In Turkey this Irano-Turanian species is mainly found in NE, Inner and more rarely S, Anatolia; it also grows in Lebanon, Syria, Transcaucasia and perhaps NW Iran. The description covers all the material seen at Edinburgh (E).

I am grateful to R. D. Meikle of Kew for pointing out to P. H. Davis that the name *Scorzonera dichotoma* Vahl is illegitimate. When Vahl gave *Lactuca flava* Forssk. in synonymy, he obscured the issue by wrongly citing that binomial in a polynomial form.

BOOK REVIEW

Flora of Iraq. Six years have elapsed since the last part of the *Flora of Iraq* made its appearance. It is therefore particularly pleasing to welcome the publication of a further volume*—the fourth of a projected nine. It is entirely devoted to the Leguminales comprising the Caesalpiniaceae, Mimosaceae and Papilionaceae. The largest family by far is the last-named. It is also a most important family economically and contains some of the wild progenitors of several almost world-wide basic food plants—both for man and his animals.

In all, about 300 wild species of the Leguminales are dealt with. Quite the largest genus is *Astragalus* and its detailed taxonomic account occupies about a third of the volume. Mr C. C. Townsend has adopted a fairly conservative attitude in his taxonomy, even in the super-genus *Astragalus* only eleven species carry his name as author, and he has clearly not conflicted with the previously published accounts in the Floras of adjacent countries unless there was good reason to do so. *Astragalus*, with up to 1500 species in SW Asia, has now been dealt with in *Flora of Turkey* (372 species), *Flora Palaestina* (50 species), *Nouvelle Flore du Liban et de la Syrie* (126 species) and in this Flora (116 species). We now wait for the publication of the genus in *Flora Iranica*—the area of its greatest specific representation and morphological variation—and the account in *Flora of West Pakistan*, where there are an estimated 106 species. It is to be hoped that at a later date some courageous astragalophile, a latter-day Bunge, will undertake a general classification of the whole genus, utilising as its nucleus, as far as SW Asia is concerned, the vast quantity of information in these Floras. *Astragalus*, in fact provides an example of how, in a very large genus, the only realistic way of preparing a monographic revision is by synthesizing information from Floras.

One of the problems facing a writer of any Flora is that of cultivated or naturalized species. Should they be included, and if so, how? Some Floras bar them altogether, others include them all, yet others, such as the *Flora of Turkey*, compromise by only covering

* Flora of Iraq, vol. 3. Leguminales by C. C. Townsend; edited by C. C. Townsend & Evan Guest. Baghdad Ministry of Agriculture & Agrarian Reform 1974. vii, 662 pp. 111 plates. Obtainable from Robert MacLehose & Co. Ltd. University Press, Glasgow G13 1HX, Scotland. £3.75.

those that are important crops or are more or less common amenity plants or introductions. In this Flora, at least in this volume, everything cultivated or introduced seems to be dealt with—and in detail! In the Caesalpiniaceae, seven genera and seventeen species (out of overall totals of respectively nine and nineteen) are not native; in the Mimosaceae, the totals are three genera and thirteen species (out of five and fifteen). How much space should be given to these plants which often are, as in these three families, important agriculturally or for amenity, is a difficult decision to make, but personally I would rather that less space and detail had been devoted to the non-natives. Although it is a case of "reductio ad absurdum" I would hate to have to use a British Flora that also included all other cultivated plants!

Complementing Mr Townsend's taxonomic work are Mr Evan Guest's economic notes and general remarks on folk lore and local names. With a vast store of knowledge of the country, its languages and its plants, Mr Guest makes the Flora much more than a mere taxonomic enumeration. Maybe his contributions extend beyond that normally to be expected in a traditional Flora; maybe at times they are too long and not always relevant to Iraq, but certainly they are always interesting to read and any extra information that makes a Flora, within the bounds of accuracy and brevity, more readable, can only be welcomed.

Although once the basic format of a Flora is decided it should ideally be adhered to, it is nevertheless worthwhile making some comments on lay-out. Under many species are given very long lists of exsiccatae and it really helps no one that the specimens (mostly at Kew or the National Herbarium of Iraq at Abu Ghraib) are listed in such detail. Another excess of detail is that given under the external distribution of species. The latter may occupy six lines of print because each political country in which the species occurs is listed. Inevitably this leads to mistakes and the Flora would lose nothing in value if the total distribution of species was summarised in a much more succinct fashion. Typographically the Flora is generally excellent, but I find that the contrast in print size between the transliterated Arabic or Kurdish names in large capitals side by side with the original Arabic in very small print rather perturbing.

A quintet of botanical artists have provided 111 plates comprising habit drawings and floral or fruit detail. These, for the most part, are very good and some are of the highest standard of botanical exactness and aesthetic appeal. It is a fortunate Flora writer indeed who has the talent of such artists at hand.

It only remains to say that at £3.75, a price which must bear little relationship to its production costs, this is a high-quality bargain Flora.

I. C. HEDGE