

Preface to the section of the Proceedings of the 28th European Congress of Arachnology, Torino, 2014 Aug. 24-29 (pp. 1-54)

I remember very well the exact moment when our esteemed former President, Ferenc Samu, together with our new President, Wolfgang Nentwig and the omnipresent Theo Blick, called me away during the Israeli meal at the 2011 congress in Israel. “These guys look pretty serious – I thought – what is wrong with them?” I could not imagine that they were trying to put on my shoulders the responsibility for organizing the 28th European Congress of Arachnology! I had a little hesitation, but I could not see any doubt in their subtle kindly threatening expression, which meant that the decision was already taken and that there was just one possible answer to their question.

If, from one side, I had no time for taking the decision, from the other, there was enough time for the organization: in three years I could try to make a good job. Back in Italy, a few months later, I assembled the team and the adventure started.

The “core” of the organization team was composed both by arachnologists and non-arachnologists, and all of them were (and still are) very good friends: Mauro Paschetta, Alberto Chiarle, Raquel Galindo, Rocco Mussat, Elena Piano Sr and Stefano Mammola. In the last weeks before the meeting, the team grew up with 8 more volunteers joining the group.

The Congress was attended by 225 participants (including 27 accompanying persons and 15 members of staff) from 41 countries. Beside European countries, we hosted people coming from New Zealand, Australia, Mexico, USA, Uruguay, Japan, China, Iran, Pakistan, India and Taiwan.

As they told us many times (especially during the evening entertainments!), people had a lot of fun during the congress!

The scientific program itself was split over four days of talks, and comprised 5 plenary talks, 81 oral presentations and 81 posters that encompassed a wide breadth of arachnological research, with 22 thematic sessions (12 for oral presentations and 10 for posters) in addition to three special symposia. A wide range of contributed talks followed each plenary, many of which were given by students. The talks were split into subject areas such as behavioural and community ecology, functional morphology, biogeography, systematics and faunistics, phylogeography



and phylogenetics. Three special symposia placed at various stages throughout the congress also added focal points, covering topics such as invasive species, mating strategies and spider genomics.

The plenary talks given throughout the conference illustrated the breadth of research covered at the meeting. Martin Entling gave the first talk of the conference, on trophic interactions in spiders and their importance in ecosystems and Lucia Kuhn-Nentwig started off the sessions on the second day with a talk on the complexities of venom evolution. On day three Erhard Christian fascinated the entire audience with a talk on the hidden world of palpigrades, which was the first ever Arachnological Society plenary lecture to feature these remarkable arachnids, and Gustavo Hormiga described the evolutionary history of orb-weaving spiders in light of data acquired using new genetic tools. Last but not least, Frederick Hendrickx was the fifth plenary, with a fascinating talk on evolutionary ecology in *Oedothorax*.

The congress excursions took place after two full days of conference talks, and allowed for relaxation or hard hiking – depending on which tour partici-



1 Galina Fet, 2 Ersen Aydın Yağmur, 3 Eva Liznarová, 4 Lucia Kuhn-Nentwig, 5 John Haymoz, 6 Miguel Richard, 7 Malayka Picchi, 8 Vladimír Hula, 9 Mert Elverici, 10 Jana Niedobová, 11 Paolo Glerean, 12 Holger Frick, 13 Efrat Gavish-Regev, 14 Francesco Ballarin, 15 Giulio Gardini, 16 Alireza Zamani, 17 Igor Armiaich, 18 Roman Bucher, 19 Laia Mestre, 20 Guadalupe Corcobado, 21 Julieta May Morales, 22 Alberto Chiarle, 23 Alesandro Valdez Mondragón, 24 Nollie Hallensleben, 25 Mauro Paschetta, 26 Arthur Decae 27 Paolo Pantini, 28 Roland Stockmann, 29 Marco Isaia, 30 Paolo Tongiorgi 31 Aldo Mulas, 32 Patrick Bousès, 33 Jacopo Orlandini 34 Christine Rollard, 35 Elena Piano Jr. 36 Marie-Louise Célérier, 37 Peter Koomen, 38 Isidoro Riondato, 39 Martina Dalle, 40 Raquel Galindo, 41 Stefano Mammola, 42 Elena Piano Sr., 43 Davide Giuliano, 44 Alberto Doretto, 45 Mauro Fanelli, 46 Christian Komposch, 47 Gustavo Hormiga, 48 Shichang Zhang, 49 Victor Fet, 50 Erhard Christian, 51 Gabriele Uhl, 52 Luis Fernando García, 53 Yael Lubin, 54 Rachel Werneck, 55 Raluca Bancila, 56 Nataša Sivec, 57 Bernhard Huber, 58 Torbjörn Kronestedt, 59 Karin Sindemark Kronestedt, 60 Gustavo Silva de Miranda, 61 Jörg Wunderlich, 62 Dakota Piorkowski, 63 Brigitte Schmidt-Blick, 64 Theo Blick, 65 Jay Stafstrom, 66 Christian Kropf, 67 Loris Matani, 68 Shou-Wang Lin, 69 I-Min Tso, 70 Marzio Cometa, 71 Enrico Simeon, 72 Rainer Neumann, 73 Alessio Trotta, 74 Jutta Schneider, 75 Jannis Liedtke, 76 Wolfgang Nentwig, 77 Oliver Wearing, 78 Raju Mangaly, 79 Tomas Nowicki, 80 Marjan Komnenov, 81 Sara Goodacre, 82 name not known, 83 Tucker Gilman, 84 Radek Michalko, 85 Irina Marusik, 86 Robert Bosmans, 87 Yuri Marusik, 88 Ondřej Košulič, 89 Katrin Kunz, 90 Anna Nekhaeva, 91 name not known, 92 Anne-Sarah Ganske, 93 Henrik Krehenwinkel,



94 Aline Moser, 95 Gergely Ambrus, 96 Marij Decler, 97 Jonas Wolff, 98 Pao-Chen Huang, 99 Jobi Joseph, 100 Csaba Szinetár, 101 Lenka Sentenská, 102 Boris Zakharov, 103 Simon Wittwer, 104 Jakob Walter, 105 Andrei Tanasevitch, 106 Ferenc Samu, 107 Pavel Just, 108 Benjamin Eggs, 109 Martina Pavlek, 110 Orsolya Beleznai, 111 Milan Rezáč, 112 Siegfried Huber, 113 Stano Pekár, 115 Andreas Fischer, 116 Luka Katušić, 116 Petr Dolejš, 117 Jens Runge, 118 Martin Entling, 119 Christoph Hörweg, 120 Jan Raška, 121 Peter Michalik, 122 Christo Deltshev, 123 Peter Jäger, 124 Elisabeth Bauchhenß, 125 Maria Chatzaki, 126 Beate Martens, 127 Cor Vink, 128 Marija Biteniekytė, 129 Jochen Martens, 130 Brent E. Hendrixson, 131 Hirotsugu Ono, 132 Janet Beccaloni, 132 Liana Lasut, 134 Ellen Akkersdijk, 135 Rebecca Godwin, 136 Tamara Spasojevic, 137 Nicole Garrison, 138 David Nagy, 139 Sandra Preiml, 140 Lior Ventura, 141 Katalin Sólyom, 142 Vera Opatova, 143 Peter, Otto' Horak, 144 Gordana Grbic, 145 Anda Babalean, 146 Helga Heiling, 147 Pedro Sousa, 148 Zhisheng Zhang, 149 Gudrun Horak, 150 Sean Blamires, 151 Stanislav Korenko, 152 Angelo Bolzern, 153 Zsuzsanna Deb-nár, 154 Barbara Thaler-Knoflach, 155 Paula Chushing, 156 Bence Tajthi, 157 Miquel Arnedo, 158 Luis Crespo, 159 Victor Tudorica, 160 Gyula Szabó, 161 Chris Hamilton, 162 Seppo Koponen, 163 Heli Hurme, 164 Cristiana Tuni, 165 Jason Bond, 166 Paul Selden, 167 Maura Selden, 168 Patricia Velado Lobato, 169 Frederik Henderickx, 170 Léon Baert, 171 Martin Forman, 172 Plamen Mitov, 173 Paolo Ghislandi, 174 Peter van Helsdingen, 175 Konrad Wiśniewski, 176 Zheng Cao, 177 Shlomi Aharon, 178 Raşen Kaya

pants had selected. The toughest trip involved a hike up to the Rifugio Questa in the Alpi Marittime National Park. Participants on this tour were fortunate to encounter several individuals of *Vesubia jugorum*, a rare lycosid species, which became a real talking point. Others opted for a more leisurely hike in the Alpi Marittime, to the Royal Hunting Lodge where we were served a delicious meal, which we enjoyed in the sunshine. Further tours were enjoyed to the Venaria royal residence and Mandria National Park, and a wine tasting excursion took place in the Langhe region, with the opportunity to explore the wine region.

The Torino meeting represented an important milestone in the Society, with several important matters decided, such as the election of our new president, Wolfgang Nentwig.

We congratulate again the winners of the best student oral presentations, Nicole Garrison, Vera Opatova and Katrin Kunz and the best posters, Anne-Sarah Ganske, Gustavo de Miranda and Gordana Grbic. Awards were kindly provided by our sponsors, although selection amongst so many high quality student presentations was difficult.

The awards ceremony was not only for talks and posters but also for photography. With his picture entitled 'Spotted by Spider', Peter Koomen won a trip to Ultima Frontiera, a private reserve in the Danube delta, an area of outstanding natural beauty

that is designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage site and Biosphere Reserve.

In addition to the European Arachnological Society, the congress was under the patronage of Regione Piemonte, Provincia di Torino and Città di Torino. The main sponsors and collaborators were the Museo Civico di Scienze Naturali Enrico Caffi of Bergamo, the British Arachnological Society, Arachnologische Gesellschaft, Pensoft Publishers, Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Torino (CRT), Università di Torino and Compagnia di San Paolo, Terredavino - Cantine in Barolo, SKUA Nature Group, Siri Scientific Press, Società Entomologica Italiana, Museo Regionale di Scienze Naturali di Torino, EDISU Piemonte, Pelagosphera, Turismo Torino, Parco Regionale La Mandria, Parco Naturale Alpi Marittime, Grotte di Bossea and Forteto della Luja.

Finally, only five manuscripts in total were submitted from the Torino congress, of which all withstood the peer review and were evaluated as appropriate for publication.

I take this opportunity to thank again all congress participants and all the people involved in the Organization (see <http://www.eca2014.it>). It has been a precious and unforgettable experience, sometimes tough, sometimes funny and really amazing.

See you all soon at the next ECA meetings!

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