

## Foreword

The 22<sup>nd</sup> European Colloquium of Arachnology was held in the Bulgarian town of Blagoevgrad, from 1–6 August 2005, accommodated in the buildings of the American University. The meeting was organized by the Institute of Zoology and the National Museum of Natural History (both part of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), under the aegis of the European Society of Arachnology (ESA). Participations from 28 countries – 96 scientific delegates and 19 accompanying persons attended the colloquium, which was officially opened by Dr Søren Toft – President of ESA, in the presence of the university authorities. The traditionally week-long meeting involved four full scientific days and a mid-week colloquium excursion. Including plenary sessions, there were 49 oral scientific presentations and 36 posters on display. The invited speakers gave thorough lectures on fields such as paleoarachnology (Jason Dunlop), ecology (Jean-Piere Maelfait), systematics (Matiaz Kuntner) and biogeography (Carles Ribera). The colloquium excursion took the participants to the region of the picturesque Melnik town and Rozhen Monastery, where except for the cultural program, all delegates were given opportunities to collect spiders and other arachnids in sandy and xerothermic sites. At the end of the excursion there was a reception in the wine cellar of a house with typical Bulgarian architecture. The colloquium dinner took place in a traditional Bulgarian restaurant where the guests tasted typical Bulgarian meals and listened (and danced) to Bulgarian folk music. During Friday's closing session prizes for the best student presentations were handed out, and ESA representatives thanked the organizers for their work. The General Assembly Meeting of ESA decided the next 23<sup>rd</sup> Colloquium of Arachnology to be held in Barcelona, Spain in 2006.

The present volume presents the proceedings of the 22<sup>nd</sup> European Colloquium of Arachnology. It comprises 32 scientific articles by 61 authors and covers the following topics: paleontology, morphology, taxonomy and systematics, ecology, biogeography, faunistics and parasitology. We are very thankful to all referees for providing professional and timely reviews of all manuscripts submitted for publication to *Acta zoologica bulgarica*. We hope that the diverse topics of the articles and their high scientific quality will make this issue pleasant, interesting and useful reading not only for all arachnologists but also to general ecologists and biologists.

The Organizing Committee members (Christo Deltshev, Petar Beron, Stoyan Lazarov, Plamen Mitov, Gergin Blagoev, Pavel Stoev, Boyan Petrov, Toshko Ljubomirov, Mario Langourov, and Silviya Tosheva) took on the task of all colloquium related duties. The logo and the web site were created by Stanislav Abadjiev, to whom the organizers are especially indebted. Very important for the social program and the accommodation was the help of Vlada Peneva (Central Laboratory of General Ecology, BAS), Velin Radenkov (St Kliment Ohridsky Sofia University), Rayka Georgieva, Alexander Pulev (Blagoevgrad Regional Museum of History) and Nadya Afendova (American University, Blagoevgrad). We express our gratitude to all that helped in the meeting's organization and proceedings publishing, as well as to the invited speakers and session leaders for making the colloquium interesting and smoothly running. We especially acknowledge the financial and kind support of the following companies and NG organizations: European Society of Arachnology, Gradus – Panagyuriste, Amarea Ylsor – Sofia, Optics – Panagyuriste, Asen Nikolov Foundation – Sofia, Bulgare Foundation – Sofia, Rajna Knyaginya – Panagyuriste, and Nikola Kaymakov – Panagyuriste. To all those who attended the meeting we express our thanks for the presentation of interesting lectures and posters, and for the all unforgettable moments that we shared together. We look forward to meeting you again at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Colloquium of Arachnology in Spain.

*Christo Deltshev*