

The 14th World Congress of Myriapodology
Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde Görlitz
21–25 July 2008

Willi E. R. Xylander

In July 2008 the 14th World Congress of Myriapodology took place in Görlitz, 25 years after the Centre International de Myriapodologie was founded in Paris where CIM is still hosted by the Museum Nationale d'Histoire Naturelle and has a crucial input on the coordination of not only the triannual international congresses but also – by publishing the yearly CIM Bulletin – on the information exchange between the working scientists.

A second major source of information on the groups and items we work with are the proceedings of our congresses, which contain the majority of contributions given orally or by posters during the congresses. With this volume you receive an issue of the second volume of our international scientific journal SOIL ORGANISMS published by the Senckenberg Museum für Naturkunde in Görlitz. The scope of this journal, which is the follower of the *Abhandlungen und Berichte des Naturkundemuseums Görlitz* (which was founded in 1827), is to publish original papers and reviews on the biology, taxonomy, morphology and ecology of soil organisms. The journal is distributed to about 500 institutions in more than 70 countries which may guarantee the distribution of your contributions to the scientific community world wide. Most issues are 'under control' of a soil biologist from our museum who helps the Executive Editor Herbert Boyle with the manuscripts. For this issue, Dr Karin Voigtländer has taken over this task, as you will have seen from the correspondence. I would like to thank her for her support which took a lot of time and effort over the last months.

But back to our meeting: The decision to have the meeting in Görlitz was made at the marvelous CIM congress in Bergen in July 2005 after Karin Voigtländer and I applied for the honour to host the 2008 meeting. Since then Karin Voigtländer and I, strongly supported by Katrin Adam and Dr Hans-Jürgen Schulz, worked in contact with many of you on the programme and the content of the meeting which – from my point of view – was a big success: 93 scientists from 24 countries participated in the meeting and gave 58 oral contributions and presented 37 posters during the 5 days of the congress.

We had a nice pre-congress excursion to Saxonian Switzerland and a post-congress excursion to Dresden. On Wednesday during the meeting, we were taken to the Biosphere Reserve Upper Lusatian Heath and Pond District where we had a great guided tour by the rangers. Afterwards there was an official reception of the Mayor of Görlitz, Joachim Paulick, who not only welcomed the participants but also showed the historic mayor's house down to the medieval dungeon.

On the last day of the meeting – after traditionally focussing on Onychophora – we had the CIM General Assembly with elections of the CIM Council and the President and Vice-President. During the General Assembly, Dr Michelle Hamer from South Africa was elected as president of CIM and Zoltan Korsós as Vice-president. The elections of the board also resulted in a couple of new members so the members of the new council are: Henrik Enghoff, Michelle Hamer, Zoltan Korsós, Bjarne Meidell, Robert Mesibov, Luis Pereira, Rowland Shelley, Megan Short, Karel Tajovský, Willi Xylander and Jean-Jacques Geoffroy as appointed Secretary. At the end, the decision was taken to have the next congress in Melbourne/Australia hosted by the National Museum of Australia and Robert Mesibov, Megan Short and further colleagues.

The farewell dinner took place in the Kunstmühle (Art mill) in Ludwigsdorf close to Görlitz where we had a great meal in historic surroundings, good discussions prospecting to the next meeting and future work to be done. But for the organisers the work did not end with this event. Karin Voigtländer and I worked on the proceedings which you now hold in your hands.

During the meeting we received an unexpected resonance from newspapers, radio stations and TV. More than 200 reports in the newspapers all over Germany and Europe, more than 15 radio and several TV-interviews (one with several congress participants broadcasted in the ‘Tagesthemen’, the most popular late news in Germany) kept me busy and filled the ‘summer hole’ in the German news. They made the millipedes and their world congress so widely acknowledged that on the Monday after the congress, the Süddeutsche Zeitung mentioned the World Congress of Myriapodology as the ‘major summer event of 2008’ (followed by the dress of Angela Merkel the Wagner-Festival at Bayreuth and the strike of pilots on place two and three).

Finally, I would like to thank those persons and institutions who contributed to the success of our meeting. The German Science Council (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft), the Saxonian Federal Foundation for Nature and Environment (Sächsische Landesstiftung für Natur und Umwelt) and the Free State of Saxony funded our meeting. The staff of the biosphere reserve kindly led us through the Heath and Pond District and its wonderful nature. Many colleagues from the museum helped in different ways to organise the meeting; *pars pro toto* I would like to thank Katrin Adam and Karin Voigtländer who had to take the major burden in organisation.

At the end, we hope that all participants will keep our meeting in mind as a successful come-together of scientists who share the fascination for the multi-legged animals!

Görlitz, in December 2009

Willi E. R. Xylander



Participants of the 14th World Congress of Myriapodology at the entrance of the Mayor's Hall in Görlitz