

**6th German Meeting of Acarologists
(6. Milbenkundliches Kolloquium)**

from 20 – 22 September 2007

at the Zoological Department and Museum of the Christian-Albrechts-University Kiel

The present issue of ‘**SOIL ORGANISMS**’ is based on the 6th German Meeting of Acarologists (6. Milbenkundliches Kolloquium), which took place in Kiel from 20 – 22 September 2007. The meeting location was the Zoological Museum, a lovely Gropius building near the Kiel Fjord, which is part of the Baltic Sea. The first ideas and the concept for that building were established by Karl August Möbius (1824 – 1908), the museum was erected by the famous architect Martin Gropius (1824 – 1880) and opened for the public in 1881. Although the Zoological Museum in Kiel is part of the Zoological Department of the Christian Albrechts-University, scientific meetings had been an exception here for a long time. By the generous support of Drs Wolfgang Dreyer and Dirk Brandis from the museum, together with their non-scientific team, the meeting was made possible. The lecture hall was the first for Zoology in Kiel and many prominent Kiel zoologists (e.g. Adolf Remane, Wolfgang Tischler) were active here as students and/or teachers before the new Biological Centre was founded outside of the city centre in 1978.

Kiel University was a special place for a meeting of German-speaking acarologists. When Adolf Remane retired in 1967, the well-known European acarologist Reinhart Schuster succeeded him as director of the Zoological Institute and Museum. He planned to establish an acarological centre. Acarology had previously not played a particular role in the institute. Only some short taxonomic and ecofaunistic studies on halacarids of the North and Baltic Sea had been performed by Erich Schulz before and after the Second World War. When Schuster started with his acarological research programme, an investigation on the oribatid fauna of the salt marshes in Schleswig-Holstein was in progress (as a dissertation by Gerd Weigmann). Schuster fetched Klaus Böttger – a specialist of water mites – as an assistant, and also began supervising acarological dissertations about taxonomy, morphology, ecology and behaviour of soil mites, especially those living in the marine littoral. Members of this acarological research group (the so called ‘Die Kieler Truppe’) were the students Gerd Alberti, Rainer Ehrnsberger, Harald Witte, Steffen Woas and, finally, Gerda Theis. However, in 1971, Schuster left Kiel, following an appointment to the University of Graz, Austria; Theis followed him in order to finish her studies in Graz. All the other members of the Kieler Truppe, including Gerd Weigmann, remained in Kiel, but later, as post-docs, they dispersed and continued their scientific career – mainly working with mites – in other German universities and museums.

Despite its regional remoteness, the Kiel meeting was a successful event. About 54 acarologists from 8 countries registered for the meeting and nearly all were present. Since the professor of Animal Ecology of the Kiel University, Prof. Thomas Bauer, was at that moment in the dual role also as rector of the Kiel University, we had the pleasure of receiving the recognition of a University rector for the first time in the history of the meetings of the German-speaking acarologists. Also the mayor of the city of Kiel (Angelika Volquartz) and Dr Dirk Brandis of the Museum presented opening speeches.

The scientific programme was composed of 21 lectures and 13 posters. The latter were presented in two sessions, under the friendly moderation of Reinhart Schuster. As in the other meetings of German acarologists, the scientific programme was comprehensive, ranging e.g. from morphological, taxonomical and faunistic topics to rather 'modern' subjects such as genetically based phylogeny or Synchrotron X-Ray Phase Contrast Tomography. One of the many highlights of the programme was the film presentation of Prof. Urs Wyss on 'Spider mites and their natural enemies'. The scientific contributions were given both by students just beginning their research career as well as experienced acarologists. This successful composition of participants gave the small meeting of German-speaking acarologists a special ambience.

The broadness of the presented topics at the meeting is also reflected in the contributions of this issue of **SOIL ORGANISMS**. It is wonderful that this new journal offers the opportunity of presenting the proceedings of the acarological meetings, which had been previously provided by the 'Abhandlungen und Berichte des Naturkundemuseums Görlitz'. With the kind support of Dr Axel Christian, this new style of presentation of the proceedings is possible.

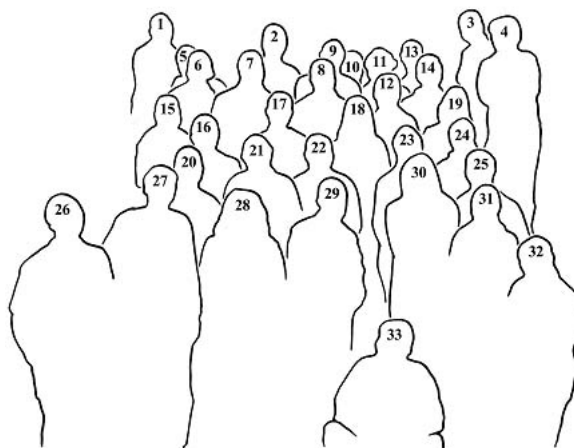
Hopefully, the evening meetings in restaurants together with the two days of scientific programme contributed to pleasant feelings and positive memories among the participants. Most of them also joined the excursion, which was kindly supported by favourable weather. The tour was interrupted by stops at the lakes 'Selenter See' and 'Ukleisee', and by a walk along the shore of the Baltic Sea near Behrendorf. Probably the highlight of the field trip was the visit of the 'Haus der Natur' in Cismar, where the family of Dr Vollrath Wiese received us very hospitably. They also provided for our physical well-being. Dr Wiese gave us an informative tour through the museum with a main focus on molluscs and Otfried Wiese, his father, led a visit to the minster of a former Benedictine abbey.

At last, we particularly wish to thank the foundation 'Pro Acarologia Basilensis', Prof. Th. Bauer, Dr D. Brandis, Uwe Fischer (of the firm Hydrobios, Kiel) and the firm Carl Roth (Karlsruhe) for financial, logistical and material support. And special thanks to Silvia Dähn and many helpers from the limno-ecological working group within the Department of Ecology of the Kiel University. All of these persons enabled a successful and low-priced meeting.

In 2010, the next meeting of the German-speaking acarologists will take place for the first time in a non-German speaking country. Prof. Czesław Błaszak kindly invited us to the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Poland). We are looking forward to the next meeting and expect much new scientific, scenic and cultural input.

Kiel in August, 2008

Peter Martin



Participants of the 6th German Meeting of Acarologists (6. Milbenkundliches Kolloquium)

1 – R. Gerecke, 2 – E. Ebermann, 3 – N. Olfert, 4 – H. Smit, 5 – P. Bergmann,
 6 – H. Wolter, 7 – R. Ehrmsberger, 8 – J. Dabert, 9 – R. Schuster, 10 – R. Olomski,
 11 – G. Weigmann, 12 – Th. Schwaha, 13 – T. Pfingstl, 14 – M.G. Walzl, 15 – C. Vajen,
 16 – A. Christian, 17 – G. Raspotnig, 18 – E. McCullough, 19 – S. Schäffer, 20 – E. Wurst,
 21 – G. Alberti, 22 – K.-H. Schmidt, 23 – J. Knapp, 24 – J. Jagersbacher-Baumann,
 25 – G. Krisper, 26 – P. Martin, 27 – J. Hevers, 28 – S. Pfeffer, 29 – C. Błaszak,
 30 – B. Sikora, 31 – A. Wegner, 32 – E. Kreibich, 33 – J. Mourek

Not in the picture

D. Brandis, P. Föttinger, M. Gebser, T. Goldschmidt, M. Heethoff, K. Heinz, K.-G. Kirstein, A. Klöters,
 P.A. Martinez, J. Pahnke, A. Pahnke, A. Possiel, P. Reutimann, A. Ruf, H. Schatz, S. Schmelzle, A.
 Shatrov, M. Skorupski, A. Wierzbicka, St. Wirth, U. Wyss