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Part II: Proposals and Agreements

Initiation of a European Lichen Mapping Project – Proposals and Considerations

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It is highly desirable to achieve a more precise description of the actual distribution of lichen species in Europe. We have to estimate the cost of obtaining that knowledge and decide which efforts must be undertaken to achieve it. We need to develop an organization and choose appropriate methods.

The following points involve some ideas, thoughts or proposals which may serve as a base-line to start this discussion.

(1.) Mapping should be a grid mapping scheme because it provides an economical way to acquire data and to process the data by computer. As a European grid system is already well established for several botanical (higher plants, mosses) and zoological mapping projects – namely the UTM-grid system – this system should be used in lichenology as well. A further economical and practical advantage is the availability of a printed map scheme (Flora Europaea Project, JALAS & SUOMINEN 1972).

(2.) Time is precious for us all. It is very important to ensure that joint projects do not become too heavy a burden on us. It would be ideal if the resulting European maps were a byproduct of the national projects which are fundamental for mapping in Europe.

(3.) The most convenient way to achieve this is based on well organized, computer-sustained national mapping projects using grids which can be transcribed or incorporated into the larger grid of a European mapping scheme. This transcription can be performed by computer, at least to a certain extent. If there is no computer assistance available manual transcription is feasible by placing a transparent overlay with the European grid on it over the national maps.

(4.) As the knowledge of the distribution of a lichen species is the sum of information compiled by many lichenologists in several countries, European mapping cannot be a single scientist's job. Indeed, it is absurd to imagine that a single worker or a group of persons would be able to collect the data alone. Neither can the European project be organized by a single head scientist at the top, compiling and publishing data delivered to him by many others. Those lichenologists working intensively on European maps should jointly participate in editing them.

(5.) There surely are several possibilities to satisfy these conditions. One way could be to apportion different species among different lichenologists interested in these species and to start mapping with well known species or those of delimited distribution. This method is the one applied by the European bryologists (SCHUMACKER 1982, 1984, 1985).

Of course it would not be economical if the editors of the map of a certain species would have to identify the correct grid unit of records for the whole of Europe. It would be more reasonable to exchange UTM-data among the co-workers from diffe-

rent countries, each of them delivering (processed) data of his region. Additionally the map editor should also inform the national mappers on the state of his knowledge on the distribution of the respective species.

The subsequent publication of single maps or collections of maps may then be done by one author or better by a group of authors involved in the work. A more comprehensive edition could be achieved later by assembling already published maps and updating them.

(6.) A current list of treated species and lichenologists dealing with them should be published. Negative aspects of hierarchical organization would be minimized in this way and it would be as fair as possible to the interests of individual scientists.

(7.) Prerequisite to this procedure is a general methodological agreement concerning:

- 7.1. the type of grid;
- 7.2. the basic map scheme for publication; all countries should use the same basic map type;
- 7.3. the differentiation of records into historical periods;
- 7.4. any other differentiation of symbols used in the maps;
- 7.5. a list of species to be mapped in the future;
- 7.6. the use of computer programs.

(8.) We should discuss the need for financial support concerning the European lichen mapping project and to whom we might address our requests.

(9.) A checklist of European lichen species as a synthesis of different national lists should be established. It might even be a very provisional list. In fact, we have no real imagination about the exact number of species present in Europe, and such a list may be a base-line. Recently the OPTIMA Congress decided to establish such a list for the Mediterranean countries. Lichenologists involved were NIMIS, ROUX and LLIMONA. It may be more difficult to find an agreement at a European scale, but it should be tried anyway.

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