

The newsletter of the European Society of Arachnology

November 2012, No. 2

Secretariat of European Society of Arachnology
Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics, Democritus University of Thrace
Dimitras 19, 68100 Alexandroupolis, Greece
E-mail: maria.chatzaki@gmail.com

Editor: Marco Isaia, E-mail: marco.isaia@unito.it
Co-editor: Sara Goodacre, E-mail: sara.goodacre@nottingham.ac.uk



From the President

By Ferenc Samu

Dear Fellow Arachnologists,
looking at the logo of the recent Ljubljana Congress, one thing comes into my mind: good things are always simple. Those who were fortunate to participate in Ljubljana had a marvelous time, sensing a real 'flow' at this smoothly and (seemingly) effortlessly organized meeting. Enjoy the lively and personal account of the events at the 27th European Congress of Arachnology in this new issue of our extended Newsletter.

Congress Report

By Marco Isaia

Photos by: Christian Komposch, Alberto Chiarle

The 27th European Congress of Arachnology was hosted by Matjaž Kuntner and the EZ Lab at the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Science and Arts, in the lively and smart town of Ljubljana, Slovenia. After a pleasant car trip all across the Po Valley, I arrived at the congress venue on the evening of September 1st and enjoyed a nice reception at the newly renovated Atrium at Novi Trg 2, in the beautiful downtown of Ljubljana. Once I started to walk along the Ljubljanica river, I immediately perceived the uniqueness of this town: stylish architecture and pleasant bars are perfectly integrated in a city that is five-thousand years, from the remains of the Roman city of Emona to the old city centre and its medieval castle, to the elegant Baroque façades and the picturesque Tivoli park, which stretches into the very city centre (and is also

very nice for jogging, in case a sport-break is needed in between the congress sessions).

Ljubljana is also known as the "city of the dragon".

I wondered if "the dragon" was actually referring to the rigorous and austere congress staff or the organizer, but I was actually wrong. I have been told that it refers to the legend of Jason and the Argonauts, who killed a horrible monster near the town. Moreover, after just one beer, it was also easy to see that the presumed austere "monster-congress staff" was in reality a very welcoming and easy dragon (no sharp claws, no spitting fire), with many nice people working efficiently in a very friendly way.



Welcome party at the main congress Venue (Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Science and Arts of Ljubljana)



Left, Matjaž Kuntner, chair of the 27th European Congress of Arachnology.
Above, the Congress logo



The Congress was attended by 156 participants from 38 countries from all continents, including colleagues from such distant countries as Australia (André Walter), Brazil (Cristina Rheims and Ana Lúcia Tourinho), China (Wenjin Gan, Samuel Yu-Lung Hsieh, Ning Sun, Lihong Tu, Xin Xu, Tingting Zhang), India (Atul Bodkhe, Shazia Quasin), Japan (Hirotugu Ono), Mexico (Alejandro Valdez Mondragón), New Zealand (Fiona Cross), Pakistan (Muhammad Mukhtar), Singapore (Seok Ping Goh, Daiqin Li, Shichang Zhang), Taiwan (I Min Tso's "regulars": Pao-Shen Huang, Chih-Wei Lai, Chen-Pan Liao, HsienChun Liao, Yun-Jia Lo, Yueh-Sheng Loong, Chang-Cheng Ya), Uruguay (Laura Montes de Oca) and the USA (Ingi Agnarsson, Paula Cushing, Lauren



Esposito, Eileen Hebets, Sean Kelly, Lauren Kerzicnik, Heine Kiesbüy, Dakota Piorkowski, Paul Selden, Jason Bond and Boris Zakharov).

The countries with the highest number of participants were Germany (25), the Czech Republic (14), the “locals” (Slovenia, 11) and USA (11). Taiwan followed with 9, then Italy (7), Austria, China and Switzerland (6).

In respect to last year’s congress (Israel 2011), 23 countries re-confirmed their participation and several new countries appeared in the list, including China (6 participants), Croatia (4), Bulgaria (3), Singapore (3), Brazil (2), Serbia (2), Turkey (2), Algeria (1), Finland (1), Macedonia (1), Mexico (1), New Zealand (1), Norway (1), Pakistan (1) and Poland (1).

Participants by country

Germany	25	Belgium	3	Ukraine	2
Czech Republic	14	Bulgaria	3	Algeria	1
Slovenia	11	Israel	3	Finland	1
USA	11	Singapore	3	Japan	1
Taiwan	8	Spain	3	Liechtenstein	1
Italy	7	UK	3	Macedonia	1
Austria	6	Australia	2	Mexico	1
China	6	Brazil	2	New Zealand	1
Switzerland	6	Denmark	2	Norway	1
Hungary	5	India	2	Pakistan	1
Croatia	4	Netherlands	2	Poland	1
Russia	4	Serbia	2	Uruguay	1
Slovakia	4	Turkey	2		

Overall, more than half of the participants (86 out of 156) delivered oral presentations and 67 presented posters. More than 40% of the presentations (35) and more than 60% of the posters (42) were presented by students. This important and welcomed participation of students was made possible in part thanks to the offering of more than thirty grants, which covered fees and accommodation.

When considering all the scientific contributions presented at the congress, most of the work focused on Araneae (87.5%). Opiliones (5%) and Scorpiones (2%) followed. Solifugae, Palpigradi, Pseudoscorpiones and Amblypygi were represented altogether in just 2% of the total contributions. A few talks about arachnids in general were also presented (3.5%).

The great majority of the contributions focused on Systematics and Evolution (60%), followed by Ecology and Behaviour (26%), Physiology and

Functional Morphology (5%) and Biogeography (4%). The “special” DNA Barcoding Symposium hosted 8 presentations (5%).

The first plenary was given by the leader of one of the most important research groups on spider silk, Fritz Vollrath from the University of Oxford. A very interesting overview on “the secret of silk” was presented. So far, Fritz’s studies about spider silks and webs have lead us to a number of important discoveries, ranging from tunable nano-scale composite structures to complex self-assembling micro-machines. Giving sound examples, Fritz underlined the fact that silks have a bright future, both as model to guide our understanding of energy efficient bio-polymers but also as prototype models to guide the design of totally novel polymer systems, both for medical or engineering aims.

According to the Organizer’s aim that there be good support for the work of students, the first session of each day was devoted to Student talks. Lenka Sentenská (Czech Republic) had the difficult job of opening the Ecology and Behaviour session, chaired by I-Min Tso, with a talk about the effect of aposematism and mimicry on spider behaviour, referring to the particular case of the salticid spider *Evarcha arcuata*. Steffi Zimmer (Germany) presented the results of an interesting experiment about conditional male mating strategies in the Australian wasp spider *Argiope keyserlingi*. With a talk about sexual cannibalism in the European wasp spider, *Argiope bruennichi*, Klaas Welke (Germany) brought us back to Europe just before jumping away again, this time to Singapore, with Shichang Zhang, who talked about the evolution of chemical defense in *Nephila antipodiana* (Nephilidae).

Just after the first coffee break, Yael Lubin chaired the second session of Student talks that started with Jasmin Ruch (Germany), who presented the exciting discovery of a new subsocial crab spider from Queensland (Australia). Just after this, Huda Al-Beiruti (Israel) presented a talk about foraging and diet selection of spiders in the Negev wheat fields. Roman Bucher (Germany) talked about antipredator behaviour in insects and spiders induced by chemotactile cues of three spider species. The rare functional response of Type 4 (decrease in hunting frequency at higher prey density) was the main subject of Eva Líznavá’s contribution (Czech Republic). Finally, Katrin Kunz (Germany) presented a talk about the functions of the bizarre cephalic modifications of the males of the dwarf spider *Oedothorax apicatus*. The originality and the high scientific content of the talk lead Katrin being



awarded the first student prize for the best oral presentation about Ecology and Behavior.

At the following lunch break, the choice was hard: in the space of a little more than one hour time we had to choose to dine in one of the hundred bars, local and ethnic restaurants located near the main venue (from Thai to Mexican to -the ubiquitous and fantastic- Italian food). Luckily, the very detailed list provided to all participants (including comments about prices and food quality) was very helpful!

Back to work, the sessions started with the special DNA Barcoding Symposium, organized in two parts and introduced by Wolfgang Nentwig and Matjaž Kuntner. Three longer introductory lectures were given on the general topics and utility of DNA barcoding. Miquel Arnedo (Spain) discussed "advantages and pitfalls" of using DNA barcoding and proposed to develop a European research network focusing on inventory and biodiversity monitoring, Ingi Agnarsson (USA) presented a mega-transect of Caribbean arachnids and showed how DNA barcoding facilitates species discovery and Jeremy Miller (The Netherlands) presented his DNA barcoding efforts in Europe and Asia, focusing on optimizing methods, getting the most out of natural history collections, and use of image libraries to enhance the value of tropical inventories. During the second part of the symposium, which took place during a parallel session, more specialized short talks were given presenting ongoing barcoding efforts by Matjaž Kuntner (Slovenia), Liana Lasut (Switzerland) and Wolfgang Nentwig (Switzerland) on behalf of the German Barcode of Life initiative. Finally, Peter van Helsdingen (The Netherlands) presented a philosophical viewpoint on DNA barcoding. These talks were followed by a lively discussion linking barcoding techniques to species identification, conservation, biogeographical, faunistic, ecological, monitoring and taxonomical research.

The other parallel session in the Prešernova Hall focused on behaviour (chair: Jutta Schneider). The session was composed by five talks. Mikhail Omelko (Russia) talked about the genus *Cybaeus* (Cybaeidae) in Russian Far East, Stano Korenko (Czech Republic) presented his talk about manipulation of web architecture induced by parasitoids, Dirk Renner (Germany) about opportunistic mating in *Argiope bruennichi*, Manuel Cárdenas (Spain) about phenotypic plasticity in *Zodarion* and finally, Reiner Neumann (Germany) presented his talk on the balance between reproductive success and alternative mating strategies in size mismatched males in *Nephila senegalensis*. Reiner's talk was

awarded with the third prize for student talks on Ecology and Behavior.

The first congress day ended with a bowling night at the "Spider Club" (whose sign - true 70s like glam style - testified that the name was indeed the real one and that it was not given just for the occasion). Participants were grouped into teams for the official bowling game, which was certainly a very interesting subject for the "funniest picture competition" that took place unofficially. The table-footy competition "ArachnoChamp" was hard, but after a short while it turned into a friendly, uncompetitive, funny excuse for asking for more drinks (rigorously offered by the staff!).



The bowling-tablefooty-alcoholic night at the Spider Club.

After the long bowling-tablefooty-alcoholic night (oh gosh, it was only the first day!), day two began with the second plenary of the Congress, given by Jason Bond, world leader in the study of Mygalomorph spiders.

The need for cross-disciplinary collaboration was strongly advised by Jason, who demonstrated through his deep studies on mygalomorphs in California, that integrating morphological, ecological, and molecular-based approaches is the only way to ensure that taxonomy reflects evolutionary diversity. Starting from the molecular-based studies of mygalomorph spiders, Jason demonstrated that



molecular approaches to species delimitation often grossly overestimate diversity whereas morphology-based species delineation may underestimate it. It seemed very clear that neither of these approaches taken alone is optimal and thus the field of taxonomy really is in need of a broader perspective. So please let us all try to work together!

The student session on Ecology and Behavior, chaired by Sara Goodacre, started with a talk on the function of body color of the Asian crab spiders by Yun-Jia Lo (Taiwan). Yueh-Sheng Loong (China) presented the results of his experiment on the nocturnal prey attracting strategy of *Deinopis* (Deinopidae) and Wenjin Gan (China) talked about the significance of bright body coloration in web building spiders. The “local” Matjaž Gregorič (Slovenia) closed the first session with his presentation about optimal foraging vs biogenetic law using *Leucage venusta* as model for his studies on orb web allometry.

After the coffee break there were further student talks about Ecology and Behavior (Session chaired by Daiqin Li) at which two talks about *Philodromus* were presented: Pamela Loverre (Italy) presented her work about the functional response of these spiders at low temperature and Radek Michalko (Czech Republic) talked about the ecological mechanisms that allowed the coexistence of three species of the same genus in the same habitat. Shazia Quasin (India) presented her talk about spiders along an altitudinal gradient in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve, which was awarded with the second prize for a Student Oral presentation in Ecology and Behaviour. After that, Pavel Žila (Slovakia) talked about changes in spider communities in non-forest habitats and Youcef Alioua (Algeria) closed the student session with a talk on spider biodiversity in palm groves.

After lunch (again, hard choice!), two parallel sessions followed, chaired by Gabriele Uhl (Behavior) and Bernard Huber (Systematics and Evolution). Daiqin Li (Singapore) opened the Behavior session with a comprehensive talk on sexual conflict and the causes and the effects of spider genital emasculation. The role of conspicuous body coloration in courtship of nocturnal fishing spider (*Dolomedes raptor*) was the main topic of I-Min Tso's talk (Taiwan) and André Walter (Australia) wrap-attacked us with a talk about silk decorating in orb web spiders.

Stano Pekár (Czech Republic) presented a comparative analysis based on nearly one-thousand species of spiders, aimed at revealing the drivers of the evolution of inaccurate and accurate mimicry.

Yael Lubin (Israel) closed the session before the coffee break, with a talk about dispersal in the colonial spider *Cyrtophora citricola*.

In parallel, in the Prešernova Hall, Bernard Huber was chairing the Systematics & Evolution afternoon session, which started with a talk on systematics, phylogeny and biogeography of Zodariidae, with special reference to forest dwelling Afrotropical species by Arnaud Henrard (Belgium). Just a few hours before the forthcoming Russian Party (scheduled the same night), Yuri Marusik (Russia) warned us (and proposed several guidelines) about the inconsistency in arachnological terminology, while Efrat Gavish-Regev (Israel) gave a talk about the systematics of the spider genus *Sintula* in Europe, North Africa and Israel. The cladistic analysis of the spider family Sparassidae was the main focus of Cristina Anne Rheims's talk (Germany) and just after, Charlotte De Busschere (Belgium) helped us to unravel the Oonopidae puzzle. Finally, Hannah Wood's talk (Denmark) focused on archaeid spiders and their Palpimanoidea relatives.

The first poster session took place in the afternoon, the second one took place the day after at the same time. Posters were grouped in three main topics. Systematics and Evolution (20 students and 12 regulars), Ecology & Biogeography (18 students and 12 regulars) and Physiology & Functional Morphology (2 students and 2 regulars).



Poster session at Prešernova Hall

Students were awarded with three prizes for poster presentation and in particular Jana Plíšková (Czech Republic) won the first prize in Systematics and Evolution with a poster about the karyotype differentiation of Alpine scorpions of the subgenus *Euscorpis*. The second prize was assigned to Susanne Meese (Germany) with a poster about the discovery of multiple paternity in natural populations of three different spider species. The third prize went to Cheng-Ya Chang (Taiwan) with a poster about colour discrimination abilities of jumping spiders.



The Ecology and Behaviour student poster session was won by Urška Pristovšek (Slovenia), with a contribution about the increase of aggressiveness in emasculated males (how can it be different?!) of *Herennia* (Nephilidae). The second prize went to Hsien Chun Liao (Taiwan) and his work on the effects of wind on microstructures of MA silks produced by *Cyclosa mulmeinensis* (Araneidae). The third prize was assigned to Klaas Welke (Germany) and to his poster about inbreeding depression and cryptic female choice in *Argiope australis* (Araneidae).

As stated in the program, the Russian party scheduled that night went on “until the salmon was drunk”, and was accompanied by the excellent Russian food brought by Yuri Marusik, his wife and all the Russians. The menu included all kind of dried-or-smoked-excellent-whatsoever and, of course, caviar, vodka and many other spirits coming from all over the world. Just to let you know in brief, the traditional Russian Party Stuff present on the Slovenian desk (drink excluded) included красная икра (red caviar) and копчёная рыба (cold smoked wild salmon) from Magadan (Siberia), varieties of сушённые кальмары (dry squids, calamari) from Moscow, желтый полосатик (yellow dry striped

fish), янтарная с перцем (Amber spicy, Dried Peppered Pollack), chechil cheese in pigtail form from Caucasus, several types of dry bread differently flavoured and last but not least, сало (pork fat) and салями (salami) from Ukraine. (After three vodkas all names in Cyrillic should become more clear).

Eileen Hebets from the University of Nebraska (USA) held the third plenary of the congress, talking about the potential of arachnids as models for behavioral studies. In her interesting talk, Eileen drew our attention on the fact that Arachnids are extremely well equipped to both extract and transmit salient information from or through the environment utilizing a diverse array of sensory structures. During her presentation Eileen referred to her recent works focusing on the Amblypygid *Phrynus marginemaculatus*, the wolf spiders *Schizocosa stridulans* and *Rabidosa rabida*. Starting from an interesting report about multimodal communication studies in spiders, Eileen argued that arachnids are ideal organisms for studies addressing the evolution and function of sensory systems and that the future of arachnology is in cross-disciplinary collaborations.

Elizabeth Lipke (Germany) opened the third Student Session on Systematic and Evolution, chaired by Ingi Agnarsson with a very interesting talk (awarded with the second prize for oral presentations in Systematic and Evolution) on spider sperm, highlighting the discovery of the largest spider sperm known so far (*Caponina alegre*, Caponiidae). Jonas Wolff (Germany) presented a comparison between the claw tufts of eleven spider families and Bastien Klußmann-Fricke (Germany) focused on the prosomal ganglion of the harvestman *Mitostoma chrysomelas*. Finally, Ren-Chung Cheng (Slovenia) closed the session with a comprehensive talk on female biased sexual dimorphism in the araneid subfamily of Argiopinae.

After the coffee break, Christian Kropf chaired the second part of the session, starting with a presentation about Turkish linyphiids by Hayriye Karabulut (Turkey), followed by Gregor A. Wachter (Austria) and his talk about the faunal history of *Megabunus* harvestmen in the Alps. A new orb-weaver genus from Central Asia was the main subject of Anna Šestáková's talk (Russia) and Steffen Bayer referred about the southern Asian spider family of Psecridae. Majid Moradmand (Germany) closed the session, with a talk about the genus *Eusparassus*.

Two parallel sessions were held in the afternoon. The first was chaired by Lauren Esposito (Systematics & Evolution), starting with Sara



Caviar and other Russian speciality at the Russian Party.



Goodacre (UK) and her talk about the evolution of sex ratio distortion in *Pityohyphantes phrygianus*. The sperm structure in daddy-long-leg spiders (Pholcidae) was the main focus of Peter Michalik's talk (Germany) and Lihong Tu (China) illustrated the evolution of the movable epigynum in linyphiids. Paul A. Selden (USA) brought us back to the Jurassic, with a talk about primitive orbweavers and Bernhard Huber (Germany) talked about multiple convergent shifts among microhabitats in Pholcidae. The session ended up with a re-discovery of the arachnid fauna of the Brazilian Amazon, with Ana Lúcia Tourinho's talk (Brazil).

In parallel, in the Prešernova Hall, Stano Pekár chaired the Ecology session starting with a talk about the effect of spontaneous fire on spider communities in Eastern Ukraine by Nina Polchaninova (Ukraine). Christoph Muster illustrated a very interesting case study about synanthropic harvestmen and our esteemed President Ferenc Samu (Hungary) presented his "flight" with Prezi on the preservation of spider communities in fragmented nature reserve areas. The spiders of sandy grassland in the Moravian Sahara were the subject of Jana Niedobová's talk (Czech Republic) and the ground-living spiders at polluted sites of Ukrainian industrial areas were Mariia Fedoriak's (Ukraine) subject. A "cool and underground" talk was given by Christian Komposch, focusing on spiders and harvestmen collected in undercooled scree slopes in the Austrian Alps.

A very enjoyable "Music night" followed the sessions. In perfect ESA style, the elegant and cool atmosphere created by the three refined musicians (voices, guitar, accordion) and their acoustic versions, slowly turned into a funny singing and then sweaty dance (especially when the trio presented their wild version of Hot 'n' Cold by Katy Perry).

Fiona Cross (New Zealand) opened day four, with a fascinating and intriguing talk about the exciting discovery of the "vampire attitude" of *Evarcha culicivora*, a salticid from the Lake Victoria region of East Africa. *E. culicivora*'s predatory strategy is unique because it feeds indirectly on vertebrate blood by seeking blood-carrying mosquitoes. Moreover, *E. culicivora* targets the anthropophilic genus *Anopheles* (the genus to which all human malaria vectors belong) as its preferred mosquitoes. Excitingly, by examining *E. culicivora*'s olfaction-based behaviour (beware, this spider really "smells" our blood!), Fiona discovered the first real "anthropophilic" spider (I just wonder if such a draculian attitude may be regarded as a real *philia*...).



The music night at the Atrium.

Jeremy Miller chaired the fourth student session of the Congress, scheduled, as usual, in the morning. An interesting talk by Marija Majer (Denmark) about habitat niche separation in two social spiders (*Anelosimus* vs. *Stegodyphus*) opened the session. The talk was awarded with the third prize for a student oral presentation in Systematics and Evolution. Seok Ping Goh (Singapore) talked about the phylogeny and the behaviour of the Asian species of *Anelosimus* and Dakota Piorkowski (USA) focused on capture silk evolution through using *Hickmania troglodytes* as model. The molecular phylogeny of the subfamily Argyrodinae (Theridiidae) in the Major Antilles was the main subject of Heine Kiesbüy (USA), who ended the first session of the day. After the coffee break, the final session of the student talks took place. Paula Cushing chaired the session, starting with a talk by Ning Sun (China) about the epigynal morphology of erigonine spiders, followed by the best student oral presentation in Systematic and Evolution (first prize) by Henrik Krehenwinkel, who presented a phylogeographic and ecological dissection of the recent range expansion of *Argiope bruennichi*. Vera Opatova (Spain) gave an interesting talk about the Mediterranean ctenizid trapdoor spiders (Ctenizidae, Mygalomorphae) followed by Alejandro Valdez-Mondragón (Mexico), who talked about the phylogenetic systematics of the spider genus *Ixchela* (Pholcidae). The last student talk was presented by Laura Montes de Oca (Uruguay), focusing on the taxonomic status of the tarantula *Grammostola anthracina* (Theraphosidae).



In total, 35 student talks were presented and 12 of them (6 presentations and 6 posters) were awarded with monetary and membership prizes offered by the American Arachnological Society, the British Arachnological Society and Arachnologische Gesellschaft, who are all warmly thanked for their contributions.

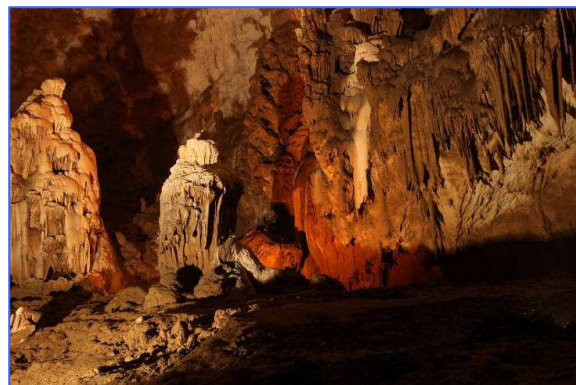
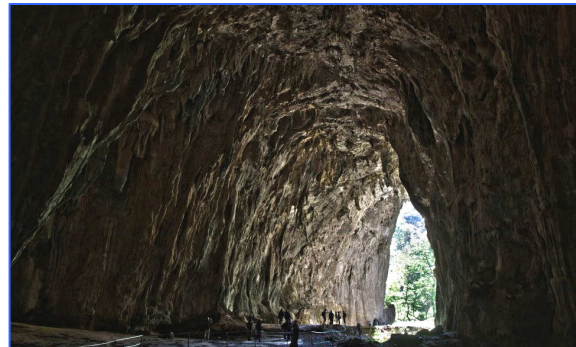
The last sessions of the Congress opened in the afternoon, chaired by Miquel Arnedo (Biogeography) and Peter Michalik (Functional morphology & Physiology). Scorpions from Caribbean Islands (Lauren Esposito, USA), spiders from South-western Alps (myself, Italy), cursorial spiders from Punjab (Muhammad Khalid Mukhtar, Pakistan), spiders of Socotra (Vladimír Hula, Czech Republic), spiders from Colorado agroecosystems (Lauren Kerzicnik, USA) and the harvestmen genus *Siro* in Europe (Ivo Karaman, Serbia), were the subjects of the session.

At the same time in the parallel session, the presentations focused on several aspects of Physiology and Functional morphology, including gland secretions in Palpatores (Miriam Schaidler, Austria) and Cyphophthalmi (Günther Raspotnig, Austria), papillae on the pedipalps of Solifugae (Paula Cushing, USA), effect of insecticides and herbicides on *Plexippus paykulli* (Salticidae) (Shafaat Yar Khan, Pakistan) and *Pardosa sumatrana* (Lycosidae) (Hafiz Muhammad, Pakistan), and morphology of male palps in Gnaphosidae (Boris Zakharov, USA).

Despite the final General Assembly, the Student Awards Announcement and the Closing Ceremony officially closing the Congress, the enjoyable and friendly atmosphere created by the participants and by the hosts remained in the air until late night for the Congress dinner (served in the Atrium).

The following day (five), a very early wake was the start of the official excursion day. Arachnologists from all over the world entered the Škocjan Cave in the morning of Sept 5th. Due to the exceptional beauty, the extraordinary cave system of Škocjan has been regarded as a World Heritage Site since 1986. The caves host flowstone deposits, every kind of stalactite and stalagmites formations, several large rimstone pools, an amazing underground canyon of the Reka River (2,600 metres in length, from 10 to 60 metres wide, up to 146 metres in height!) and one of the largest underground chambers in Europe (the Martel Chamber is 2.2 million m³, 146 metres in height, 120 metres wide and 300 metres long). An interesting coenosis of cave animals is harboured by the cave, including large nursery colonies of several bat species, the

world-famous cave salamander (*Proteus anguinus*), and several endemic species of troglobiont crustaceans, beetles and spiders, of course.



Congress excursion at Škocjan cave, a World Heritage Site since 1986.

Back on the bus, we went straight to Lipiča town, where we walked in the pleasant landscape of a traditional Stud Farm and had a quick lunch. A nice walk from Socerb Castle to Osp (some of the participants also crossed – but not on purpose! - the Italian border) and a massive collection of spiders and whatever else took place during the walk.



Congress excursion at Škocjan cave, a World Heritage Site since 1986.



To sum up, the hosts were very friendly, we partied all nights and the Congress resulted in a very fruitful experience for everyone attending. Our sincere thanks for the organization go to Matjaž Kuntner, Matjaž Gregorič, Nina Videgar, Simona Kralj-Fišer, Tjaša Lokovšek, Ren-Chung Cheng, Klemen Čandek, Olga Kardoš, Martin Turjak, Tea Knapič, Urška Pristovšek, Miha Pipan and Klavdija Šuen.

News from ESA general assembly

By Efrat Gavish Regev

The President opened the General Assembly with some announcements, such as the society's financial support of the Araneae Spiders of Europe project in 2012 and a new membership "policy". The new "policy" includes tighter control of payments, due to the high number of non-paying members. It includes three guidelines. The first suggests membership cancellation if a member does not pay after three years. The second is a new payment deadline by 1st of February by bank transfer, payment via other societies or by sending the money in registered mail. Members who wish to pay at the congress must pay one year in advance (previous congress). Finally, members that pay through other societies should notify the ESA treasurer and membership secretary of this payment by 1st February. The Treasurer (Christian Kropf) reminded the meeting of the problem with closing the old account in Paris, which is based at La Banque Postale in Paris and cannot be formally closed, because only the family of Bertrand Krafft who opened the account can close it. Theo Blick presented the publication of the proceedings in the *Arachnologische Mitteilungen*. AraMit is an open access journal that is included in "Scopus", and has an "Online early system" and DOI-links for the references. Both the 25th (Greece, AraMit Vol. 40) and the 26th ECA (Israel, AraMit Vol. 43) proceedings included 11 manuscripts. The congress volumes are also online at ESA webpage. Marco Isaia presented the next European meeting (2014) which will be held in Torino, Italy. Marco suggested two dates for the meetings: 25th – 29th August or 1st – 5th September; a slight majority of the members preferred the latter. The elections to council resulted in re-election of Theo Blick, Jason Dunlop, Christian Kropf and Samuel Zschokke, and the new election of Wolfgang Nentwig and Sara Goodacre in addition to the other six serving members. The meeting was closed with a moment of silence in memory of two arachnologists that passed away recently: Rod Allison and Alfred F. Millidge, and with the announcement of two new honorary members: Yael Lubin (Israel) and Rudy Jocqué (Belgium). Further details of the General Assembly can be found on the Society website.

Announcements

- **The 19th International Congress of Arachnology (ICA 2013)** will be held at the Howard Beach Resort, Kenting National Park, at the subtropical southern tip of Taiwan, from June 23 to June 28, 2013. It is the first ICA to be held in Asia. The meeting will be organized and hosted by an Asian Organizing Committee of Affiliates of the International Society of Arachnology.



Asian and International Keynote speakers and a variety of topical sessions (taxonomy, systematics, behaviour, physiology, ecology, biodiversity) and additional symposia (genus *Nephila*, spider silk, Arachnid diversity, urbanization and sustainable development, harvestman systematics) have been organized. In addition, there will be opportunities for collecting arachnids and five-day post-congress excursions organized for participants. The program is not finalized, so participants may propose additional symposia, or direct general inquiries, to the Organizing Committee; see the Symposium website

<http://araneae.thu.edu.tw/ica2013/welcome>
or e-mail spider@thu.edu.tw.

- **The 28th European Congress of Arachnology** will be hosted in summer 2014 by Marco Isaia, at the Department of Life Science and System of Biology in Torino (Italy). More news will come next year, in the third issue of the ECA newsletter, focusing on the International Congress of Taiwan.
- **ESA is on Facebook!**
Come join our Fan Page for quick-and-easy access to all of our contents and share your thoughts about the latest scientific and non-scientific news!



<http://www.facebook.com/pages/European-Society-of-Arachnology/261644717221105>

