

Floras

6. **Santiago CASTROVIEJO** (gen. ed.), **C. BENEDÍ, E. RICO, J. GÜEMES & Alberto HERRERO** (vol. ed.) – **Flora iberica**. Plantas vasculares de la Península Ibérica e Islas Baleares. Vol. **XIII, Plantaginaceae-Scrophulariaceae**. – Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Real Jardín Botánico, Madrid, 2009 (ISBN 978-84-00-08747-0, volume; 978-84-00-06221-7, set). XLVII + 677 pages, map, 133 plates of drawings; cloth with dust jacket.

Exactly two-thirds the 21 planned volumes of *Flora iberica* have now been published, and the countdown toward completion is steadily ticking. True, two major hurdles remain: *Compositae* and the grasses; but

they, too, will be overcome. Discounting the single naturalised representative of *Buddlejaceae*, the present volume deals with just two families, those mentioned in the subtitle: *Plantaginaceae* and *Scrophulariaceae*; and the first question that comes to mind nowadays (and that no one would have asked twenty years ago), is: how defined? To reassure the traditionally minded among users, the answer is: no change. Neither has *Veronica* been transferred to the plantains, nor were *Lathraea* and the hemiparasitic genera moved to *Orobanchaceae* (already dealt with in vol. 14), nor have the *Antirrhinaceae* been split off. Some may be disappointed by seeing families defined in a way that is presently considered, and may well be, unnatural. To them, let me say that a Flora is a practical tool to identify and learn about plants, not a showcase for the newest classification hypotheses. There is a proper place for everything, and definitely a Flora that is to serve for half a century at least is not a suitable forum for introducing major structural changes of classification that may or may not outlive the coming decade. Besides it would hardly be practical if the key to identify families, first published in 1986 (vol. 1) and regularly reprinted since, were to change repeatedly.

Several of the genera treated in this volume show centres of diversity and high rates of endemism in the Iberian Peninsula. Based on species numbers, the largest are, in order: *Linaria* (54), *Veronica* (44), *Plantago* (27), *Verbascum* (26), *Antirrhinum* (24), *Scrophularia* (22), and *Chaenorhynchium* (16). Some of the smaller genera are also worth being mentioned, such as *Digitalis* with 11 taxa (species and subspecies) of which 8 are endemic. On the other hand, none of the hemiparasitic genera of the *Rhinanthaceae* exhibit a marked polymorphism in the area, being much more diverse in other parts of Europe.

The editors of volume 13 were awarded an OPTIMA Silver Medal for their book, at

the recent XIII OPTIMA Meeting in Antalya. The award, well deserved, also reflects on the previous published volumes of *Flora Iberica*. Sadly the founder, general editor and coordinator of the work, Santiago Castroviejo, did not live to receive the award, having succumbed to a long painful illness at the end of September last year. He leaves a great responsibility with his successors, which he was confident they would live up to carry; and so am I.

W.G.