



1. PEKAR Stano, Czech Republic – 2. POULIKARAKOU Stavroula, Greece – 3. PARMAKELIS Aristidis, Greece – 4. MARUSIK Yuri M., Russia – 5. PITERKINA Tatyana, Russia – 6. MARUSIK Irina, Russia – 7. FET Victor, USA – 8. DOLEJS Petr, Czech Republic – 9. SAMU Ferenc, Hungary – 10. FORMAN Martin, Czech Republic – 11. PAVEL Stoev, Bulgaria – 12. HAJER Jaromir, Czech Republic – 13. KOMENOV Marjan, FYR Macedonia – 14. KRÁL Jiří, Czech Republic – 15. DELTSHEV Christo, Bulgaria – 16. HUBER Siegfried, Germany – 17. MYLES Nolan, Ireland – 18. DUNLOP Jason, Germany – 19. KOPONEN Heli, Finland – 20. KROPF Christian, Switzerland – 21. KOPONEN Seppo, Finland – 22. LOGUNOV Dmitri, UK – 23. JÄGER Peter, Germany – 24. BERGTHALER Gernot J., Austria – 25. KUNTNER Matjaž, Slovenia – 26. GREGORIĆ Matjaž, Slovenia – 27. ARNEDO Miquel, Spain – 28. GALINDO Raquel, Spain – 29. KNAPIČ Tea, Slovenia – 30. BIDEGARAY BATISTA Leticia, Spain – 31. MICHALIK Peter, Germany – 32. SCHÖNHOFER Axel, Germany – 33. FRICK Holger, Switzerland – 34. GEORGIEV Georgi Y., Bulgaria – 35. BLICK Theo, Germany – 36. KANNIPARAMBIL Sunil Jose, India – 37. CHIARLE Alberto, Italy – 38. CRAVERO Elisa, Italy – 39. ISAJA Marco, Italy – 40. PASCHETTA Mauro, Italy – 41. LAZAROV Stoyan, Bulgaria – 42. LAZAROVA Alexandra, Bulgaria – 43. BRUGISSER Odile, Switzerland – 44. THALER-KNOFLACH Barbara, Austria – 45. VAN HELSDINGEN Peter J., Netherlands – 46. ONO Hirotsugu, Japan – 47. MELEKOGLU Abdullah, Turkey – 48. DANIŞMAN Tanik, Turkey – 49. HORAK Peter "Otto", Austria – 50. HSIEH Samuel Yu-Lung, Germany – 51. STENCHLY Kathrin, Germany – 52. BUCHHOLZ Sascha, Germany – 53. STATHI Iasmi, Greece – 54. PANAYOTOV Eleni, Greece – 55. KARAKATSANIS Kyriakos, Greece – 56. GOGOPOULOS Stavros, Greece – 57. SPYRIDOPOULOU Katerina, Greece – 58. PASPATI Aggeliki, Greece – 59. CHATZOTAKI Maria, Greece – 60. GEORGIAIDIS Pavlos, Greece – 61. OVTCHARENKO Vladimír, USA – 62. HUANG Jin-Nan, Taiwan – 63. HOU Chueh, Taiwan – 64. WALTER André, Germany – 65. HUANG Pao-Sheng, Taiwan – 66. TSO I-Min, Taiwan – 67. UNİYAL Virendra P., India – 68. UNİYAL Bhagwati, India – 69. EL-HENNAWY Rana, Egypt – 70. SEYFULINA Rimma, Russia – 71. DECAE Arthur, Netherlands – 72. LUBIN Yael, Israel – 73. HERVÉ Christophe, France – 74. NAUMOVA Maria, Bulgaria – 75. DECLEER Marij, Belgium – 76. SELDEN Paul Antony, USA – 77. SELDEN Maura, USA – 78. MITOV Plamen, Bulgaria – 79. SZINETAR Csaba, Hungary – 80. DOLANSKY Jan, Czech Republic – 81. KOMPOSCH Christian, Austria – 82. LOPARDO Lara, Germany – 83. SHAW Emma M., UK – 84. BOSMANS Robert, Belgium – 85. BAEHR Ursula, Australia – 86. ROLLARD Christine, France – 87. BAEHR Barbara, Australia – 88. VRENOZI Blerina, Albania – 89. RAVEN Robert, Australia – 90. EL-HENNAWY Hisham K., Egypt – 91. BAYRAM Abdullah, Turkey – 92. KAYA Rahsen S., Turkey – 93. YILMAZ Zeyhan, Turkey – 94. YAGMUR Ersen Aydin, Turkey – 95. AMBALAPARAMBIL Sudhikumar, Belgium – 96. HUANG Jin-Nan, Taiwan.

Preface

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The 25th European Congress of Arachnology was held in the city of Alexandroupolis, from 16 to 21 August 2009. It was jointly organised by the Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics of the Democritus University of Thrace and the Natural History Museum of the University of Crete. Arachnologists from all over the world arrived to this little point at the north-eastern border of Greece to attend this meeting, the 25th in a series which started in 1972 in Strasburg. The arachnological meeting has passed through many countries of Europe, but this was the first time that has taken place in Greece.

90 participants, including 30 students, from 28 representative countries from all five continents and 17 accompanying persons attended this meeting. The scientific programme comprised 51 oral presentations and 34 posters from various thematic fields such as taxonomy and faunistics, phylogenetics, biogeography, phylogeography, physiology, behaviour, ecology and others. 18 papers were submitted for evaluation for the proceedings volume and of these, 11 were selected for publication after peer review by two referees each. During the four days of scientific programme, three keynote presentations were given on special topics by: Miquel Arnedo, Victor Fet and Peter Jäger. Student awards were given to the best three oral presentations and the best three posters on the closing ceremony. Lectures: Holger Frick (Switzerland), Samuel Yu-Lung Hsieh (Germany), and Odile Bruggisser (Switzerland). Posters: Jin-Nan Huang (Taiwan), Vera Opatova (Czech Republic), and Chueh Hou (Taiwan).

During the five-day stay at the congress hall of the Alexander Beach Hotel, participants had the opportunity to enjoy the hospitality of the staff, but also to take advantage of the beautiful

beach opposite the hotel and the cosy atmosphere of Greek taverns. Accompanying persons visited the most important archaeological sites, cities and natural reserves of the area. During the mid-week excursion, all of us had a wonderful experience canoeing on the Nestos river or walking by its riverbank and then enjoying the food, wine and nice view of a local tavern in the surroundings of the city of Xanthi, where we spent the rest of the day. An opening ceremony at the pool of the hotel, the standard 'Russian party', Thursday's congress dinner, and finally a beach party at the end of the congress completed the picture of a very pleasant week.

The General Assembly of the ESA members closed the meeting of 2009. During this ceremony we had to say our last goodbyes to the late arachnologists Gershom Levy and Jean-Pierre Maelfait who passed away that year. Nevertheless, we also had to congratulate the 70th anniversary of the still very active arachnologist Christo Deltshev. Members of the Society had to vote on the fate and form of the proceedings of the congress, which later in the year lead to a general referendum. Proceedings should thus retain their paper format and be distributed to all members of the Society, either edited by an existing journal or – eventually – by the Society's official future journal.

Scientific contributions and exchange of knowledge harmonised with relaxation and fun due to the commitment of many people who volunteered to offer their help: first of all Iasmi Stathi and Katerina Spyridopoulou did their best for the whole year's organisation procedure; our students Eleni Panayiotou, Aggeliki Paspatis, Kyriakos Karakatsanis and Stavros Gogolopoulos, assisted in various ways during the congress week; Pavlos Georgiadis was the main group leader of the accompanying people's

activities and Emma Shaw assisted in the secretariat, as well as other activities; without Peter Jäger there would never have been such a successful last day beach party, since he was the night's DJ. Many participants also assisted with the smooth running of the week's programme, among them session chairs, members of the scientific committee and evaluation teams. I am deeply grateful to the staff of the Alexander Beach Hotel for their patience and kindness, all the facilities they provided and the very well organised service. I also owe my gratitude to Theo Blick and the rest of the *Arachnologische Mitteilungen* personnel for our excellent cooperation during editing of the proceedings and the numerous reviewers who volunteered

to check and decide upon the selected papers of this volume.

I finally have to acknowledge our sponsors: the local authorities, Prefectural Self-Government Prefecture of Evros; Prefecture of Rhodopi-Evros; Region of Macedonia-Thrace; the Democritus University; the European Society of Arachnology. Special thanks to all secretary members of the above offices who offered their support and help at any moment as well as the members of the ESA council not only for financial support, but also for the psychological and consulting support during the whole year of the organisation of this congress.

Maria Chatzaki

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2. <http://www.european-arachnology.org/collo/collo25.shtml>
3. <http://www.mbg.duth.gr/en/index.php?cid=84&st=1>

The abstract volume (pdf) and the congress photo (jpg) are available at:

1. <http://www.mbg.duth.gr/en/index.php?cid=84&st=1>
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Autor(en)/Author(s): Chatzaki Maria

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