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Book review

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Willdenowia
Annals of the Botanic Garden and Botanical Museum Berlin-Dahlem

Book review

Charpin A. & Aymonin G.-G.: Botanistes de la Flore de France. Notices biographiques. – Paris: Société Botanique de France, 2015 (= Le Journal de Botanique Hors-Série 2015). – ISSN 1280-8202. – 21 × 29.7 × 1 cm, 200 pp. – Price: EUR 25.00. – Available at Mme. Huguette Santos-Ricard, Trésorière de la Société Botanique de France, Maison Baa, F-65120 Betpouey, France.

André Charpin, honorary curator at the Conservatoire et Jardin Botaniques in Geneva, and Gérard-Guy Aymonin (†), professor at the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris, have published a considerable number of brief biographical notes on the botanists who have contributed to the knowledge of the flora of France. These appeared in alphabetical order under the title "Bibliographie selective des Flores de France. Notices biographiques sur les auteurs cités" in four instalments numbered II[sic]–V and published in 2002–2004 in the Journal Botanique de France, i.e. vol. 20: 65–104, 21: 49–88, 25: 49–86 and 27: 47–87. Now a second edition of these biographical notes has appeared forming a volume *hors-série* of the journal in which the first edition appeared.

The philosophy of the work, the approach of the authors and the layout have not been changed. However, a few names have been added and, more importantly, the treatment is much more comprehensive, consisting of four elements: (1) brief biographical data, i.e. date and place of birth and death, (2) curriculum vitae with the main activities, (3) sources and (4) notes. In many cases (2) is followed by a quotation from an obituary, which brings the personality of the figure involved to life, although often with a hagiographical undertone. While the first edition was without any illustrations, the authors have included reproductions of numerous photographs of portraits in the second, largely taken from the extensive archive kept in the Conservatoire et Jardin Botaniques in Geneva.

Considering the title of the work, it seems necessary to underline that more is included than just "Botanistes de la Flore de France", because botanists are included who have lived and worked exclusively or mainly outside France, among them Horace Bénédict de Saussure based in Geneva, André Lawalrée in Brussels or Anna Menghini in Forlì. It should also be mentioned that the authors decided "not to go back further than 1753", with the consequence that key figures like Charles Louis L'Héritier de Brutelle, Antoine-Laurent de Jussieu or Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, to mention just three, are not dealt with. However, this is not a critique: an immense amount of data has been brought together and presented in a very concise, convincing manner. As rightly pointed out by Monique Astié, of the Comité de lecture of the Société Botanique de France, in her preface, this volume is "le fruit de longues heures de découvertes, de recherches auprès d'instituts botaniques, d'archives cantonales, régionales, départementales, municipales, diocésaines, des services d'état civil, … et de nombreux correpsondants". We have to be grateful that this very substantial work has been achieved.

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