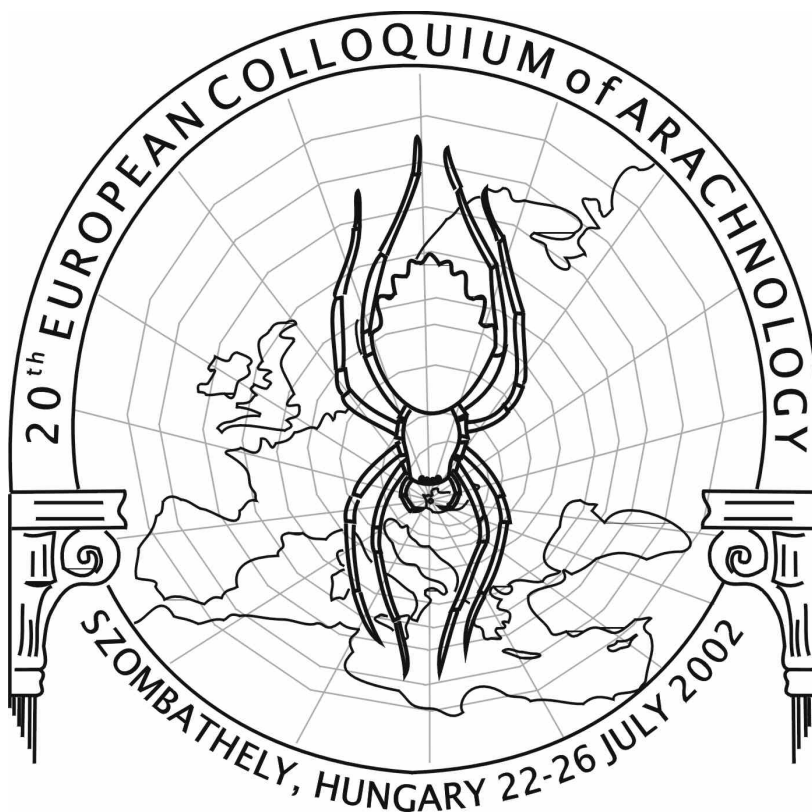


EuropeanArachnology2002

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FOREWORD

The 20th European Colloquium of Arachnology from July 22-26th 2002, took place in the small western Hungarian town of Szombathely, organised by the two strongholds of Hungarian arachnological research: the Zoology Department of the local Berzsenyi College, and the Plant Protection Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest. Like previous meetings, the Szombathely Colloquium was also held under the auspices of the European Society of Arachnology (ESA). We first indicated our intention to organise a colloquium during the 17th meeting in Siedlce. The General Assembly of ESA in Århus finally decided that in 2002 the ever-growing young group of Hungarian arachnologists could host their colleagues from Europe and all over the world. This was of great significance for us, because for a country treasuring the scientific heritage of famous arachnologists such as Ottó Herman, Kornél Chyzer, Ladislaus Kulczynski, János Balogh and Imre Loksa, this was our first opportunity to receive arachnologists in any great number from abroad.

Delegates from 30 countries, representing all five continents (115 scientific delegates, 10 scientific guests and 25 accompanying persons) participated in the Colloquium. This high attendance, to our knowledge second only to the Edinburgh Colloquium, was possible because the organisers did everything possible to keep fees moderate, and at the same time were able to provide a reasonable number of grants (52) for students and others in need, ranging from reduced registration fees to completely free attendance with full board.

The traditionally week-long meeting involved four full scientific days and a mid-week colloquium excursion. With only plenary (and no parallel) sessions, there were 53 lectures and 55 posters on display. During the colloquium we had two special thematic sessions: Jean-Pierre Maelfait from the Institute of Nature Conservation, Brussels, Belgium organised the session "Spiders as ecological indicators", and Axel Schmid of the University of Vienna, Austria hosted another on "Spider senses". On both occasions the organisers gave an overview of the field, after which selected speakers gave an account of current research which covered a wide selection of topics, and was at the same time of interest to the non-specialist audience. Further invited speakers gave thorough presentation of fields such as behavioural ecology, sociality (Yael Lubin) and systematics (Nikolaj Scharff).

A number of satellite programmes complimented the scientific sessions of the Colloquium. The opening reception was held in the Museum Village exhibiting traditional folk architecture from western Hungary, where we could gain a taste not only of architecture, but also of the finest Hungarian sausages and bacons – a bad day for vegetarians! In two specially arranged exhibitions we displayed a selection of the original, beautifully detailed taxonomic drawings of Imre Loksa, to whom this volume is dedicated. A colourful exhibition of post cards depicting spiders showed how the public at large perceive those dreadful creatures we study. The colloquium excursion led the participants to the Fertő-Hanság National Park, where all those who volunteered could canoe in the labyrinth of channels cut in the greatest reed bed of Central Europe. There were collecting opportunities in salt marsh grasslands, and reed bed edges. At the end of the day there was a reception on the courtyard of "Egret Castle", the thatched roofed headquarters of the National Park, during which we could taste local wines. The two music events which participants could enjoy were a concert by the singers of General Harmony and a performance of the world music ensemble "Hétrét" at the Colloquium dinner.

During Friday's closing session prizes for the best student presentations were handed out, and participants and ESA representatives warmly thanked the organisers for their work. We

take this opportunity to say thank you for this kind gesture and also for the positive reports appearing in a number of arachnological journals.

The General Assembly Meeting of ESA took place during the Colloquium. The meeting did not pass uneventfully, because the serious matter of what form forthcoming proceedings volumes should be published in was discussed; but eventually no great change was decided on. The Assembly voted that the 2003 Colloquium would be held in St. Petersburg, Russia.

From the contributions presented at the Colloquium 39 were prepared as scientific papers, and form the present proceedings volume. Although no such agreement was reached at the General Assembly, the personal view of the editors is that this – and forthcoming volumes – should be edited and produced in such a way that, if not a scientific journal, then at least a book series should gradually evolve. If we examine earlier volumes from past colloquia, over the last 10 years, it is obvious there is a very stable community of authors behind these proceedings. The past volumes which appeared yearly (except for every 3rd year) included scientific papers with well over 200 pages in every single volume. The quality of these papers is also very stable and encouraging; typically they are original, brief scientific papers, just as in any refereed journal. This volume also exemplifies that this stable scientific community and its high-quality output can be relied upon, hence the present 39 papers. When setting out to edit this volume and to promote our ideas of a would-be book series, we decided to take a few preliminary steps into that direction: (i) In the hope of setting a standard, in agreement with the editors Søren Toft and Nikolaj Scharff, we copied the format of the Århus proceedings volume (including the precise standard of reference formatting, and other conventions); we also gave the sequel title to our volume "European Arachnology 2002". (ii) We also hoped to follow and maintain a standard in the quality of papers. Therefore all papers went through a strict reviewing process, which involved two referees (often not participants of the colloquium themselves) and editorial checking. The goal was not the rejection of papers (although the possibility was not excluded), rather we hoped to promote a joint positive approach from all participants to improve the quality of the papers. The side-effect of such a process is more effort and somewhat slower publication. On the other hand, we are confident (although only the individual authors, reviewers and editors know themselves, separately for every case) that during this process scientific quality and readability of most manuscripts improved considerably. Unfortunately native English speaking referees were not available in every case, so in many places the editors had to fiddle with the delicacies of the English language, so few times the second official language of the volume became 'Hunglish'. (iii) To overcome another shortcoming of isolated proceedings volumes, we would also like to take steps in the direction of increasing the publicity of the volume by hopefully being able to send a copy to all members of ESA, including those who did not attend the meeting. Apart from the offprints, we also wish to provide freely distributable pdf files to both authors and ESA. Still, we think that by becoming an established series with an ISSN number, wider recognition could be further increased by possibly gaining subscriptions from libraries, and a higher likelihood of inclusion into electronic databases.

Finally we express our gratitude to all who helped in the organisation of the Colloquium and in the creation of the proceedings volume.

We thank our 26 sponsors, who contributed by donations, free or reduced rate services to the success of the Colloquium: Berzsényi Dániel College, Plant Protection Institute HAS, Department of Zoology, Berzsényi Dániel College, Directorate of Vas County Museums, Szombathely City, Vas County Assembly, Kossuth Publishing House, ÉlőVilág, Balogh és Társa Kft (Szombathely), Fertő-Hanság National Park, Őrség National Park, Balaton-felvidék National

Park, FERROSÛT (Szombathely), Hungarian Ornithological and Nature Conservation Society, Prospektus Printing House (Veszprém), BUDA PIÉRT Kereskedelmi Kft., Vasi Volán Rt., County Educational Centre, OLYMPUS Hungary Kft, Hungarian Natural History Museum, Zool. Section, Kinga Fotó (Szombathely), Kertész MTSZ (Szombathely), Kiskunság National Park, Aggtelek National Park, Bükk National Park.

Starting from the early preparations, the Organising Committee members (Ferenc Samu, Csaba Szinetár, György Dudás, János Eichardt, Roland Horváth, Balázs Kiss, Teréz Márkus Szinetárné, András Szirányi, Éva Szita, Tamás Szűts, Ferenc Tóth), and their allies took on the task of all Colloquium related duties. The 'allies', many colleagues, students, friends and family members were devoted labourers of the Colloquium events. We are grateful to all of them: Erika Botos, Péter Baraksó, Renáta Bolfán, Kinga Fetykó, János Fülöp, László Jakab, Katalin Kappel, Péter Kovács, Vince Kovács, Attila Miltényi, Péter Nagy (Colloquium logo), Richárd Rózsa, Borbála and Márton Szinetár, Gábor Takács, András Tomor. We thank György Dudás, Szabolcs Lengyel and Balázs Kiss for being post-colloquium tour guides.

Apart from the institutional sponsorships, officials from the mother institutions, Prof. Dr. Károly Gadányi (rector), Prof. Dr. László Kovács (scientific director) and Dr. József Gyurácz (Head of Dept. Zoology) of the Berzsenyi College, and Dr. Tamás Kőmíves (director) of the Plant Protection Institute provided a lot of personal support, for which we are indebted. Gáborné Bozzay and Ákos Dremmel from the canteen were very flexible and gave a lot of extra help in addition to the excellent services, that we paid for.

From Szombathely town and Vas County officials Dr. Emil Prugberger, Dr. Boldizsár Horváth, György Horváth and Dr. Sándor Horváth provided a lot of personal support.

We are grateful for the organisation of the post card exhibition by Dr. Ferenc Szentkirályi and József Bedő. Péter Ujhelyi made it possible that the logo and the Internet address of the Colloquium could appear in the magazine "ÉlőVilág".

The colloquium account and finances were kept in order by the Finances Department, Plant Protection Institute. We thank all their efforts, with special reference to Róbertné Saláth (Finances Dept. Director) and Mihályné Szakáll. On the spot Éva Szita, Erika Botos and Kinga Fetykó dealt with money matters.

Many people provided voluntary help in the editing process of the present volume. We are grateful to all the referees for their work. Special thanks to Drs. Jason Dunlop, Anne Gaskett, Keith D. Sundreland, James Bell, Ann L. Rypstra, Gabriel Weyman and Emma Shaw for their express linguistic check-up of some manuscripts. Dr. Søren Toft and Per G. Henriksen kindly provided the format of the Århus proceedings volume, which was used as a model. The editors are indebted to the technical editor, Éva Szita, who did all the technical work from keeping an account of manuscripts, handled much of the correspondence, and, most of all, accomplished the tedious task of producing the camera ready material from Word documents and the bits and pieces of electronic and hard copy figures.

So that memories of the Colloquium are not lost and a record is kept for ESA and for future organisers, the full program, abstracts (including abstracts of those presentations not published here), list of participants, guidelines to authors, photos of the excursion and other events are still displayed, and will be displayed, for as long as possible, on the Colloquium web-site under the Hungarian Arachnological Site: "www.julia-nki.hu/arachnol.html".