora vascular de Andalucía Oriental.** – Universidades de Granada, Almería, Jaén y Málaga, Granada, 2011 (ISBN 978-84-338-5217-5 [etc.]). 802 pages, figures, analytical drawings, map, 128 plates of colour photographs; with a CD-ROM; laminated flexible cover.

The title is an understatement. The book is much more than a set of identification keys, it is a fully fledged portable Flora, a smaller version of the bulky and heavy 4-volume *Flora of East Andalusia* published two years previously (see OPTIMA Newslett. 39: (6-7). 2010). Just the taxon descriptions were omitted (but the remainder is still there: synonymy, growth form, overall size, phenology, habitat, general and local distribution, frequency, threat category), as were ¾ of the colour photographs (535 remain, as compared to the original 2181). The reduction in size and weight has been achieved to a large extent through the use of smaller print and illustrations, and thinner paper. One of the five editors of the large edition (Fernández López) has dropped out, being replaced by Salazar; but the 77 text authors remain.

The book is not a mere abstract of the major Flora, as one might suspect. Reader feedback has made it possible to incorporate numerous corrections and improvements regarding taxonomic status (63 cases), local distribution (146), habitat (45), and misspellings (90). Most importantly, 44 species and subspecies have been newly added, as well as two families and several genera, and the identification keys have been adapted to accommodate them all. The new additions raise the E Andalusian vascular flora to a total of 3724 native or naturalised species and subspecies; which means that the large edition of the Flora, two years after having been printed in 4000+ copies (!), is already slightly out of date. No way, obviously, of getting a new edition printed; but ed. 2 has nevertheless been prepared and is added to the present book in full, on a compact disk, as a single, searchable pdf file. In my review of the 2009 edition I had pointed at the discomfort of using the CD-ROM then delivered, due to the splitting of the information in four files, each corresponding to one volume. This concern has now been taken into account. The problem that remains (or has arisen?) is that the new CD-ROM's search facilities do

not co-operate well with Windows Vista – there is no problem with other operating systems, though, including Windows XP.

Let me stress that the present volume is a valuable addition to any botanist's library, being practical, informative and easy to use – especially if you are short-sighted and/or have a magnifying glass ready at hand. W.G.

8. Daniel JEANMONOD (ed.) – Compléments au Prodrome de la flore corse. *Asteraceae* – III: *Cichorieae* (sauf *Taraxacum, Hieracium* et *Pilosella*), par Daniel JEANMONOD & André SCHLÜSSEL. – Conservatoire et Jardin botaniques, Ville de Genève, 2012 (ISBN 978-2-8277-0818-5). 306 pages, 94 black-and-white figures (maps and photographs), map, 2 graphs, 2 tables; laminated flexible cover.

The subtitle is explicit: The third *Asteraceae* volume of this serial Flora does not, as one might have hoped, bring the treatment of the family to its conclusion. Three genera, the essentially apomictic *Taraxacum* and *Hieracium* plus the equally critical *Pilosella,* are left for a dessert. Even so, the amount of information presented is substantial, and the quality and interest of the data are as remarkable as ever.

The present volume treats 24 genera and 57 species considered to be members of the Corsican flora (including two species only known as former casuals). The treatments are authored by Jeanmonod (17 genera/32 species), Schlüssel (3/15), both of them together (1/5), or both plus Isabelle Chapalay, a former master student at the Geneva Conservatoire botanique (3/5). Half of the genera are represented by a single species, the largest one, *Crepis,* by nine. All taxa are carefully described and discussed, and their Corsican distribution is mapped. Whereas few users will read the lengthy specimen enumerations in small print upon which the maps are based, illustration remain a major asset of this Flora. Many grayscale photographs showing overall habit are included, plus excellent close-ups of analytical details such as flowering/fruiting heads, achenes, and sometimes leaves or underground parts. Nomenclatural types are often but not consistently indicated, mostly for generic and Linnaean names; in the special case of the subendemic *Crepis bellidifolia* Loisel., originally decribed from Corsica, the holotype has been traced and is illustrated. No nomenclatural novelties are included, disregarding the odd new name *Muralis* (p. 47) used for a genus that is not accepted nor indexed – which upon closer inspection proves to be an error for *Mycelis*.

This being a critical Flora, it is natural that the authors did not follow slavishly any established taxonomic frame but have developed their own classification scheme, based on the most recent published results and on their own study of (mostly Corsican) plant material, and supported by arguments set out in considerable detail. In view of the speed with which generic boundaries and names are currently changing – changes that are usually triggered by new molecular studies – it is gratifying to find that the *Med-Checklist* solutions, five years later, are still considered as valid in all but one case (*Lagoseris* segregated from *Crepis*). At species and subspecies level, I noticed two divergences, one upgrade (*Tragopogon porrifolius* subsp. *eriospermus* to *T. eriospermus*) and one downgrade (*Cichorium pumilum* to *C. endivia* subsp. *pumilum*), both of them borderline cases in which rank is open to discussion.

A most commendable feature of the work is the thoroughness with which the authors have tracked down the sources of unconfirmed records that haunt the literature, being all but impossible to eradicate. They managed to eliminate convincingly no less than 8 species and one subspecies, and even one whole genus *(Scorzoneroides),* that have been cited for Corsica in error. W.G.

9. Dmitar R. PEEV (ed.) – Flora na Republika Bălgarija [Flora reipublicae bulgaricae], **11** (Stefan I. KOŽUHAROV † & Minčo E. ANČEV, ed.)**.** – Akademično Izdatelstvo "Prof. Marin Drinov", Sofija, 2012 (ISBN 978-954-322-522-4). 527 pages, 97 plates of drawings, inset folded map, hard cover.

Ever since volume 10 of this important S European national Flora came out, botanists have been anxiously awaiting its continuation; at long last, after 17 years, their patience has been rewarded. As I then wrote (in OPTIMA Newslett. 31: (7). 1997), Bulgaria has been going through difficult times. Beholding this impressive new book, it is my hope and wish that it signals the end of these difficulties, at least of the worst ones.

Volume 11 comprises the treatment of three families – one *(Morinaceae)* with a single species, the other two *(Dipsacaceae, Campanulaceae)* medium-sized – and one subfamily, *Asteroideae* of the *Compositae*: 262 species in total, 241 native and 21 naturalised aliens. The two largest genera are *Campanula* (34 species) and *Achillea* (22), followed at a distance by half a dozen with 11 to 14 species: *Anthemis, Artemisia, Inula, Knautia, Scabiosa,* and *Senecio.* Even though several of the *Compositae* treatments were written well over 20 years ago (their author, Bogdan Kuzmanov, died in 1991), taxonomic frame adopted for that family is surprisingly modern: the Med-Checklist classification of genera, even though still unfamiliar to many, has been adopted throughout. Minčo Ančev's *Campanulaceae* and Ana Petrova's *Dipsacaceae* are less convincing in this respect. The delimitation of *Scabiosa,* in particular, is incompatible with modern concepts of that genus. As to *Campanula,* it is hard to predict the conclusions that will eventually be drawn from ongoing large-scale molecular studies, but if one is to keep that genus reasonably wide yet natural, it is not tenable to exclude from it splits such as *Diosphaera* (here unaccountably merged with *Trachelium*) and Balkan *"Symphyandra";* but where are we to draw the line?

As to the arrangement and presentation of the data, the editors have managed to adhere faithfully to the traditionally high standards of the Flora. The time gap of publication did not, I am glad to say, result in a break of general style and appearance, and even the details have remained unchanged. Same as last time, when the title was altered to reflect the country's new denomination, the Preface (but nothing else) is bilingual, Bulgarian and English; and the Bulgarian-to-Latin dictionary of technical terms – invaluable for foreign botanists who want to use the work – has also been maintained. Two new *Campanula* taxa, one subspecies and one nothospecies, are described (in Latin) and validly named in an Appendix, which also lists 17 nomenclatural novelties (new combinations and/or rank transfers) at infraspecific ranks (one subspecies, 15 varieties, one forma). As these combinations are validated twice in the same volume, in the main text and in the Appendix, cross-references in both places would have been useful, for indexers in particular (in June 2013, when this review was written, none of the new names had yet made it to the IPNI database). Incidentally, *Flora of the Republic of Bulgaria* is exceptional if not unique among contemporary floristic publications in that it persists adopting infraspecific taxa at more than one rank.

The illustrations are one of the Flora's major assets. They are due to the skills of Dimitar Vlaev, the artist who has produced the drawings, all based on actual (but unspecified) specimens, for this and many previous volumes. All indigenous species and some invasive aliens have been thus portrayed. When more than one subspecies is present in Bulgaria, subspecies names are sometimes but not always mentioned in the caption; if they are not, one may probably

assume that the drawing is of the "typical" subspecies, but I was unable to find confirmation for that assumption.

All being well, the next, twelfth volume will bring this Flora to completion. Being devoted to the remainder of *Compositae,* i.e. the *Carduoideae* with their two large and critical tribes, *Cardueae* and *Cichorieae,* it will no doubt be a very sizeable book. May I express the hope and wish, doubtless shared by many, that it can be produced and printed in a timely fashion, more so than its predecessor now before us. W.G.

10. Mostafa ASSADI, Ali Asghar MAASSOUMI & Valiolah MOZAFFARIAN (ed.) – Flora of Iran. No. **74:** *Salicaceae,* by Ali Asghar MAASSOUMI, Mostafa ASSADI & A. HEMMATI (ISBN 978-964-473-334-5); No. **76:** *Lamiaceae,* by Ziba JAMZAD (ISBN 978-964-473-357-4). – Research Institute of Forests and Rangelands, [Tehran], 2011; 2012. 90, 1068 pages; 11, 303 figures (line drawings); 38, 615 maps; paper (**76** also as hardcover).

Since my last review of this major national Flora, "only" two further issues have been published (N° 75, announced for *Amaranthaceae,* has apparently not been distributed to date); but what issues! The smaller of the two, *Salicaceae,* is already quite substantial with its 30 *Salix* species, many of them endemic, plus 6 infraspecific hybrids and two species of poplars. Those who have been thinking of willows as a speciality of central and northern Europe will do well to reconsider.

The really impressive achievement, however, is Ziba Jamzad's *Lamiaceae* treatment: the single most sizeable issue so far, of the largest family yet treated as a single unit (other major families, such as *Compositae, Leguminosae* and *Caryophyllaceae,* are being published by bits). By sheer page number, this treatment exceeds the by itself exceptional production of the whole previous year. The number of accepted species (408, not counting interspecific hybrids) is the highest ever, by far.

The *Labiatae* (as the family should better have been named for consistency, as previously the same Flora had used *Umbelliferae* in preference to *Apiaceae*) are, moreover, among the most complex and taxonomically most critical members of the country's flora. To witness, they include 3 of Iran's most species-rich genera: *Nepeta* (79), *Salvia* (61), and *Stachys* (38); as well as the validation of the names of 11 new taxa (5 species, 1 nothospecies, 2 subspecies, 3 varieties) plus 5 new combinations or rank transfers, concerning the genera *Ajuga, Dracocephalum, Lamium, Nepeta, Phlomis, Salvia, Stachys,* and *Teucrium,* which add to several such novelties published by the author beforehand, in separate papers. To note that, in agreement with the new tenets of phylogenetic systematics, the formerly verbenaceous genus *Vitex* is now treated as a member of *Labiatae,* in a separate subfamily *Viticoideae.*

All in all a splendid achievement, in which the author, and Iranian botany in general, may take justified pride. The plentiful and excellent, mostly full-page original drawings of 300+ species, many of which had rarely or never been illustrated before, adds to the usefulness of the book for those unfamiliar with farsi language and/or Arabic script. W.G.

Popular Books

11. H. Walter LACK & Kathrin GROTZ (ed.) – Floras Schätze – die Erfassung der grünen Welt. Flora's treasures – recording the green world. – Botanisches Museum Berlin-Dahlem, Berlin, 2012. 132 pages, photographs (mostly in colour), facsimiles, drawings, graphs, maps; laminated flexible cover.

The Berlin Botanical Museum's special exhibition "Flora's treasures" opened at the end of April 2012, to last 10 months. It was devoted to Floras with a capital F; that is, to written books inventorying and describing all plants of a given area; and it aptly features as its logo a colourful image of the homonymous Roman goddess, a beautifully preserved mural from Pompeii. This may well have been the first time ever that Floras – the way they are prepared, written and published – form the acknowledged subject of a major public display.

The present, entirely bilingual (German and English) slim volume was published as a companion to that exhibition, with the second half serving as the latter's catalogue. Its first portion is a loose series of ten essays, to serve as a general frame. It starts with Lack's introduction of Flora writing as a never ending synthesis – an implicit homage to Lincoln Constance, who coined the phrase "unending synthesis" to qualify systematic botany as a whole. A text on keys for identification follows, and thereupon accounts of exploratory field campaigns in Cuba and China; Raus's review of Greek Floras (the only item of immediate concern from a Mediterranean perspective); an essay on Floras documenting changes over time, taking Berlin as example; and a somewhat idealistic outlook on future Flora writing as a communal, Wikipedia-style exercise.

All in all an attractive, well presented and generously illustrated assemblage of texts and documents relevant to the general subject, Floras. Take a look, you may find inspiration, one way or another, for your own work. W.G.

Floristic Inventories and Checklists

12. Alain DOBIGNARD & Cyrille CHATELAIN – Index synonymique de la flore d'Afrique du Nord. Volume **4,** *Dicotyledoneae, Fabaceae à Nymphaeaceae.* [*Publication hors-série* N° 11c.] – Conservatoire et Jardin botaniques, Genève, 2012 (ISBN 978-2-8277-0126-1). 431 pages, greyscale illustrations (mostly photographs), drawing, table, map; laminated flexible cover.

When reviewing the first three volumes of which I have qualified as "one of the most important works in Mediterranean plant science published in recent years" (see OPTIMA Newslett. 40: (12-14). 2011), I explained extensively its coverage, data content and way of presentation. This I am not going to repeat.

Volume 4 is the penultimate planned, with volume 5 scheduled to be published in 2013 (perhaps already available but not yet received when these lines are being written). The dicot families treated here, alphabetically arranged, are those beginning with the letters *F* through *N*. This means that all those included here have been covered in vol. 3 and 4 of *Med-Checklist,* provided the same family name are accepted, and mostly, as it happens, even when the names differ (e.g., *Labiatae* vs. *Lamiaceae, Leguminosae* vs. *Fabaceae*). The only exceptions I am aware of are *Nitrariaceae* (to be included in *Zygophyllaceae* for *Med-Checklist* purposes), *Grossulariaceae* and *Hydrangeaceae* (there to remain in *Saxifragaceae*). Other unfamiliar family names here adopted, resulting from recent splits, include *Gisekiaceae* and *Lophiocarpaceae,* whereas conversely, *Globulariaceae,* to be merged with *Plantaginaceae,* will be treated in the final volume.

As mentioned in a small chapter on statistics, this volume treats 34 families, 219 genera, 1519 species and 275 infraspecific taxa; which brings the number of species so far accepted to a total of 5893.

As in previous volumes, several nomenclatural novelties have been validated her e and are explained in an apposite addenda section, by Dobignard. This time, all eight such novelties – concerning the genera *Lathyrus, Ononis, Tripodion, Erodium* (3),

Marrubium, and *Sideritis* – involve a change in rank to that of subspecies. The Addenda furthermore include interesting novel considerations, such as the resurrection of Pomel's long forgotten monotypic genus *Maropsis,* to accommodate the peculiar former *Sideritis deserti.* A whole series of entries is based on Guittonneau's comments on *Erodium* taxa. With these, I disagree in one particular case, the taxon renamed *Erodium crassifolium* subsp. *hirtum.* On the basis of the criteria mentioned, and also of ecology, the plants of Cyprus (*E. crassifolium* s. str.) and Crete do not differ for those of Egypt (*E. hirtum*) and neighbouring countries, but are unlike those from Morocco. The latter must bear the name ***E. crassifolium*** subsp. ***maroccanum*** (Maire) **comb. & stat. nov.** (*E. hirtum* var. *maroccanum* Maire in Bull. Soc. Hist. Nat. Afrique N. 14: 135. 1923; *E. maroccanum* (Maire) Förther & Podlech 2001, non *E. marocanum* Batt. & Pit. 1918).

One may spot a few minor imperfections that are not compatible with the idea that the text has been generated directly from the database. To give one example: The running head for each page includes mention of the family and genus for the initial text portion – but on p. 351 (*Teucrium*), unaccountably, the family *Cordiaceae* has displaced *Lamiaceae.* Curiously, in vol. 3 the header *Cordiaceae,* which would rightfully belong to p. 353, also appears on p. 351 – hardly a mere coincidence? W.G.

13. Aco TEOFILOVSKI – Prilozi za florata na Republika Makedonija [Contributions to the flora of the Republic of Macedonia]. – Privately published, Skopje, 2011 (ISBN 978-9989-57-741-3). 142 pages, 10 plates with 67 colour photographs, map, 117 distribution maps, 5 tables; paper.

The title of this work is fully appropriate for its first portion, up to p. 35; but it obscures that fact that the second and larger part, pp. 36-104, is a fully fledged analytical checklist of a particular area, Suva Gora. More on the latter follows further down.

The initial chapter assembles new, specimen-based locality data for 120 taxa, among which 15 (8 species, 4 subspecies, 2 varieties and 1 forma) are first records for the Republic Makedonija – one of them, *Rubus wahlbergii,* being new for the entire Balkan Peninsula (its nearest occurrences are in the Czech Republic). Along with the new records, earlier literature data for the taxon (if any) are cited, and maps showing the new and old localities, marked by different symbols, are provided for all but two of them. Colour photographs (apparently computer printouts of fairly good quality) illustrate several of the more spectacular additions (there are six of them for the *Rubus* alone). The corresponding list of references at the end, which runs over 6 full pages (105-110), looks like an all but exhaustive bibliography of the country's floristic literature.

Suva Gora, the book's main subject, is a complex of mountains at hills to the southeast of Tetovo, peaking at Mt. Dupen Kamen (1857 m). The area was poorly known previously, with merely 227 taxa recorded in the literature (4 of which are dismissed as unconfirmed). Teofilovski adds no less than 1132 taxa, bringing the known flora up to a total of 1307 species (1355 taxa). In addition to the checklist proper, statistic tables of life forms and chorotypes are provided.

This is a valuable work, but (like many other publications from this remote part of the Balkans) it is fairly rare, only 50 copies having been produced. W.G.

14. Andrej Vasil'evič ENA – Prirodnaja flora krymskogo poluostrova [A. V. Yena – Spontaneous flora of the Crimean Peninsula]. – Orianda, Simferopol', 2012 (ISBN 978-966-1691-61-1). 232 pages, 2 maps, 1 graph, 4 tables, 6 portraits; laminated flexible cover.

The main body of this slim and unpretentious book is an annotated checklist of the Crimea, running from p. 40 through 200. It lists 2536 accepted vascular plant taxa (species and subspecies) in total, singling out endemics, aliens, and a few cases of extinction. Apart from an utterly streamlined 6-lines abstract in English (p. 5) the text is written entirely in Russian.

The checklist proper is preceded by 5 introductory chapters characterising the territory covered, outlining the history of its floristic exploration, discussing alien categories and species concepts, and explaining the conventions used. At the end, there is a statistic summary of the Crimean vascular flora with its 760 genera of 127 families (defined and named according to the new, molecular-based concepts of phylogenetic systematics). Predictably, *Asteraceae* are by far the largest family, whereas among genera, perhaps surprisingly *Carex* with 39 taxa comes on top, preceding *Astragalus, Euphorbia* and *Taraxacum*.

At the end of each genus follows a tripartite explanatory section of Notes, Additions and Deletions. This is an incredibly informative if highly condensed assemblage of data, fully referenced to a final bibliography with no less than 628 items. Interestingly, the excluded taxa, on average, outnumber the newly added ones. This fact, together with taxonomic mergers mentioned in the Notes where synonymies are given, accounts for the recent tendency of the taxon number to decrease. There is an interesting table in the historical chapter, according to which the number of taxa of the Crimean flora steadily from Pallas's initial 978 of 1795 to Golubev's 2775 of 1996, which number has been gradually eroded to the current total, by almost 10 %, through Yena's studies. Clearly a tidying-up of the historical ballast of errors was badly needed, and the new checklist has undertaken that task with remarkable success.

One does not usually expect to find illustrations in a work of this kind, so it is appropriate to mention the presence of portraits (some not previously published) of the fathers of Crimean botany: Pallas, Marschall von Bieberstein, Steven, Busch, Rubtsov, and Golubev, not to forget Yena's own image that appears on the back cover. W.G.

15. Georgij A. LAZ'KOV & Bejšekan A. SULTANOVA – Kadastr flory Kyrgyzstana. Sosudistye rastenija [Alexander SENNIKOV (ed.), Checklist of vascular plants of Kyrgyzstan]. [*Norrlinia* (ISSN 0780-3214), **24**]. – Botanical Museum, Finnish Museum of Natural History, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, 2011 (ISBN 978-952-10-7588-9). 166 pages, map, portrait photograph; paper.

Kyrgyzstan is a Central Asian republic, formerly part of The Soviet Union, situated to the SE of Kazakhstan. Its national Flora, *Flora Kirgizskoj SSR,* was published between 1948 and 1970, in 11 volumes plus 2 supplements. According to Sennikov's English editorial foreword (on which this review mostly relies), it is considered "of inferior academic quality" and is "completely obsolete and unreliable". No other inventory of Kyrgyzstan's vascular flora exists, as the present text, originally intended as part of a national biodiversity register, could not be published locally. It is fortunate that the Botanical Museum in Helsinki accepted to host it in its serial *Norrlinia.*

The checklist is based on literature, on the holdings of the herbarium of the authors' institution (FRU) at the Kirghiz capital, Bishkek, and on their reassessment of the taxa of the major families and genera of the flora. It lists 3869 species, including 71 aliens: the first and only reliable figure that exists for the Kirghiz vascular flora. Due to an exhaustive reference list, it also serves as guide to the published information of Kirghiz floristics.

The editor, apologetically, comments that the genus and family concepts here used

do not reflect "recent advance of molecular phylogeny", being "at least 20 years old and partly obsolete". I wonder: might this not rather be a strong point? Let me challenge Sennikov's idea by proposing a bet: that 50 years from now the taxonomy here used will be less at variance with the then prevailing taxonomic tenets than the scheme he currently prefers. I wish him long life, so he may be able to find out who won. W.G.

Regional Studies

16. Toni BUIRA I CLUA, Rafel BALADA I LLASAT & Claude SASTRE – Plantes vasculars del quadrat UTM 31T EH04 Estany de Salses. [*ORCA: Catàlegs floristics locals,* **18.**] – Institut d'Estudis Catalans, Secció de Ciències Biològiques, Barcelona, 2012 (ISBN 978-84-9965-129-3). 71 pages, maps, graphs; paper.

ORCA'a series of local floristic inventories, each devoted to one unit square of the Catalan mapping grid, is thinning out; but the flow has not stopped completely. Number 17 was published in 2008 (see OPTIMA Newslett. 39: (18). 2010); four years later comes the next following one. It is peculiar in that it is the first to deal with a territory that lies outside of Spain and, moreover, is only partly relevant to the Catalan territory as defined in the Floras and mapping project for the area. The Etang de Salses, as it is called in French, is a large, brackish coastal lagoon separated from the Mediterranean Sea by a bar of dunes, which for its northern half belongs to the harbour of Leucate (where Occitan French is spoken) and only for its southern portion to the Catalan Port del Barcarès. This sandy bar, the flora of which is the all but exclusive subject of this pamphlet, is one of the areas in which the Montpellier botanists of old, including Gouan and the elder Candolle used to botanise. Most of it is now completely built over, or heavily transformed by seaside resorts, or covered with mounds of mud dredged out of the lagoon.

The surprising result of the present study is that the flora of this tiny strip of badly mistreated land is still quite rich – or perhaps, speaking in terms of species number, richer than ever before. The authors list 652 species plus 15 additional subspecies, 667 taxa in all. Discounting the 151 species that are only known from the Occitan territory (where a small area with remnants of coastal maquis on calcareous bedrock exists), and moreover 36 cultivated species, which best escape, the wild Catalan flora present still encompasses 480 taxa, only two of which are presumed extinct. True, many of these are widespread, often weedy and sometimes exotic plants; yet according to the analysis here presented over ¾ are Mediterranean in the strict or wider sense.

It is surprising that no mention is made of existing or needed conservation measures. A single sentence, under the subtitle "Former floristic studies", refers to the fact that the whole of the Salses-Leucate lagoon, including the near totality of the study area, has been classified as a Natura 2000 site, and inventoried accordingly prior to 2008. True, conservationists have focused principally on the 280 bird species known from the lagoon. But might not plants, too, profit from that attention? W.G.

17. Werner GREUTER – Results of the Seventh "Iter Mediterraneum" in the Peloponnese, Greece, May to June 1995. (Occasional Papers from the Herbarium Greuter – N° **1.**) [Bocconea (ISSN 1120-4060), **25**]. – Herbarium Mediterraneum Panormitanum, Palermo, 2012 (ISBN 978-88-7915-025-5). 127 pages, greyscale photographs, maps, table; paper.

The material gathered by the participants to the VII Iter Mediterraneum had

been lying ever since, safely but virtually untouched, in a vault of the Patras Herbarium (UPA), following the departure to Athens of the botanist in charge of them. I had a first look at that material in November 2011, then in April 2011 had it transferred to the Palermo Herbarium (PAL) where I could start working on it, meaning: identify and label it, sort and despatch duplicate series, and prepare the results for publication. The work, with interruption, took the better part of a year. The first and second set are now in PAL-Gr and UPA, the subsequent ones in B, SALA, MA, BRNM, W, RNG, BEO, etc.

In conformity with the declared goal of OPTIMA's Itinera the Greek organisers ensured that ill-known, not well investigated areas would be explored in the first place. The fact that I found no less than 10 taxa among the material that, in my opinion, were new when collected is therefore less surprising than it might appear. Only one of them *(Achillea occulta)* had been named in the meantime; the other 9 (7 species, 2 subspecies), in *Allium, Asperula, Ballota, Klasea, Lolium, Minuartia, Nepeta, Oenanthe,* and *Trifolium,* are newly described here.

The booklet, which also includes a concise, synoptic enumeration of all Itinera Mediterranea to have taken place to date, can be obtained for free (upon refund of mailing costs) by OPTIMA members in good standing. Just write! W.G.

18. Ulrich KULL – Kreta. [*Sammlung geologischer Führer* (ISSN 0343-737X)*,* **107.**]. – Borntraeger, Stuttgart, 2012 (ISBN 978-3-443-15095-2). VI + 320 pages, colour photographs, maps, graphs; laminated flexible cover.

You may be surprised to find a geological field guide reviewed in this column. Well, there are good reasons – the one most immediately obvious being the presence of a sizeable botanical chapter (22 pages of tightly written text), in which the flora and principally the vegetation are described. Throughout the book you will find plant names mentioned ever and again, particularly in the section that details itineraries for 32 advised (geological) excursions. A significant proportion of the colour photographs show characteristic vegetation types or feature individual plants, including several rare endemics. The two most remarkable are close-ups of that extremely rare, inconspicuous and difficult-to-spot plant, *Horstrissea dolinicola,* one of the island's two surviving endemic plant genera. My only regret is the lack of an index to scientific names of organisms.

The author, an all-round naturalist, has acted as a botanist all along his academic career. Being now retired, he can afford to spend time on his other pet disciplines, among which geology is prominent; but even in the purely geological chapters you will sense his biological heartbeat, e.g. when he writes about the fossil elephants, rhinos and deer of the Pleistocene. One of the most useful aspects of this pocket guide is the incredibly thorough coverage of all kind of primary literature sources. Even in botany, I found the citation of a relevant paper I had missed! Other domains, with which I am less familiar, are equally well referenced, so that the cumulative bibliographic list, at the end, takes 33 pages. W.G.

Excursions

19. Ina DINTER – Insel Kárpathos mit Insel Saría. Botanische Studienreise vom 31. Mai – 14. Juni 2011. – Privately assembled/printed, Ostfildern, 2011. 90 sheets + CD-ROM, maps, figures, colour photographs, tables; paper, plastic front cover sheet.

20. Ina DINTER – Nordostgriechenland mit Insel Samothráki. Botanische Studienreise vom 1. – 15. Mai 2012. – Privately assembled/printed, Ostfildern,

2012. v + 101 pages + CD-ROM, maps, figures, colour photographs, tables; paper, plastic front cover sheet.

The first of Dinter's excursion accounts that she let me have is of 1993, and many more have followed since. Their general style has not changed fundamentally during these 20 years, but they have become much more attractive in detail, thanks to modern text and graphic software, and printing facilities. The newer ones have a sophisticated graphical layout, are richly illustrated in colour, and are accompanied by a CD-ROM.

Two Mediterranean excursions, both to Greece, were undertaken in 2011. The trip to NE Greece and the island of Samothraki marginally overlaps with that of the previous year to NE Greece and Thasos, in so far as Mt. Pangeo and Mt. Falakro where visited on both; but for the remainder they differ, the 2011 one extending eastward to Thrace whereas the 2010 one had been limited to E Macedonia. The total number of species listed is 517.

The excursion to Karpathos was a second edition, following by and large the itinerary of the 1998 one (see OPTIMA Newslett. 34: (8-9). 1999). This time, the account includes the customary cumulative species list at the end, contrary to the 1998 edition which, at least for my copy, lacks that item. The 382 species observed or gathered include an interesting discovery: *Ferulago humilis,* an eastern species not so far recorded from Karpathos. Another umbel, shown in a photograph on p. 71 with the attribute "unknown" then tentatively assigned to *Seseli gummiferum,* is in fact *Hellenocarum multiflorum.* The CD-ROM is particularly well stocked: apart from the usual colour photographs it includes a searchable copy of the account itself, label copies for the collected specimens, and a variety of other useful documents. Part of the specimens were collected, and photographs taken, the year before (2011) during Dinter's preparatory trip to the same localities. W.G.

Trees and Shrubs

21. Tiziano FRATUS, con contributi di Francesco Maria RAIMONDO e Giuseppe BARBERA **– Il bosco di Palermo.** Itinerari alla scoperta dei maggiori alberi esotici d'Europa. – Meridiana, Firenze, 2012 (ISBN 978-88-6007-217-7). 127 pages, colour photographs; paper.

This book is essentially a hymn to a single tree species; perhaps essentially a single clone of a tree, as – propagated by cuttings – it pervades the city of Palermo in the manner of a fragmented forest, jumping from garden to garden, park to park, square to square. The main author, a writer enamoured in monumental trees, has presented in an exhibition in the Palermo Botanic Garden his many photographs of that tree, which also illustrate the present small but precious volume.

The tree's name, presently, is *Ficus macrophylla,* first mentioned by René Louiche Desfontaines in a plant list of the Paris botanic garden, then three years later, in 1807, formally described by Christiaan Hendrik Persoon (it does not, as Fratus erroneously believes, appear already in Desfontaines *Flora atlantica*). The species grows wild in NE Australia, with one population (sometimes regarded as a separate subspecies) endemic to Lord Howe Island. It probably reached Palermo from France, to be raised by Vincenzo Tineo in the botanic garden in the 1840ies, under the erroneous name *Ficus nervosa* under which it had arrived. Antonino Borzì, a subsequent director of the Palermo Garden, used that same tree, in 1897, to describe a new species: *Ficus magnolioides.* It has been claimed that it corresponds to the Lord Howe Island plant, which may or may not be distinct from the E Australian population.

Fratus's telling photographs and texts, lined up along three imaginary itineraries through the city of Palermo, enliven the

book. The botanists' interest, however, will be raised principally by Raimondo's narrative of the history of the Palermo Garden and its role as an early centre of plant introduction and diffusion. Did you know that the mandarin, *Citrus reticulata* (syn.: *C. deliciosa*), was first introduced to the European mainland in Palermo? W.G.

Applied Botany

22. John H. WIERSEMA & Blanca LEÓN – World economic plants. A standard reference. Second edition. – CRC Press, Boca Raton, 2013 (ISBN 978-1-4398-2142-8). XXXVI + 1300 pages, 2 figures, 3 tables; laminated hard cover.

Appropriately declared to be a "standard reference" in the subtitle, this bulky and heavy volume is indeed an unequalled mine of information on economically important vascular plants and their wild relatives. Its coverage is world-wide, even though perhaps somewhat more complete for the New World than for other continents, but excludes avascular cryptogams. Plants with a negative impact on agricultural yield, such as major weeds (2136 species), are included, as are all individual species mentioned in the CITES appendices (708 species) and large number of ornamentals with some economic importance (5361 species) – the latter category being the most sizeable and the most difficult to delimit objectively.

All taxa (species, subspecies, varieties, and some formae) are listed alphabetically by their accepted scientific name, with cross-referenced synonyms inserted in the same sequence. Family affiliation is given; it follows APG III for flowering plants, but familiar alternatives are mentioned. The accepted taxonomy is essentially modern, aimed at recognising monophyletic units, even though recent name changes based on molecular studies, particularly when disruptive with respect to current practice, are accepted only when backed by "compelling taxonomic or nomenclatural arguments". Synonymy is far from exhaustive, being limited to names accepted elsewhere in recent literature. Cultivars are not mentioned, although relationship to specific cultivar groups is sometimes commented upon. Data categories given for each recognised taxon include known uses (16 use classes, with 113 subclasses), range of occurrence as native, naturalized or casual, and common names. The latter data field is particularly impressive, as plant designations in 20 languages using the Latin alphabet and 7 more that use other alphabets are listed, the latter both in their original and in Romanized form. Thanks to apposite indexes (562 pages, i.e., almost half the book!) the work can be used as a unique multi-language botanical dictionary.

World economic plants is a spin-off from USDA's Germplasm Resoures Information Network (GRIN), a gigantic database with c. 100,000 scientific names primarily related to the holdings of the US's National Plant Germplasm System. These names are continuously vetted in agreement with the current rules of plant nomenclature, on which John Wiersema, a member of long standing of the editorial committee for the International Code of Nomenclature is one of the world's leading experts. The contents here printed are available identically (though with the option of future updates), for free, in a fully searchable online version at http://www.ars-grin.gov/cgi-bin/npgs/html/taxecon.pl?language=en.

This is a second edition. The first, by John Wiersema alone, was published in 1999. Since then, the number of accepted taxa has increased by 30% to the current figure of 12,235, with 3500 listed synonyms, and the number of names held in the GRIN database, concomitantly, augmented by ⅔. Modern databasing techniques, enhanced by new generations of ever more powerful processor chips, have assisted human brainpower to produce this remarkable achievement.

There is little doubt that the next edition, if still printed, will exceed the size of one manageable volume. Whether in future times skilled botanical brains will still be of essence is less certain. W.G.

Bibliography and Biography

23. Suzanne AMIGUES – Théophraste d'Eresos. – Mimosa, Montpellier, 2013 (ISBN 978-2-9540076-4-9). 52 pages, colour photographs, drawings, maps; laminated flexible cover.

24. Suzanne AMIGUES – Θεόφραστος της Ερεσού. – Mimosa, Montpellier, 2013 (ISBN 978-2-9540076-5-6). 52 pages, colour photographs, drawings, maps; laminated flexible cover.

No: what Suzanne Amigues wrote at the request of Theophrastus (not the man himself, of course, but the homonymous cultural association of Eresos' citizens) is not a biography really. You may call it an essay, or a series of essays, their purpose being to make the father of botany take shape in the reader's mind, regain life in our imagination. You will find dates mentioned, occasionally, of particular episodes of relevance: his birth in Eresos, 372 B.C., still named Tyrtamos, and death in Athens, aged 85; his first short stay in Athens where he became the pupil of Aristotle, with whom at Plato's death (c. 347 B.C.) he returned to his native island of Lesbos or Mytilini that became their common field laboratory for some years; his appointment to Macedonia, in 343 B.C., as tutor of to-be Alexander the Great; Aristotle's call to join him at the Lyceum in Athens that he had founded in 335 B.C., which Theophrastus was destined to lead after his master's death in 322 B.C. There are other hard facts and figures, too. Think of Theophrastus (whose new name, awarded by Aristotle, means "divine spoken") as of the famous author of 200 writings (papers and books, we would now say), with the equivalent of a top-level Hirsch index at which, had he known, he would have sneered; writings that at his death came to, and were burnt with, the famous library in Alexandria in Egypt, so that most of them are lost to us forever.

But all this is not the essence of what Amigues wants to convey. She knows her literature, every bit of it, but she also knows and loves Lesbos, and that's what makes the unique mix of her prose. She looks at the island, Eresos in particular, in the light of Theophrastus' and other classical texts; she thinks of his adolescence as a fuller's son and companion to shepherds and olive growers, and finds traces of his youth in his mature writings; she ferrets out the master's discreet apology of the ill-famed Lesbian women with their beauty contests, not written down by himself but quoted by a contemporary of his; and she dwells at length on the wondrous discoveries of exotic plants brought in from Egypt or observed by Alexander's companions on his conquest of south-west Asia. I will leave it at that: discover the remainder on your own. Just let me add that the illustrations are remarkably well chosen, and some are particularly meaningful to me: Theophrastus' statue in the Gymnasium in the Palermo Botanic Garden, just beside my office door, under whose benevolent eyes (are they really unseeing?) I pass several times a day; and the three concluding photographs, showing Theophrastus' date palm at its classical Cretan location of Vai. W.G.

25. Stefan STANEV – Beležiti bălgarski botanici. Zvezdi gasnat v planinata. Razkazi za našite redki rastenija. Treto dopălmeno izdanie. – Paisij Hilendarski, Plovdiv, 2013 (ISBN 978-954-423-821-6). 503 pages, black-and-white photographs, 32 plates of photographs, mostly in colour; laminated hard cover.

These are two books in one. The first (pp. 5-294), *Prominent Bulgarian botanists,* comes as the third revised edition of a book originally published in 1982. It comprises the well illustrated biographies of 22 leading Bulgarian representatives of various domains of botanical sciences, 8 of whom, deceased after 1982, are additional to the first edition. Some of them, of my own generation, were good friends, unforgotten, such as Emanuel Palamarev, Stefan Kožuharov, and Bogdan Kuzmanov. I shall never forget how Bogdan in 1972, from the passenger seat of my Citroen 2CV, addressed in eloquent English some Bulgarian milicija agent who, lurking behind a bush, stopped us to fine me for speeding (good sport: the tariff was 2 leva); then signalled me to take off as soon as, exasperated, the man said "go to hell".

The second portion (pp. 295-499) is very different, definitely less academic in style: *Stars sinking on the mountains,* subtitled "stories of our rare plants", first published independently in 1975, is now in its sixth, revised edition. You must be fluent in Bulgarian to appreciate its contents, as scientific plant names are used but exceptionally (they do appear consistently, though, in the captions to the colour photographs). There are insets throughout the text, each with the portrait and biographical sketch of a correlated botanist. Many are Bulgarian, sometimes duplicating the fuller information given in the book's first portion, but foreign personalities prevail: Fischer, Janka, Dingler, Frivaldszky, Pančić, Velenovský, Stříbrný, Škorpil, Kellerer, Degen, and Adamović. Bulgarian royalty is represented by its "botanical" kings Ferdinand I and Boris III, the respective patrons of *Saxifraga ferdinandi-coburgii* and *Abies borisii-regis.* W.G.

History and Arts

26. THÉOPHRASTE – Les causes des phénomènes végétaux. Livres **I** et **II.** Texte établi et traduit par Suzanne AMIGUES. [Collection des Universités de France (ISSN 0184-7155), série grecque, **490**]. – Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 2012 (ISBN 978-2-251-00574-4). pages [III]-XXXII + [1] + [2]-115 + [2]-237; paper.

After writing her marvellous, illustrated, semi-popular French version of Theophrastos' *History of plants* (see review in OPTIMA Newslett-39: (27-28). 2010), French philologist Suzanne Amigues, professor of old languages and expert of ancient Greek, has reverted to the hard core of her studies: the scholarly, critical translation of Theophrastos' writings, as they came down to us through the zealous copying of Medieval monks. Having completed her work on the eight genuine volumes of the *History* (or *Research on plants,* the title that she herself prefers), it was but natural that she should turn next to the second major work of the "father of botany", *Περὶ φυτῶν αἰτιῶν* or *De causis plantarum.* It is the lesser known of the two, which is but natural in view of its general theme. Whereas the *History* describes the plants, both indigenous and foreign, known in Greece in those times, the *Causes* observe and try to explain the manifestations of plant life: their life cycle (propagation, germination, growth and death), ecology, physiological and chemical properties. The observations are those of a keenly interested nature philosopher, one of those admirable minds who brought mankind to its early intellectual peak that was to stand unequalled for centuries; but the questions asked, in hindsight, were premature, and the answers far beyond what basic knowledge of the time, well over 2000 years before the bases of genetics and physiology were laid, permitted. So in conclusion, the *Causes* tell us more about the man who conceived them than about the plants causing his wonder.

Same as the *History,* the *Causes* probably originated as lecture notes, each forming the backbone of a teaching course, both offered in parallel to students at the Lyceum

in Athens. The text of six (of originally eight) volumes of the *Causes* is known with certainty; the two last being either lost or else, perhaps, were handed down to us under their own, different title. As a whole, the work uses a dual approach, dealing with the natural plant phenomena on one hand and, on the other, those induced by human skill (the Greek word is *τέχνη,* which means art and technique alike). The first two volumes now before us are devoted to the former aspect, even though a chapter on grafting is also included: volume I principally to reproduction, both by seed and vegetatively, volume II to the environment and its effects on plant life. The present translation parallels the previous one, with Greek original and French translation printed on opposite pages (2-115) with identical numbers (a somewhat unusual pagination), followed by an extensive section (118 pages) of explanatory endnotes in small print. W.G.

27. Pietro MAZZOLA & Francesco Maria RAIMONDO (ed.) – **Francesco Minà Palumbo. Iconografia della storia naturale delle Madonie. Iconography of the natural history of the Madonie.** – Sellerio, Palermo, "2011" [2012]. 139 + 387 + 305 + 377 pages, 13 figures + 185 + 134 + 181 colour plates (some on twin pages) in facsimile; 4 volumes, cloth with dust cover, in case.

Francesco Minà Palumbo (1814-1899) is a towering figure in Sicilian natural history of the 19th Century – even though he himself, ever a modest man, would hardly have accepted such a qualification. Born to a craftsman family of Castelbuono, a mountain borough of NC Sicily, he studied medicine at Palermo University, graduating as a surgeon in 1834. During the two following years he perfected his medical training in Naples, where he also pursued studies in zoology and acquired skills in taxidermy and naturalistic illustration (he contributed the illustrations to Briganti's *Historia fungorum regni neapolitani,* published posthumously in 1848). In 1837 he returned to spend the rest of his life in his hometown, as its appointed medical surgeon, devoting his unrelenting energy not only to health care and local politics but also to the study of natural history in its widest sense.

In 1844, Minà published his *Introduzione alla storia naturale delle Madonie,* a programmatic declaration of intent to produce, or help produce in a cooperative effort, a monographic inventory of the natural riches of his homelands. During his investigations of 60 years, he collected and studied the animals (insects, mollusks and vertebrates), plants, fungi, fossils, minerals and prehistoric artefacts found in the area. While hampered by hid isolation, far apart from the centres of learning, overcome but partly by extensive correspondence and the acquisition of literature, he managed to produce an amazingly diverse printed output, including inventories of butterflies then Lepidoptera, Hemiptera, and birds. He also contributed substantially to the work of others, e.g. Inzenga's *Funghi siciliani* (1865-1869). He filled his whole house with his collections, library and archives, turning it into a museum that he opened liberally for study by his many learned visitors.

At his death his collections went to his nephew and adopted son, Michele Morici, reputed to have watched them jealously. Eventually, his heirs donated them to the city of Castelbuono which, in 1991, made them the core of the appositely created Museo naturalistico "Francesco Minà Palumbo". Sadly the zoological specimens, with few exceptions, are no longer extant, having fallen victim to insect attack and inadequate storage during a series of displacements following their donation. However, along with the non-organic material (fossils, minerals, artefacts), most of the about 9000 herbarium specimens have survived. It is ironic that, in spite of his keen

botanical efforts, Minà never came to publish anything botanical outside the field of applied botany and agronomy (such as culture techniques, cultivars and pests of manna ash, grapevine, almond, olive and pistachio trees). Even his manuscript Catalogue of the Madonie plants, repeatedly quoted by Strobl, is no longer extant.

The present four-volume work will remedy Minà's oblivion as a botanist and will restore his all but forgotten reputation as an allround biologist. In essence, it is the facsimile publication of Minà's *Iconografia della storia naturale delle Madonie,* a collection of 500 illustrations of plants and animals painted, mostly in watercolour, by Minà himself (except for some of the birds, due to artists working under his supervision, and a few butterflies). This unique iconography was originally intended to illustrate the *Storia naturale delle Madonie,* planned in conformity with Minà's 1844 *Introduzione,* which never found a publisher. When all efforts to have them printed had failed, Minà bound them up into 4 volumes (a few remaining loose), which to date remain in the property of the Morici family. Two of the bound volumes, brought together in vol. 2 of this edition, are of vascular plants (185 plantes); a third one (now vol. 4) depicts birds (181). The fourth plus loose items (vol. 3) are heterogeneous, assembling the oldest paintings; they feature fungi (11), plants (75), slugs (1), fishes (1), Orthoptera (4), butterflies and some moths (39), and mixed objects (3). Palaeontological, mineralogical and archaeological illustrations have been omitted, not being part of Minà's concept of the *Iconografia.*

The work's obvious fascination lies in the astounding quality and variety of Minà's illustrations, which taken as a whole are a monument of 19th Century naturalistic pictorial art and a unique documentation of the natural riches of the Madonie area. The accompanying texts have been written by two botanists, Mazzola and Raimondo, who are among Castelbuono's prominent citizens of today, or – for the non-botanical portions, left to the care of specialists – have been edited by them. They are fully bilingual (Italian and English), and are basically of two kinds: standardised data and comments accompanying each plate or figure, and a series of general chapters that make up vol. 1 or preface the individual sections of the other volumes. These chapters are very interesting and informative if somewhat discursive, and the preceding digest is solely based on them. All texts are fully referenced to a bibliography given chapter-wise (not an ideal solution), but unfortunately, a full bibliography of Minà's own writings is lacking.

Carolina Lo Nero has transposed (rather than slavishly translated) all texts into a fluent English that is pleasant to read and easily understood – often more so than the Italian original –, which makes one gladly condone the few observed inaccuracies. W.G.

28. Aldo Gerbino (ed.) – **Organismi. Il sistema museale dell'Università di Palermo.** – Plumelia, Bagheria, 2012 (ISBN 978-88-89876-43-5). 255 pages, many photographs and facsimiles, mostly in colour; paper with cover flaps.

Old universities, Italian ones in particular, own a cultural heritage more recent (and more northerly) centres of academia can only dream of. The question is: do they really value, even take pride in it? Or won't they rather feel it as a millstone round their neck, something for which they are held responsible and have to spend money on without due reward? Won't they, in a time when they undergo unfair and politically short-sighted financial restraints, tend to neglect culture in favour of what is now perceived as their core duties, teaching and research?

It is not for me to answer this question generally, of course. But for the individual case of Palermo University the answer has been given by the competent person, Rector

Roberto Lagalla – and it is the answer one would have hoped for. It comes in form of the present book, devoted entirely to the presentation of the University's treasures, public or hidden (or both). To begin with buildings, the best known is the 14th Century Palazzo Chiaromonte, better known as Palazzo Steri, which hosts the rectory and central University administration. Immediately behind it are lower structures, recently restored, which throughout the 17th Century served as the Inquisition's dungeons (no parallel intended: today's Palermo students receive kinder treatment). Many other old buildings were acquired by the expanding University in the course of time, among them the 16th Century Convent of the Repented, populated by former prostitutes who had taken vows, initially funded through a tax placed on their (as yet) non-repented likes, perhaps foreshadowing social security contribution; a funerary crypt and altar pertaining to the monastery was recently uncovered and restored.

In many ways the whole University, with its paintings, statues and institutional collections, is one huge museum. Within it one can find several individual museum units, open to a greater or lesser extent to researchers or the general public. Within the domain of natural history alone, there is a geological, a zoological, an astronomical and a mineralogical museum, one on the history of radiology, and collections of human anatomy and agricultural entomology; and of course there is the Botanic Garden and Herbarium Mediterraneum, presented by Franco Raimondo on pp. 112-123, arguably the most deeply rooted of all in the heart of Palermo's citizens. In my experience, no university institution is better apt to secure public awareness, hence public support – desperately needed in times when political greed and lack of conscience threaten the very roots of academia – than is a botanic garden.

The present volume results from the work of many and from many months of labour. It bears witness, not only of this particular University's cultural riches but of the pride it takes in them. To my mind, its most tangible quality is that it flags the positive attitude of all concerned toward collections. And again the University's Magnificent Rector (yes, indeed, the title Magnifico is still in use for Rectors, in Italy) comes to mind, Lagalla, a towering personality – physical, intellectual, oratorial – who has initiated this book and supported it throughout its genesis. He has also had the foresight to set up a common structure, "sistema museale", in which the various collections are meant to obtain a degree of autonomy, financially and administratively, from the department-based normal university set-up. It is my dear wish that, during his term of office, Lagalla makes this system truly operational, beginning with – why not – the largest of his crown jewels: the Botanic Garden with its herbarium and library. W.G.

Nomenclature

29. John MCNEILL, Fred R. BARRIE, William R. BUCK, Vincent DEMOULIN, Werner GREUTER, David L. HAWKSWORTH, Patrick S. HERENDEEN, Sandy KNAPP, Karol MARHOLD, Jefferson PRADO, Willem F. PRUD'HOMME VAN REINE, Gideon F. SMITH, John H. WIERSEMA & Nick J. TURLAND – International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants (Melbourne Code) adopted by the Eighteenth International Botanical Congress, Melbourne, Australia, July 2011. [Regnum Veg. (ISSN 0080-0694), **154.**] – Koeltz Scientific Books, Königstein, 2012 (ISBN 978-3-87429-425-6). xxx + 208 pages; hard cover.

30. Werner GREUTER & Rosa RANKIN RODRÍGUEZ (transl.) – Código Internacional de Nomenclatura para algas, hongos y plantas (Código de Melbourne), adoptado por el decimoctavo

Congreso Internacional de Botánica, Melbourne, Australia, julio de 2011. Preparado y editado por J. MCNEILL, Presidente, F. R. BARRIE, W. R. BUCK, V. DEMOULIN, W. GREUTER, D. L. HAWKSWORTH, P. S. HERENDEEN, S. KNAPP, K. MARHOLD, J. PRADO, W. F. PRUD'HOMME VAN REINE, G. F. SMITH, J. H. WIERSEMA, Miembros, y N. J. TURLAND, Secretario del Comité Editorial. – Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid, 2012 (ISBN 978-84-00-09653-3). XXXIV + 213 pages; laminated flexible cover with flaps.

Botanical nomenclature (that in fact we may no longer call "botanical") has been brought back on orbit at the XVIII International Botanical Congress in Melbourne. In 1999 it had been grounded by the reactionary St Louis Congress, to remain stuck in virtual immobility in 2005 at Vienna. Twelve years have been lost for no gain, but forget it: it is the future that counts. At and after Melbourne nomenclature has made the headlines by placing electronic publication on equal footing with hard-copy printing; by providing for the mandatory registration of fungal names, while endorsing the study of similar provisions for plants and algae; and by adopting the principle of lists of protected fungal names. The option to publish descriptions of new taxa in English, also widely noted and applauded, is a trivial change in comparison.

The new edition of the nomenclatural *Code,* now abbreviated *ICN* in preference to the unpalatable *ICNAFP,* is obligatory reading for anyone working on the systematics and taxonomy of algae, fungi, or plants. If you want to publish a paper in that domain you must use and cite the *Code's* new edition, which not only incorporates the mentioned changes plus a number of minor ones, but has also been reorganised substantially, especially with regard to the chapters on valid publication in which the numbering of articles and paragraphs has changed radically.

Due to the fact that it presents itself without most of the Appendices, responsible for ⅔ of the bulk of previous editions (and now supposed to form a volume of their own, but anyway more easily consulted online), the *Melbourne Code* is pleasingly slim and light. Additionally it profits from a new, modern graphical layout that definitely improves readability. I do hope that you will like it – but buy it anyway. Incidentally, the somewhat unusual combination of colours chosen for the cover – green print on a yellow background – is a homage to the Congress's host country, Australia, and to its national plant the wattle, now allowed, after much heated debate, to keep its Latin name *Acacia*.

The need of botanists worldwide to work with the *Melbourne Code* makes it desirable that it be speedily translated into other languages. This has already happened for Spanish (see above): it is good news that the Spanish edition became available within a week after the English version was released. Potential buyers will be grateful to the publishers for the very reasonable price – less than ¼ of what you have to pay for the English hard copy edition. Non-Spanish OPTIMA members may be interested to know that, according to reliable information, translation into Portuguese, Turkish and Italian are being actively prepared, not to mention several more exotic languages. W.G.

31. Nicholas TURLAND – The Code decoded. A user's guide to the International Code of Nomenclature for algae, fungi, and plants. [Regnum Veg. (ISSN 0080-0694), **155.**] – Koeltz Scientific Books, Königstein, 2013 (ISBN 978-3-87429-433-1). V + 169 pages, 19 figure (some in colour), 11 tables; hard cover.

Cooking recipes for plant names? Sort of – except that "plant" has become all but a non-word in the formerly botanical *Code.* The book has been written primarily, but not exclusively, for the benefit of newcomers to the field of nomenclature. As stated in the

preface, the "text ... is relatively simple" and "will fail to cover every rule and explain every circumstance": a wise choice, because otherwise an unwieldy, impractical manual would have resulted. To facilitate consultation, the individual chapters address specific, frequently asked questions, such as: how to publish a new name, how to find the correct name for a taxon, how to spell plant [sic!] names, how to change the *Code*. If your problem is different or more specific, refer to the three indexes: to subjects, provisions, and scientific names; but bear in mind that, as this is a first edition, they are neither perfect nor necessarily complete. An example: alternative names governed by Art. 36.2 are mentioned, if briefly and inadequately, on pp. 39 and 117, but there is no reference to either page in the subject index, and the provisions' index only mentions p. 117.

Much useful basic information is made readily accessible by this book, so unless you know the *Code* by heart anyway, you will love it. The insets outlining "best practice" in situations authors will usually face are certainly worth reading, even though (or rather: because) they do not limit themselves to what the *Code* recommends or mandates. "Do not honour yourself in the name of a new taxon or replacement name", while sound advice, is not based on any formal provision; nor can I find a written source for the [implicit and unintended] recommendation (pp. 36-37) to store unmounted holotypes in non-yellowing newspaper.

This is a fine and useful book by a competent author. The one point that worries me is that it has proved necessary to write it. The rules governing organismal nomenclature should be clear, straightforward, and easily understood – but they are not. The practice of nomenclature being addictive (I am speaking for myself, but know I am not alone) has resulted in its rules becoming ever more complex and challenging – comparable perhaps to a computer game. Sooner or later this will have to change. Scientific names – their formation and use, which is what the *Codes* are about – are not a playfield for aficionados but have serious practical, even economic importance. In the medium or long term, the bases of nomenclature must change. Databasing, the compulsory inventorying of extant and registration of new names and their basic parameters, is the answer. The techniques exist, but so far those governing the rules – biologists altogether, eventually – have been reluctant to put them to use. The progress achieved at the Melbourne Congress (see above) is no more than a first step in the right direction.

Somewhere toward the end of Turland's book there is a subtitle, referring to the *Code* as "Decreasingly ambiguous and increasingly detailed". Turland does not elaborate: he has written a book instead. Under present circumstances, the only appropriate answer. W.G.

Herbaria and Libraries

32. Fabio TAFFETANI (ed.) – Herbaria. Il grande libro degli erbari italiani. Per la ricerca tassonomica, la conoscenza ambientale e la conservazione del patrimonio – Nardini, Firenze, 2012 (ISBN 978-88-404-1190-3). XVI + 814 pages, photographs (mostly in colour), drawings, maps, graphs, tables; laminated flexible cover with flaps.

We are living in uncertain times, generally speaking. The future of natural history collections, in particular, teeters on a knife-edge. On the one hand, there is increased awareness, in academia and among the general public, of their great value; on the other, the general economic situation, particularly in countries like Italy, can at any moment pose a threat on their very survival. A book like the present one, with its incredible richness of well presented information, may perhaps tilt the balance in favour of at least some herbaria. So let me give it a warm welcome, not only because of its obvious intrinsic merits but also as flagship of our cause.

By its title, the *Big Book of Italy's Herbaria* reminds Kew's well known *Herbarium handbook,* by which some of the technical chapters have indeed been inspired. But whereas the *Handbook* was written primarily for curators and herbarium technicians, the *Big Book* addresses university students and their teachers in the first place. Its main body is arranged in 14 chapters, forming 3 sections of which the first encompasses all aspects of the collections themselves, the second describes collection-based research, and the third discusses their possible role as an instrument of nature conservation.

Do not be misled by the prominence that, consequent to the title, is given to the term "herbarium" throughout the book. In fact, any kind of collection of any organism once treated as plant, or part thereof, is taken into consideration. There are several chapters on "herbaria" of, e.g., fungi (should we now say fungaria, or rather mycotheques?), collections of wood and pollen samples, etc. Collections of live plants and germplasm banks are also covered, a special, sizeable chapter being devoted to Italy's botanic gardens. Unaccountably I cannot find any mention of culture collections; nor anything on the desirability, or need, to document permanently the gardens' holdings by preparing dried specimens: the idea of a "garden herbarium" has not yet, it seems, gained ground in Italy.

A sizeable Appendix (over 100 pages) is of particular relevance for plant taxonomists world-wide. It is an update and extension of *Index herbariorum (herbaria).* In addition to the 68 Italian herbaria recognised in *Index herbariorum,* the Appendix includes similar, detailed data for 96 more collections, with notes on their holdings, preservation, etc. There is also information on the loss of previously recorded collections, or of their transfer to and integration into other herbaria. Regrettably, private herbaria have been excluded from the account. W.G.

Congresses and Meetings

33. Tuna EKIM, FRANCESCO MARIA RAIMONDO, WERNER GREUTER & Gianniantonio DOMINA (ed.) – Proceedings of the XIII OPTIMA Meeting, Antalya, 22-26 March 2010. [*Bocconea* (ISSN 1120-4060), **24.**] – Herbarium Mediterraneum Panormitanum, Palermo, 2012 (ISBN 978-88-7915-024-3). 339 pages, greyscale photographs, drawings, tables, graphs, maps; paper.

Following *Bocconea* 23, of 2009 (see OPTIMA Newslett. 39: (31). 2010), the present volume of the Herbarium Mediterraneum's monograph series is again devoted to the Proceedings of an OPTIMA Meeting. That very successful and rewarding meeting was attended by 236 participants, who gave 55 lectures and presented 146 posters. No meeting account is included in the present volume, but details can still be consulted online (http://www.optima-bot.org/meetings/flora2010/main.htm).

Publishing symposium contributions is not always a good idea, certainly not for all of them. As presented, results are often preliminary or partial, destined to be published elsewhere in greater detail, more mature shape or broader context. Moreover, strict peer review is now a must for any journal, Bocconea being no exception, and is bound to eliminate some of the presented manuscripts. As a result, the papers included here are relatively few, less than one sixth of the total number of scientific contributions presented at the Meeting. They correspond to 10 lectures (18%) and 22 posters (15%).

As by tradition, the subjects treated are manifold and often concern borderline areas of Mediterranean botany. In the present volume, beside floristic and taxonomic studies, you will find papers from the fields of plant ecology and vegetation science, biodiversity informatics and data modelling, ethnobotany and archaeobotany, seed banking

and herbarium collections, etc. It would be unfair to single out individual papers (the table of contents can be seen at http://unipa.it/herbmed/publications/bocconea24.html); let me just mention the most sizeable among them: the monographic revision of the *Astragalus angustifolius* group, by Brullo & al., in which several taxa are newly described or renamed. W.G.

34. Simonetta PECCENINI, Gianniantonio DOMINA & Cristina SALMERI (ed.) – Società Botanica Italiana, Gruppo per la Floristica e la Biosistematica Vegetale. **Flora vascolare d'Italia: studi biosistematici, taxa endemici e loci classici. Comunicazioni.** Orto botanico, La Sapienza Università di Roma, 19-20 ottobre 2012. – Società Botanica Italiana, Firenze, 2012 (ISBN 978-88-85915-06-0). 52 pages; paper.

In Rome in 2012, at their by now traditional joint October meeting (see OPTIMA Newslett. 40: (31-32). 2011 for the two previous ones), members of the Italian Botanical Society's study groups for floristics and plant biosystematics presented 18 workbench reports: short preliminary papers of 2-5 pages each. This time, the taxa concerned are: *Allium* sect. *Codonoprasum* and sect. *Cupanoscordum, Alyssum* sect. *Odontarrhena, Callitriche, Campanulaceae, Erysimum, Geum micropetalum, Halocnemum, Myosotis alpestris, Orchis, Pinguicula hirtiflora, Polycnemum,* and *Romulea bulbocodium.* Studies of typification and Italian loci classici were mentioned for Tuscany and Sicily, and for taxa described by Balbis and Lojacono.

By a majority vote, group members had previously decided that no nomenclatural novelties were to be accepted any more for publication in their annual pamphlets; but that vote does not, obviously, preclude effective new type designations, of which I noted three: for *Adenostyles hybrida, Asparagus aetnensis,* and *Statice sibthorpiana.* W.G.

New Journals

35. Takhtajania. – Armenian Botanical Society; Institute of Botany of National Academy of Sciences of Armenia [no ISSN]. Vol. 1, Erevan, 2011 (ISBN 978-99941-2-564-7). 204 pages, numerous photographs (partly in colour), drawings, maps, graphs, tables; laminated flexible cover. – Also available online for free, in pdf format, posted Feb. 2012 (http://takhtajania.asj-oa.am/view/year/2011.html).

The Armenian Botanical Society's journal, *Flora, rastitel'nost, i rastitel'nye resursy Armenii* – which since 1999 featured the alternative English title "Flora, vegetation and plant resources of Armenia" – has ceased to exist. In its place, after a few years' break, a new journal has been born, dedicated to the memory of that botanical giant, Armen Tahtadžjan, a son of Armenia and venerated teacher of most if not all Armenian botanists.

The change of title has not entailed any major change in the journal's style and contents, except perhaps in three respects. The first and most obvious is the cover, which now looks modern and colourful, with photographs of Winteraceous *Takhtajania perrieri* in flower and fruit on the front and back, respectively; the second and most important is size, as the present first volume is more than twice as thick as any of its recent precursor issues; and the third, equally welcome is the fact that papers in English language, while still a minority, have notably increased in number. To note: the journal accepts papers in Russian or English, but not Armenian, whereas title and abstract are given in all three languages.

Volume 1 starts on a series of half a dozen contributions to the memory of Armen Tahtadžjan, deceased 2009, aged 99. Many precious photographs illustrate the stations of his life, including two from the

1st Balkan Botanical Symposium in Bulgaria, in 1973, where we first met; one of them appears in a homage by Nora Gabrieljan, his youthful companion on that trip. Another homage was contributed by Nataša Snigirevskaja, whom some may remember as the scientific secretary of the XII International Botanical Congress in Leningrad, in 1975, of which Armen was the president. There is also Tahtadžjan's formal biography, by T. Vel'gorskaja, lacking a list of publications but with an enumeration of scientific names honouring him: 5 of genera, two of which became the type of a family name (one fossil, one non-fossil), one even of an order; and 36 of species, including two beetles. Four of these names were validly published in the present volume: *Acantholimon takhtajanii* Ogan., *Amberboa takhtajanii* Gabrieljan, *Dianthus takhtajanii* Nersesian, and *Papaver armenii* M. V. Agab. Note that of all Armen's admirers Marjam Agababjan, one of his last pupils, was the only one to dare using his given name – which he would certainly have wholeheartedly approved.

This is not the place to mention one by one the 31 scientific papers that make up the rest of the volume. Suffice it to note that a whole series of them are treatments of given groups for the Armenian or South Transcaucasian territory, obviously to serve as updates for those that appear in Armenia's national Flora. They concern *Dianthus, Acantholimon, Boraginaceae, Astragalus* subg. *Astragalus, Erysimum, Crataegus, Polygonum* s.l., *Salsola* s.l., and *Lens.*

The present volume is a perfect start for a new journal. Let me express the wish that the impetus thus gained be sufficient to ensure speedy production of the next issue.

W.G.