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Foreword

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Editors

After 380 m.y. of evolution, insects are the most diversified group of organisms on Earth. However, due to their body structure, they are less represented in the fossil record than other terrestrial organisms, such as vertebrates and plants. Nevertheless, where they are found, they are abundant and diverse.

The systematic study of fossil insects has always been little compared to other groups of invertebrates. A great number of palaeontologists and entomologists even consider insects as exotic and rare fossils. However, in the last ten years the knowledge of the insect fossil record has experimented a great impulse in comparison with other invertebrate groups (see Benton 1993 "The Fossil Record 2"), thanks to the increasing number of palaeoentomologists involved in their study. This impulse has been favoured by some events which have consolidated the improved situation of palaeoentomology. There are three events we wish to emphasize because of the large number of colleagues involved: The First Palaeoentomological Conference in Moscow (Russia) in 1998, the First World Congress on Amber Inclusions, in Vitoria-Gasteiz (Spain) in 1998, and the development of the European Scientific Foundation Network "Fossil Insects" (December 1996 - March 2000).

Some events suggest that palaeoentomology is rising, for example the establishment of new groups of palaeoentomologists that study the Cretaceous ambers in the USA, France, Spain, United Kingdom, Russia, etc, or the large number of Ph.D. theses on fossil insects recently defended by D. Azar, G. Bechly, V.A. Blagoderov, F. Marchal-Papier, M. Mostovski, J. Rust, etc. The restudy based on cladistic analysis of ancient described species, is another of the fields with more impulse today. Possibly the Insecta is the group of fossil invertebrates with major percentage of young people involved in its study, all around the world.

We wish to recognise the work made by Dr. Koteja (Poland) in the diffusion of the palaeoentomology. For more than 10 years he has published the newsletter *Inclusion-Wrostek*, which inform us about fossil insects, mainly those included in amber. Within the ESF Network, another newsletter about fossil insects emerged, *Meganeura*. During two years *Meganeura* has been financially supported by the European Science Foundation. Today a large quantity of information arrives to us via Internet, and fossil insects are not an exception. A lot of web-sites are concerned with fossil insects, mainly in amber. *Meganeura* is now a web-site and a e-newsletter, available on the WWW at http://www.ub.es/dpep/meganeura/meganeura.htm.

In the last years, the study of fossil insects is not only concerned with Systematics, but also with Phylogeny based on Cladistics, Taphonomy, Ichnology, Palaeoclimatology, etc.., as it can be seen in some of the19 papers published in this special volume entitled *Studies on Mesozoic and Tertiary Insects. Systematics, Phylogeny and Taphonomy*.

These 19 contributions give an overview of the high diversity of the current studies on fossil insects, concerning a wide range of periods, from the Triassic to the

Miocene, with many important discoveries in the Cretaceous. They demonstrate the richness and diversity of the ancient entomofaunas.

We acknowledge the participation of a great number of colleagues in this volume (31 authors). The referees of these papers were mainly authors of another ones, but the editors wish to acknowledge the collaboration of, in alphabetical order: M. Baena, G. Bechly, D.E.G. Briggs, M. Goula, Th. Hornschemeyer, E. Jarzembowski, N.P. Kristensen, J. Minet, V.N. Makarkin, S.Y. Storozhenko, I. Suárez-Ruíz, and R. Szadziewski.