for systematists to be on the alert for improbable disjunctions, and define or map the
distribution of species with the same care that they study the characters of species.
Labeling errors are lamentably frequent, but the more implausible records can be easily
detected and investigated whenever biogeographic patterns are contradicted.

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Manuscript received April 1981, revised May 1981.

BOOK REVIEW

Keegan, Hugh L. 1980. Scorpions of Medical Importance. Univ. Press of Mississippi,
Jackson. 140 pp. ($22.50).

Perusing the outside back cover the potential buyer learns that this book’s scope is to
present “an account of the distribution, morphology, biology and classification of these
scorpions considered to be of medical importance,” and that “A valuable feature of
Scorpions of Medical Importance is the outstanding drawings that have been used to
illustrate the species. It is not often that one comes across drawings so striking in their
precision and attention to even the most minute details.”

Between the covers the reader finds six chapters, each with its own list of references.
The chapters are summarized and characterized below:

Chapter 1—Scorpion Morphology and Biology. A 13 page chapter, of which five pages
are plates and two are references. In general it presents a good, albeit brief review of
morphology and biology. I was slightly disturbed upon reading that there are six, rather
than the customary five metasomal segments plus the telson.

Chapter 2—Geographic distribution of Dangerously Venomous Scorpions. A six page
chapter with a one-half page of text, a four page long table, and two pages of references.
The table lists, by country, the species considered of medical importance. It also includes
some countries which appear to have no scorpionism problems. The table is hard to
follow at times, and it’s occasionally contradicted by later statements in the text about
both the medical importance (Tityus trivittatus Kraepelin), and the distribution (Centruroides
sculpturatus Ewing in Mexico) of some dangerous species.

Chapter 3—Clinical Aspects of Scorpion Envenomation. This eight page chapter
exemplifies the problems associated with envenomation accidents in general, such as the
rather variable symptomatology, and the fact that there is no general agreement as the the
cause of death. It includes a one and a half page table of symptoms produced by
“selected species of medical importance” (actually only four species represented), and a
list of current (1978) antivenin production laboratories.

Chapter 4—Scorpion Control and Prevention of Scorpion Stings. This chapter includes
three and a half pages of text and a page of references touching upon preventive,
mechanical, and chemical control measures. Some of the methods suggested are no longer
valid: the use of chlordane (2%) against anything other than termites and when used by
anyone other than a licensed pest control operator is illegal in the United States.

Chapter 5—Classification of Scorpions. Two pages of text in which six families
(Chaerilidae omitted) are briefly characterized morphologically. The incorrect spellings
Vejovis and Vejovidae are unnecessarily perpetuated. No list of references is given with
this chapter.
Chapter 6—Accounts of Genera and Species. A 90 page chapter, of which six are references and 53 are illustrations. Twenty-six species are each given two full pages of illustrations: one page being an entire dorsal view; the other detailing lateral and ventral views of the metasoma, the dorsoexternal aspect of the pedipalp chela, dorsal aspect of the chelicera (fingers closed), the sternopectinal area, and a ventral view of the prosoma and mesosoma. The drawings are indeed striking in their precision and are very nice pieces of artwork, but they are deemed useless for identification and/or recognition purposes. The species illustrated appear to have been chosen on the basis of their availability while the author was in Japan (where five artists prepared the drawings). Of 26 species listed in Chapter 2 as being of medical importance, only 14 are illustrated. And 12 species of little or no medical importance (perhaps other than their large size and potential for entomophobia) are included.

For most arachnologists the overall usefulness of this book resides in the references provided at the end of the chapters, and the justification for such a high-priced partial bibliography is the aesthetic value of the illustrations.

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