

Preface

The XII European Meeting of Carabidologists (XII ECM) was held in Murcia, Spain (September 19–22, 2005) with the main theme ‘Ground beetles as a key group for conservation studies in Europe’. Almost sixty participants from twenty countries attended the meeting, with a good representation of young scientists. George E. Ball and his wife Kay gave us a shining example of enthusiasm and interest in sharing knowledge and friendship. Piet den Boer could not attend personally, but he was present in the mind of all participants, and his talk about the founding hypothesis was presented by Gabor Lövei as one of the invited talks. Johan Kotze, in another invited talk, reminded us of the importance of experimental design and proper evaluation methods. Konjev Desender nicely illustrated the crucial role of carabid beetles in conservation studies. Several other contributions likewise stressed this topic, such as those presented by Hilde Dhuyvetter, Jarek Skłodowski, Andrea Matern and Debbie Prins. However, the 32 presentations and 16 posters covered a wide range of topics, from taxonomy and biogeography to molecular phylogeny, ecosystem dynamics, methodology, larval development, and others more related to ecological theory. We missed many prominent colleagues such as Martin L. Luff, Jan Szyszko, Friedrich Weber and Jari Niemelä who would surely have made key contributions. The award for the best poster went to Pavel Saska, a promising young carabidologist.

All contributions were included in a 313-page book (Serrano *et al.* 2005) that reflects the quality of European carabidology, nicely complemented by the Canadians Kay and George Ball and John R. Spence, together with Gahdab Chakali, an Algerian scientist whose contribution will hopefully encourage the participation of North African researchers in future meetings. Several of these contributions are included here as full articles, considerably improved after the peer-reviewing

process of Entomologica Fennica. This has been made possible by the efforts of the editors of this special issue, complemented by the English revision performed by Jesús Gómez-Zurita. We thank the valuable help of the reviewers: Ola Atlegrim, George E. Ball, Trine Bilde, Christophe Bouget, Michael Caterino, Tyler P. Cobb, Lorna Cole, Peter Dennis, Konjev Desender, Barbara Ekbohm, Mike D. Eyre, Joshua Jacobs, Heidi Kinnunen, Leos Klimes, D. Johan Kotze, James K. Liebherr, Martin L. Luff, Chris MacQuarrie, Tibor Magura, Dietrich Mossakowski, Jari Niemelä, Karen A. Ober, Wilfried Paarmann, Lyubomir Penev, Pekka Punttila, Ignacio Ribera, Emmanuelle Richard, Thomas Simonsen, Teiji Sota, Adam J. Vanbergen and Stephen Venn. We also acknowledge the Editorial Board and the editors of Entomologica Fennica for supporting the publishing of the proceedings in the journal.

In Murcia, the local team of carabidologists was properly enhanced with friends to create a friendly and dynamic atmosphere for the participants. We heartfully thank Carlos Ruiz, Carmelo Andújar, José Galián, Antonio S. Ortiz and José Luís Lencina, who were joined by Jesús Gómez-Zurita and Anabela Cardoso, Obdulia Sánchez, Mari Ángeles Sánchez, Fernando Ochotorena, Esteban Jiménez, Mari Carmen Ortín and Javier Alcázar. All helped to prepare the insect exhibition, sort out accommodation, transportation, field and post-meeting trips, etc., all the typical affairs inherently associated with these kinds of events. The University of Murcia provided crucial technical and financial support, and the ‘Fundación Séneca’ of the Region of Murcia not only generously sponsored this event but also made it more pleasant for the participants. We are very grateful for these invaluable contributions.

The increasing contributions of young researchers and participants from countries previously little represented in ECMs are an important challenge for future meetings. Earlier (in Tuczno



Congress participants and the organizing team of the XII ECM (apologies for missing people). Names are from left to right. Top row (back): Konstantin Gongalsky, Pietro Brandmayr, George Ball, Dietrich Mossakowski, Pavel Saska, Thomas Rickfelder, Lyubomir Penev, Roberto Pizzolotto, Győző Szél, Stephen Venn, Rikjan Vermeulen, Thorsten Aßmann, Ignacio Ribera, Javier Alcázar and Jesús Gómez-Zurita. Middle row: Zoltan Elek, Wilfried Paarmann, Augusto Vigna, Kay Ball, José Serrano, Tullia Zetto Brandmayr, Hilde Dhuyvetter, Eva Gaublomme, Emmanuelle Richard, Konjev Desender, Shona Blake, Lorna Cole, Claudia Drees, Ángela Taboada, Ignacio Ribera, Anabela Cardoso and Carlos Ruiz. Bottom row: Johan Kotze, Rita Andorko, Gabor Lövei, Ferenc Kádár, José Lencina, Jose Sánchez, Jarosław Skłodowski, Axel Schwerk, Paolo Bonavita, Mari Carmen Ortin and Esteban Jiménez. A complete list of contributors to the XII ECM can be found in Serrano *et al.* (2005).

2001) Gabor Lövei stressed the need to make it easier for young scientists to attend, perhaps by organizing these meetings every second year or so, whereas Lyubomir Penev is looking for contributions from the East European countries in the XIII ECM that will be organized in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria, in 2007. Although the ecological aspects will probably remain the core of these meetings, carabidologists must be prepared to pay attention to an increasing number of topics presented at ECMs, covering modern taxonomy and phylogeny to molecular approaches, climate change, and various classic topics. Of course, it is expected that the vigorous carabidologist com-

munity will successfully deal with these new frontiers.

We hope to see all of you in Blagoevgrad, in 2007.

**José Serrano, Matti Koivula
& Gabor L. Lövei**

References

- Serrano, J., Gómez-Zurita, J. & Ruiz, C. (eds.) 2005: Ground beetles as a key group for biodiversity conservation studies in Europe. – Proceedings volume of the XII European Carabidologists Meeting. Nausicaá, Murcia. 313 pp.