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MAPPING PROJECT FOR THE IBERIAN PENINSULA AND BALEARES

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The mapping of the flora of our Peninsula is both fascinating and difficult; we have a rich flora, with numerous geographical strains and unsolved problems, many young botanists and a very old Spanish Flora.

Our team of AFE (= Atlas Florae Europaeae) Spanish collaborators is at present undergoing some changes, but will soon be reorganized. In addition, there is a Spanish research project "Flora Ibérica", sponsored by our Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas. However, this taxonomic and floristic research is focused on nomenclatural and systematic problems, whilst the chorological information will be restricted to a list giving the presence of taxa only in large-sized units, "provincias" and islands as a whole, without maps.

I believe it is now necessary to prepare another project for studying the biosystematics and ecology of our endemics and more critical plants. R.M. Masalles, at the University of Barcelona, is the secretary of the new organization "ORCA" for mapping the flora of NE Spain and the Baleares. Another

organization is needed for the Ebro valley and neighbouring mountains. The mapping of the French and Spanish Pyrenees is also beginning for selected taxa.

Biogeographical methods will make it possible to solve very old problems in some genera such as Hieracium, Festuca and Dianthus, with the help of ecological data provided by specialists on these plants. We have very high mountains in Central-NW Spain, and within the Iberian and Betic sectors opportunities for collecting good material may occur only once or twice in a number of years. Fortunately, these areas are being prospected by enthusiastic young botanists and the future is promising.

Concerning participation in the AFE project, I would like to make the following comments:

1) The minimum number of main collaborators needed in Spain is three or four. At present I am working in Northern Spain, but I am already 65 years old. The difficult southern part of our country will be worked from Seville University by J.A. Devesa and helpers, in cooperation with botanists of the University of Granada. In the West, in Salamanca, we have an excellent group of young botanists, including E. Rico and directed by B. Casaseca. Our team should also include a collaborator in the East, in Barcelona, but this will be possible only after two years or so. For some years I have looked after the correspondence with our Secretariat in Helsinki, but now I would prefer a diversification of responsibilities.

2) It is important to make more detailed studies on difficult groups of plants, if possible some years ahead of the AFE Project and also engaging specialists in taxonomy or distribution.

3) For the critical Pyrenean-Cantabrian groups and those of SW Europe - W Mediterranean, it will be interesting to improve our integrated biogeographical studies before mapping on a European scale.

4) Certainly, mapping improves botanical knowledge. The first volume of AFE made a very important contribution to fern systematics in Spain.

5) Finally, it will be of considerable importance to prepare some Computer Programs to examine the possibilities of increasing the rate of our work.