are found. The affinities of subsect. *Isaurica* are obscure, though the leaf-shape and the woolly apex of the rhizome suggest a connection with subsect. *Cardiophylla*.

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Book Review

The Flora of Cyprus vol. 1. Somewhat surprisingly considering the relatively small size of its flora and the large number of botanists that have been attracted to its shores, one of the earliest being Sibthorp in 1787, Cyprus has never had anything approaching what could be called a Flora. The Austrian Theodor Kotschy who collected extensively in the middle of the last century published in 1865 *Die Insel Cypern*, a general account of the island and its vegetation and, in the early part of this century, the Norwegian Jens Holmboe brought together his knowledge of its plants in *Studies on the vegetation of Cyprus* (1914). Useful as these two works are, neither was intended as a guide to naming all the plants of the island. For that purpose, more often than not, one had to rely on Boissier's wide-ranging *Flora Orientalis* (1867–88).

Desmond Meikle, with a very wide experience of the European and Mediterranean flora, first started working on a proposed Flora of the island as long ago as the late 1950s. The appearance of the first volume (of two) of the definitive Flora* was therefore a particularly welcome event to all concerned with the floras of south-west Asia and the E Mediterranean. The first volume covers in Bentham & Hooker *Genera Plantarum* sequence the families Pinaceae to Rubiaceae, and Theligonaceae. About 700 native species are dealt with in c. 800 pages, including the 52 full page line drawings. It is not a rich flora in comparison with that of many nearby Mediterranean countries and in the first volume there are remarkably few genera of any size or complexity—*Silene* with 26 species, *Trifolium* 31, *Medicago* 20, *Vicia* 20 are apparently the only ones with 20 species or more. *Astragalus*, the monster genus of Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan, has only 12 species in Cyprus. The format of the Flora is conventional, giving keys to genera and species (but not families), species synonymy, relevant references, indication of types, full species descriptions,

* Flora of Cyprus vol. 1 by R. D. Meikle. 832 pages, 52 figs. 25 November, 1977. Published by the Bentham-Moxon Trust, Kew. Printed by Robert MacLehose, Glasgow. Price £20.

summarised habitat, altitude and flowering time information, and general comments. Some herbarium specimens, almost all at Kew, are cited; these are given within the eight botanical divisions that the author recognises in the island. The latter correspond to some extent with natural areas but general expediency also played a part in their delimitation. Cyprus has a rich cultivated flora—the street trees and shrubs of Nicosia and Famagusta are a source of much interest and pleasure to a visitor from more northern climes—and fortunately this Flora takes good account of the well-established or widely cultivated non-natives. They are dealt with in the same way as the natives and clearly indicated by means of different typography; an indication of the additional work involved in including these cultivated plants is given by the 16 species of *Acacia* and 7 of *Eucalyptus* keyed out and described.

There are not a few changes of taxonomy or nomenclature in comparison with Floras of adjacent areas, e.g. *Flora of Turkey*: *Consolida* goes back into *Delphinium*, as do *Amygdalus* and *Cerasus* into *Prunus*, *Capparis ovata* goes into synonymy of *C. spinosa*, *Cleome iberica* is resuscicated out of synonymy in *C. ornithopioides*, *Capsella rubella* is rejected as an E Mediterranean native, *Sanguisorba* goes back into *Poterium*. All of these changes seem progress in the right direction.

The initial, and subsequent, impression of this volume is of a very accurate, clearly presented and taxonomically very sensible Flora. Its relevance extends far beyond the narrow confines of Cyprus. It is very much a one-man Flora—I could only spot about a dozen species accounts that were not written by the author—and obviously this leads to much greater uniformity of taxonomic treatment than an 'edited' Flora with numerous contributors, albeit it takes longer. There is no doubt that the ideal Flora whose content and format suits all tastes has yet to be written—possibly compilers of Floras do not always give enough thought to what its aims are and who its users are likely to be—and, in this case, very excellent though the core of the *Flora of Cyprus* is, there are a few lesser features that are open to criticism. Personally, I find the species descriptions unnecessarily long, often up to 25–30 lines of print, and it is not irrelevant to wonder if the Flora would have appeared many years earlier if the descriptions were shorter. Nothing would be lost if they were because the majority of the species are fairly widespread and not poorly known. I also found the typography a little curious with the species name and synonymy information given in smaller type than the description and the often most informative comments at the end of the species description also given in small print. Similarly, the use of italics seems unusual (why is it necessary to italicise author's names?), and the indentations and spacings are not as simple and clear-cut as they could be.

If there were to be a similar time lag before the second volume appears to that between the inception of the Flora and the appearance of the first volume, we will have to wait till nearly the next millennium! Hopefully, Desmond Meikle will find the time and energy within the next few years to complete what will be a major contribution to floristic knowledge in the E Mediterranean. And not only to complete the actual Flora but to synthesise the information in it and present an account of the floristic relationships of the Cyprus flora, its endemism and its phytogeography.

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