

6. **Santiago CASTROVIEJO** † (gen. ed.), **S. TALAVERA**, **C. ANDRÉS**, **M. ARISTA**, **M. P. FERNÁNDEZ PIEDRA**, **M. J. GALLEGGO**, **P. L. ORTIZ**, **C. ROMERO ZARCO**, **F. J. SALGUEIRO**, **S. SILVESTRE** & **A. QUINTANAR** (vol. ed.) – **Flora iberica**. Plantas vasculares de la Península Ibérica e Islas Baleares. Vol. **XI**, *Gentianaceae-Boraginaceae*. – Real Jardín Botánico, Madrid, 2012 (ISBN 978-84-00-09415-7, volume; 978-84-00-06221-7, set). XLVIII + 672 pages, map, 124 plates of drawings; cloth with dust jacket.

To my mind, *Flora iberica* is and remains unchallenged as the best designed, most carefully edited, most detailed and informative among modern critical Floras. Users who do appreciate its qualities will easily concur with my assessment, but few will be aware of the complex, keen effort behind the stage that is needed to achieve such result. To truly appreciate that fact you have to be familiar with co-operative projects of a comparable size, and with the difficulty of having them funded over a thirty-year period. Carlos Aedo's most readable preamble gives us the essential facts. The Flora Iberica Programme consists of 4 research teams in as many Spanish cities, with additional participation from 14 committed university departments. Funding for the ninth triennial project phase (2011 to 2014) has just been granted by Spain's Research Ministry (congratulations!). So far,

17 volumes have been published over a period of 26 years, almost exactly one every 1½ years. In parallel to the publication proper, three major correlated databases have been designed, implemented and kept running: the *Flora iberica* database, which permits online consultation of the published volumes in pdf format, also providing for posting updates and offering to the contributors the opportunity of online editing and data sharing; *Anthos*, a reference system holding 1.3 million georeferenced locality data from herbaria and literature, able to generate distribution maps for individual taxa, and also including information on chromosome counts and vernacular names; and *Phyteia*, said to be an inventory of legal protection norms for plant species (but not currently available for consultation under the cited Web link). Indeed an impressive – and by no means exhaustive – scenario!

Work on volume 11 (as for vol. 9, yet to come) started as long ago as 1997, which, the preamble claims, ensures *eo ipso* that its scientific standard is particularly high. It is by and large the product of the project team in Sevilla, where 9 out of 10 volume editors and 10 of 19 text authors are based, who wrote the treatments for 64 of the 76 genera. If the volume is to have its hero, it can be no other than Benito Valdés, who authored the accounts for more than half of the *Boraginaceae* species, including the two largest and arguably most difficult genera, *Myosotis* (20 species) and *Echium* (19). The next most important genera, this time, are *Solanum* (18), *Convolvulus* (15), *Gentiana* (13), *Centaureium* (11), and *Cuscuta* (9).

Nine families are included, one of which large (*Boraginaceae*), three of medium size (*Convolvulaceae*, *Gentianaceae*, *Solanaceae*), and 5 small (*Apocynaceae*, *Asclepiadaceae*, *Hydrophyllaceae*, *Menyanthaceae*, *Oleaceae*). Family delimitation is pleasantly traditional, with *Asclepiadaceae* kept separate from *Apocynaceae* and *Hydrophyllaceae* distinct from *Boraginaceae* in which

*Heliotropium* still finds its place. Generic definitions tend to be on the narrow side, with *Gentiana*, *Gentianella*, *Gentianopsis* and *Comastoma*, *Buglossoides* and *Aegonychon*, *Lithodora* and *Glandora*, *Cynoglossum* and *Solenanthus* (but not *Pardoglossum*) treated as independent. Concerning *Lithodora* and *Glandora*, I take exception to the suggested etymology (and consequent pronunciation) of the names. It makes little sense to derive the second word element, *-dora*, from *δορά* (skin). The obvious meaning is gift (*δῶρον*), used adjectivally as in classical *Θεόδορος* and *Θεοδώρα*, gift of God (note the shift in stress, between masculine and feminine), the intended signification of *Lithodora*, the name of a very decorative chasmophytic shrublet, being: gift of the rock. The stress is to be placed on the penultimate syllable (*Lithodóra*, *Glandóra*).

Four volumes (9, 16, 19, and 20) are still to come, 2018 being the target date for completion. Publication of vol. 9 and 20 is said to be imminent, but the two largest families, *Compositae* and *Gramineae*, have been left for the end – in view of their size, they will presumably each form a twin volume, same as *Leguminosae*. These monster families will present a major challenge for editors and project teams, but hopefully not a stumbling block. We wish them energy, good health, and generous funding, and can assure the funding agencies that every Euro they have spent and will spend on this project is money well spent!

W.G.