JAMES RENNIE BEQUEST

REPORT ON EXPEDITION/PROJECT/CONFERENCE

Conference Title: Third Biennial Conference of the International Biogeography Society

Travel Dates: January 9th-14th 2007

Location: Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife, Canary Islands

Group Member(s): Kate Armstrong

Aims: To present a poster of my Ph.D. research at the conference and meet other researchers in my field

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OUTCOME (not less than 300 words):-

Thanks to support from the James Rennie Bequest, I was able to attend the Third International Biogeography Society (IBS) conference in Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife from January 9-14, 2007. IBS is a young society (inaugurated in 2003) that is developing rapidly and this was the first time a conference had been held outside of the U.S.

There were approximately 750 people in attendance at the conference, which meant that although a fair size, the audience was still small enough to allow for a single session to be held at a time. There were 5 sessions in total each with approximately 5 talks on the following topics:

- An integrative view of ecographic rules
- Quaternary impacts on holarctic biogeography
- Island biogeography
- Marine connectivity
- Separating historical from environmental effects on species distributions

Posters were also an important part of the conference - 248 were presented on a broad range of biogeographic topics. During the island biogeography session I presented a poster on my preliminary Ph.D. research entitled: Systematics and Biogeography of the pantropical genus *Manilkara* (Sapotaceae). It was well received and I had some excellent discussions with other researchers as a result. When reading other people's posters, it was interesting to see similar biogeographic patterns in other organisms (reptiles, squirrels, frogs, snails, etc.) and also the ways in which other researchers chose to interpret and represent their data. This was a valuable aspect of the conference for me.

During the conference I met Vicki Funk, the current president of the society and a fellow botanist working at the Smithsonian Institute. She is involved in the Flora of the Guyanas program and has offered to collect *Manilkara* samples from the Guyanas for my research. I also met Mike Donoghue, a plant systematist from Yale University. He spoke on "Historical biogeography and rates of diversification as factors in explaining geographic patterns in species diversity." I particularly enjoyed this talk, as it relates directly to my research. His laboratory has developed novel techniques for incorporating an element of time into the interpretation of molecular phylogenies. As a result of our meeting, I plan to visit his laboratory in order to learn new analytical techniques to interpret my data. I also spoke with David Kidd who is at the National Evolutionary Synthesis Center (NESCent). He has built a computer program GeoPhyloBuilder which marries phylogenies and GIS in order to simultaneously represent the evolutionary and geographical history of taxa. (http://www.nescent.org/news/thisweek.php?id=1) This is a particularly interesting development, which I intend to utilize once I have generated more data.

On the last day of the conference, I participated on a field trip to the Teno Peninsula and Teide National Park. It had snowed on Teide the night before, which made the volcanic backdrop for the park all the more spectacular. We also visited a small botanic garden of plants native to the park.

I wish to thank the James Rennie Bequest for supporting my travel to this conference. It was excellent to have the opportunity to attend and I made many valuable contacts for my Ph.D. I also look forward to being more involved in the International Biogeography Society in the future as a result.