

Preface



The history of the Apterygota meetings goes back to the era where Apterygota were defined as the ‘wing-less insects’. From the start of these meetings, the focus has been very much on the taxonomy of especially Collembola and Thysanura. Nowadays the scientific community working on this group of animals is still very much alive. Although still a respectable group of researchers studies the taxonomy and statistics

of Collembola, Diplura and Protura, together forming the basal Hexapoda, as well as that of the wing-less Insecta groups Microcoryphia and Zygentoma, the focus has strongly diverted to the ecology, evolution and ecotoxicology of the soil fauna groups.

The XIII International Colloquium on Apterygota was held at the University of Coimbra on the 13th and 14th of August 2012. As in previous Colloquia, this forum was a site for researchers to share their fascination and knowledge on Apterygota and to report on new developments in the taxonomy, systematics, ecophysiology, ecology, ecotoxicology and evolution of this group.

This present Colloquium counted 28 oral presentations and 29 posters separated into four thematic sessions: Biogeography and Mapping (7 oral and 5 poster presentations), Taxonomy (7 oral and 12 poster presentations), Ecology (11 oral and 12 poster presentations) and Ecotoxicology (3 oral presentations). Contributions included traditional and advanced taxonomic studies with barcoding techniques, classical ecological to more novel studies on the effects of landscape management and climate change on collembolan communities using traditional and trait-based approaches, as well as a few talks on the ecological genomics of these organisms. Participating in the meeting were 66 colleagues from 20 countries throughout the world.

During this symposium we had the opportunity to pay homage to a great Portuguese Collembologist, Prof. Manuela da Gama (from the University of Coimbra), who has provided major contributions to the systematics and biogeography of Collembola since 1962 until her retirement in 2002. She made important contributions to the study of the genus *Xenylla* at a world-wide scale and of the genus *Pseudosinella* at a European scale, describing several species from cave areas. She also played an important role in the study of Collembola from the Macronesia Islands (Madeira, Azores, Canary Islands and Cape Verde). From all these studies she has described or re-described over 100 species, resulting in the publication of over 80 scientific papers in national and international journals. For her great passion for the world of Collembola, for always being present and available for any collaborative work, for her commitment in passing on her knowledge and keeping young collaborators motivated and for giving them the opportunity to ‘spread their wings’ in the scientific world, she is and will always be cherished, loved and respected by her peers, friends and former collaborators.

Last but not least, as in previous Colloquia, this year’s colloquium is of course a team effort. We’d particularly like to thank every author who submitted a research paper or poster to the symposium, the scientific committee who carefully considered them and of course the chairs of the various sections of the colloquium that together with the organizing team made this symposium possible.

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