Book Review

Flora of Turkey Vol. 6. Boissier's *Flora Orientalis* still remains the only Flora which covers the whole of the area of western Asia. Though some parts of this region, including the Caucasus, already have modern Floras, no completed works yet exist for the major part of the area. For this reason the continuing appearance of two collateral floras, K. H. Rechinger's *Flora Iranica* and P. H. Davis's *Flora of Turkey*, is of exceptional significance for the study of the flora of the Middle East on the contemporary level.

The first volume of *Flora of Turkey* was published in 1965 and the sixth* in the series has followed only 13 years later: thus out of the eight projected volumes of this monumental work six are already published. Such speed of preparation and publication is certainly praiseworthy, especially for a Flora which covers such a vast area, including not only Asia Minor but European Turkey and the East Aegean Islands as well as Turkish Armenia. The maintenance of impetus of production is due to the energy of the Flora's inspirer and initiator—Peter H. Davis.

When considering the difficulties in preparing the Flora one must bear in mind the size of the territory as well as the exceptional diversity of its flora. Suffice to say that there pass through the *Flora of Turkey* area the borders of three floristic regions of the Holarctic (the Circumboreal, Mediterranean and Irano-Turanian) and five floristic provinces (the Euxinian, East-Mediterranean, Mesopotamian, Armeno-Iranian and Central Anatolian—the penultimate of which includes within the area three sub-provinces: the Armenian, Atropatanean and Zagrossian—see Takhtajan, A. *Floristi Regions of the World*, 1978). Such marked floristic heterogeneity certainly complicates the study of the flora of Turkey.

The *Flora of Turkey* undoubtedly complies with the strictest requirements one can impose to be considered a modern Flora. Its appearance is an important event in botanical literature as it is indispensable not only for botanists studying the flora of Turkey itself, but for those working in neighbouring countries including Transcaucasia (especially Armenia and Georgia). But even such an outstanding publication has its shortcomings, the most important of which is probably some inconsistency between different contributors in the ranking of species and subspecies—noticeable in places in vol. 6. Strict equivalence of ranks in a collective flora is, however, very difficult to achieve and inconsistencies even occur in Floras by a single author, e.g. Boissier's *Flora Orientalis*.

Though it seems evident that the editor and authors adhere to the modern concept of polytypic species, in some cases, probably because of lack of herbarium material, we see unnecessary splitting and there are a few examples where an accepted species is not even worthy of subspecific rank. Thus I am very dubious about *Campanula coriacea* Davis as a separate species and agree with Dr A. A. Fedorov that it does not differ from *C. radula* Fischer. Last year in Armenia Dr Nora Gabrielian and myself were studying variation of *C. radula* in different conditions of light and moisture and we reached the conclusion that *C. coriacea* lies completely within the variation range of *C. radula*.

To be sure in any large Flora one can always find some nomenclatural, bibliographical and geographical errors. I know no exceptions. Nor can I rank *Flora of Turkey* among them. Thus, *Onosma stellatum* Waldst. & Kit. var. *kubanicum* M. Popov is quoted as a synonym of *O. caucasicum* Levin (p. 361), while in reality the author of this variety is not M. Popov but N. Popov. Another example is the location of Kuban which is situated not in Soviet Azerbaijan as stated but in the western part of the North Caucasus. However, it must be admitted that such inaccuracies are rare in the book.

In the course of the work on the sixth volume large amounts of herbarium material were studied, including numerous field collections made by Dr Davis and his collaborators. Unfortunately, however, insufficient use was made of herbarium material collected in Turkish Armenia by Russian botanists and kept in Tbilisi and Leningrad—this material has not been adequately consulted for *Flora of Turkey*, especially in the later volumes.

In conclusion I can only offer my congratulations to the authors of the *Flora of Turkey* and to its indefatigable editor and inspirer Dr P. H. Davis on the occasion of publishing the sixth volume of this superb work and wish them successful completion of it.

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**Flora of Turkey and the East Aegean islands*, vol. 6, edited by P. H. Davis assisted by J. R. Edmondson, R. R. Mill and B. S. Parris. Edinburgh University Press. Pp. xviii + 825, 59 maps, 24 illus. Price £60.