



## IN MEMORIAM

### KONRAD THALER

19<sup>th</sup> December 1940 - 11<sup>th</sup> July 2005

In the middle of the summer of 2005 we received the sad and unexpected news of the death of our colleague and friend Konrad Thaler. He died on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July 2005 when leading a student excursion in the Alps near Innsbruck, the region he knew so well and which was so much “his” territory. He was born in Innsbruck and has

lived there whole his life. He was preparing for his retirement early 2006 and making plans how to continue with his work on spiders.

With Konrad Thaler we have lost not only a dear friend and good colleague but also a leading arachnologist. His earliest publication on an arachnological subject dates from 1963. It grew into a steady stream of papers on taxonomical and zoogeographical subjects, some of which still are appearing posthumously. It shows how much he was taken in the middle of active life. The Alpine fauna had his deep interest and he studied the spiders of that mountain range as well as the harvestmen, myriapods and flies. He liked to work together with others and thus his list of publications, recently published in the *Arachnologische Mitteilungen* 21, comprises 220 papers many of which were written in cooperation with other arachnologists. His “oeuvre” covers many different subjects which reflects his broad interest in biology. He strongly contributed to the knowledge of the spider fauna of his own homeland Austria in the first place, directly by studying the spiders himself as well as indirectly by inspiring students and others to work on this group of animals. Gradually he was aiming at a complete overview of the Austrian spider fauna which early this century resulted in his contribution to the checklist of the spiders of several countries in central and western Europe on the internet. Konrad hated to simply repeat old records and was only willing to include data when he was convinced of their correctness. With his wife Barbara he undertook many trips to Greece and published on the species they found there. His taxonomic work was also not restricted to Austria but focussed on the European fauna. He also showed much interest in the history of arachnology and loved to unravel ancient publications and carry out a thorough exegesis of what the old masters wrote. He would be the last person to deny that he wanted to work on spiders every available hour on every available day for as long as he could.

We all have loved Konrad with his gentle manners, such a gentleman and always helpful. We could always rely on his enormous experience and knowledge of spiders and his willingness to share it with others. He loved to work with students and train them to carry out research properly. When visiting his office in the Zoological Institute in Innsbruck it soon

became clear how many people were in frequent contact with him and sought his advice or help. His laboratory always had that warm and pleasant atmosphere and was the inspiring place for many projects. We will not easily forget him. Konrad participated in most colloquiums of the European Arachnological Society and also of the International Arachnological Society, the former Centre International d'Arachnologie (C.I.D.A.), of which he acted as president from 1986-1989.

At the General Assembly of the European Society of Arachnology during the 22<sup>nd</sup> Colloquium on Arachnology in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, he was commemorated and a moment of silence was duly respected as a farewell.

*P. J. van Helsdingen*