

## Preface to the section of the Proceedings of the 27th European Congress of Arachnology, Ljubljana, 2012 Sept. 2-7 (pp. 4-20)

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Almost four years ago, during the 2009 congress in Greece, I was called away from the Russian party only to be cornered by the esteemed colleagues of the ESA council and be asked the unnerving question, to which, of course, a negative response was not an option: “Matjaž, how would you feel about organizing a future European congress”? Three years later, in September 2012, not only European arachnologists, but also many overseas col-

leagues came to Ljubljana with huge expectations from me and my crowd of enthusiastic, yet inexperienced, sidekicks, of which only one was a professional researcher, and the rest were graduate or undergraduate students. 2012 was a recession year, and with hundreds of our letters asking for sponsorship of this “unique and prestigious scientific event” ignored (though with a handful of exceptions, see below), we had to pull the event off on a shoestring. We did, however, keep the fees low for numerous colleagues to be able to attend, and in addition we sponsored an unprecedented number of students that would otherwise be unable to attend the meeting; no fewer than 30 lucky international students were thus awarded grants that in addition to waived fees also covered their accommodation.

And so we (EZ lab) hosted, at the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU) in Ljubljana, between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> September 2012, 156 colleagues from 39 countries. The participants represented most European countries, and those from further afield came from Brazil, Uruguay, Mexico, USA, Algeria, India, Pakistan, Japan, China, Taiwan, Singapore and Australia. As people told us, the congress was a lot of fun.

The event would never have been possible without the amazing help from my EZ Lab



organizing team. Thank you Matjaž Gregorič, Ren-Chung Cheng, Nina Vidergar, Klemen Čandek, Urška Pristovšek and Miha Pipan, who made the impossible things work, with further help coming from Olga Kardoš, Martin Turjak, Tea Knapič, Klavdija Šuen and selected student grantees. I am also indebted to the wonderful scientific committee, Drs. Simona Kralj-Fišer, Ingi Agnarsson, Christian Kropf, Daiqin Li and Miquel Arnedo. These colleagues helped me select and invite four outstanding plenary speakers from around the World. We were privileged to welcome and listen to the lectures of Jason Bond (Auburn University, USA) on integrative approaches to delimiting species and taxonomy, Fiona Cross (University of Canterbury, New Zealand) on olfaction based behaviour of a mosquito-eating, and thus blood-sucking, jumping spider from Africa, Eileen Hebets (University of Nebraska, USA) on interacting traits and secret senses in arachnids, proposing them as model organisms in studying behavioural evolution and Fritz Vollrath (University of Oxford, UK), who spoke of the secrets of silk. These lectures were all fascinating and of high scientific value. Most of them can be viewed online at [http://videlectures.net/eca2012\\_ljubljana/](http://videlectures.net/eca2012_ljubljana/).

We grouped the presentations into logical sessions, some of which had to be parallel, with

non-overlapping presentations of the students competing for awards. With the help of Wolfgang Nentwig we also organized a symposium on DNA barcoding, where longer introductory talks by Miquel Arnedo, Ingi Agnarsson and Jeremy Miller introduced the concepts and recent practices in discovering, delimiting and inventorying species using DNA barcodes, while more specific presentations introduced recent European barcoding initiatives. There were also two poster sessions, and many social events. We congratulate again those students who won awards, kindly provided by our sponsors, although the selection amongst many high quality student presentations was difficult. Within the broad category “Systematics and Evolution”, the awarded oral presentations were those of Henrik Krehenwinkel (1), Elisabeth Lipke (2) and Marija Majer (3), the awarded posters were those of Jana Plíšková (1), Susanne Meese (2) and Cheng-Ya Chang (3). Within the category “Ecology and Behavior” the awards for oral presentations went to Katrin Kunz (1), Shazia Quasin (2) and Reiner Neumann (3), while those for posters went to Urška Pristovšek (1), Hsien-Chun Liao (2) and Klaas Welke (3).

The main congress sponsors in addition to the European Society of Arachnology were the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian

Academy of Sciences and Arts (<http://www.zrc-sazu.si/>) and its EZ Lab (<http://ezlab.zrc-sazu.si/>), the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (<http://www.sazu.si/en/o-sazu.html>) and the Slovenian Research Agency (<http://www.rrs.gov.si/en/dobrodoslica.asp>). Further generous sponsorships came from Pensoft (<http://www.pensoft.net/>), Bioform (<https://www.bioform.de/>), the British Arachnological Society (<http://britishspiders.org.uk/>), the American Arachnological Society (<http://americanarachnology.org/>) and the Arachnologische Gesellschaft (<http://arages.de/>).

Finally, although the congress saw numerous talks and posters (the Abstract book can be downloaded at <http://ezlab.zrc-sazu.si/eca2012#abstracts>), the future of the proceedings from the European Congress of Arachnology may be bleak, as no more than five manuscripts in total were submitted from the Ljubljana congress, of which three withstood peer review and were evaluated as appropriate for publication. Perhaps it's time for the society to reconsider the future of publishing presentations from the congresses in manuscript form, but rather move towards publishing and indexing only presentation abstracts.

Matjaž Kuntner, Ljubljana



1 Paul Selden - 2 Ren-Chung Cheng - 3 Nina Vidregar - 4 Seok Ping Goh - 5 Ingi Agnarsson - 6 Shichang Zhang - 7 Roman Bucher - 8 Tingting Zhang - 9 Susanne Meese - 10 Liana Lasut - 11 Leila Gurtner - 12 Christian Kropf - 13 Fiona Cross - 14 Holger Frick - 15 Ivan Franco - 16 Alberto Chiarle - 17 Mauro Paschetta - 18 Giulio Gardini - 19 František Štáhlavský - 20 Dmitri Logunov - 21 Boris Zakharov - 22 Marco Isايا - 23 Theo Blick - 24 Arnaud Henrard - 25 Charlotte De Busschere - 26 Robert Bosmans - 27 Wolfgang Merkten - 28 Jasmin Ruch - 29 Gabriele Uhl - 30 Hannah Wood - 31 Jeremy Miller - 32 Eileen Hebets - 33 Jason Bond - 34 Jakob Walter - 35 Wolfgang Nentwig - 36 Kjetil Åkra - 37 Ludmila Černecká - 38 Plamen Mitov - 39 Christoph Muster - 40 Mikhail Omelko - 41 Christo Deltshhev - 42 Olena Yaroshynska - 43 Jonas Wolff - 44 Sara Goodacre - 45 Yael Lubin - 46 Huda Al-Beiruti - 47 Efrat Gavish-Regav - 48 Pao-Shen Huang - 49 Miha Pipan - 50 Xin Xu - 51 Matjaž Gregorič - 52 Daiqin Li - 53 Simona Kralj-Fišer - 54 Gergely Ambrus - 55 Peter Michalik - 56 Jutta Schneider - 57 Katrin Kunz - 58 Eileen Gabel - 59 Annedore Maeder - 60 Cristina Rheims - 61 Fritz Vollrath - 62 Stano Pekár - 63 Yuri Marusik - 64 Irina Marusik - 65 Elisabeth Bauchhenß - 66 Alessio Trotta - 67 Peter Gajdoš - 68 Nina Polchaninova - 69 Samuel Yu-Lung Hsieh - 70 Miguel Richard - 71 Miquel Amedo - 72 Věra Opatová - 73 Maria Fedoriak - 74 Jörg Wunderlich - 75 Klemen Čandek - 76 Matjaž Kuntner - 77 Wen-Jin Gan - 78 Yueh-Sheng Loong - 79 I-Min Tso - 80 Youcef Alioua - 81 Majid Moradmand - 82 Gregor Wachter - 83 Petra Föttinger - 84 Miriam Schaidler - 85 Pavel Just - 86 Petr Dolejš - 87 Ondřej Košulič - 88 Chih-Wei Lai - 89 Cheng Ya Chang - 90 Yun-Jia Lo - 91 Vladimír Hula - 92 Seppo Koponen - 93 Pavel Žila - 94 Manuel Cárdenas Guerrero - 95 Jan Raška - 96 Henrik Krehenwinkel - 97 Radek Michalko - 98 Siegfried Huber - 99 Peter Horak - 100 Gordana Grbić - 101 Günther Raspotnig - 102 Christian Komposch - 103 Urška Pristovšek - 104 Ning Sun - 105 Lihong Tu - 106 Stefanie Zimmer - 107 Klaus Welke - 108 Rainer Neumann - 109 André Walter - 110 Bernhard Huber - 111 Elisabeth Lipke - 112 Jens Runge - 113 Andy Sombke - 114 Bastian-Jesper Klußmann-Fricke - 115 Alejandro Valdez Mondragón - 116 Ivalú H. Ávila - 117 Jana Niedobová - 118 Jagoba Malumbres Olarte - 119 Stanislav Korenko - 120 Anna Šestáková - 121 Wioletta Wawer - 122 Lenka Sentenská - 123 Eva Liznarová - 124 Laura Montes de Oca - 125 Helga Heiling - 126 Csaba Szinetár - 127 Alexandr Anatolevič Fomichev - 128 Anna Nekhaeva - 129 Ferenc Samu - 130 András Rákóczi - 131 Dakota Piorowski - 132 Heine Kiesbüy - 133 Sean Kelly - 134 Chen-Pan Liao - 135 Hsien-Chun Liao - 136 Jana Kotrbová - 137 Jana Plíšková - 138 Hana Svojanovská - 139 Peter van Heijdsingen - 140 Marjan Komnenov - 141 Alexandra Lazarova - 142 Stoyan Lazarov - 143 Shazia Quasin - 144 Atul Bodkhe - 145 Nataša Sivec - 146 Hirotsugu Ono