

Mites and ticks, from genes to populations: proceedings of the 8th symposium of the European Association of ACarologists, Valencia, 2016

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In July 2008, Serge Kreiter invited me to organize the eighth meeting of the European Association of Acarologists in Valencia, Spain. I accepted the challenge and during the meeting held in Vienna in 2012 it was agreed that I would take the presidency of the Association for the period 2012-2016 and would organize the next meeting. The 8th EURAAC Symposium took place in Valencia from July 11 to 15, organized by the Polytechnic University of Valencia and EURAAC. The meeting was opened to all scientific fields in Acarology and was attended by 157 people from 33 countries belonging to four continents. Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom and France were the countries which contributed with the highest numbers of participants. The participants featured 153 presentations distributed in 85 oral presentations and 68 posters.

The central topic of the Symposium was “Mites and Ticks: from genes to populations”. With this title I tried to summarize two aspects. First, the remarkable diversity of mites and the invitation to people everywhere interested in mites inhabiting any habitat on Earth and displaying any behaviour and ecological role. Second, we are experiencing in this time an integrative approach of different disciplines which contributes to improve our understanding of these organisms at different scales, from the molecular to the community level. The presentations were divided in nine sessions: Biological Control and Integrated Pest Management; Morphology and Physiology; Taxonomy, Systematics and Phylogeny; Chemical Control, Resistance and Toxicology; Field Ecology and Population Dynamics; Genetics and Evolutionary Acarology; Biogeography and Biodiversity; Behavioural Ecology and Life-History Strategies;

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and Medical and Veterinary Acarology. In addition to the normal sessions, we organized two special and monographic sessions devoted to Bioinvasions and Climate change, hosted by Dr. María Navajas, Dr. Denise Navia and Dr. Menelaos Stavriniades, and Forensic Acarology, chaired by Dr. Maria Alejandra Perotti.

Furthermore, the organizing committee invited a number of key researchers to present Plenary Lectures. I was proud to have with us: Dr. Lee Goff, Professor Emeritus in Entomology and Forensic Sciences at Chaminade University of Hawaii, who told us about the implications of television series like “CSI Las Vegas” to the United States legal system and the role that mites play in forensic entomology; Dr. Ronald Ochoa, Acarologist at USDA Systematic Entomology Laboratory, Beltsville, USA, who presented examples of the application of Low Temperature Scanning Electronic Microscope to reveal the true three-dimensional structures of mite morphology; and Dr. Marie-Stéphane Tixier, Professor in Montpellier SupAgro and Researcher at Centre de Biologie et Gestion des Populations, Montferrier sur Lez, France, who told us about the importance of Systematics in mite research and how to focus the education of students to make the discipline more attractive.

Some of the participants wished to publish their contributions in the Proceedings. As in the case of the previous congress in Vienna, the journal *Acarologia* offered support for publishing these articles in a special issue devoted to the Symposium. I would like to thank the chief editor Serge Kreiter for his assistance during this period. We received twelve manuscripts, from which eleven were accepted after the peer review process. All the submitted manuscripts were reviewed by specialists who helped to improve the quality of the papers. My special thanks to the reviewers Julia Baumann, Carlo Duso, Farid Faraji, Juan Carlos Iturrondobetia, Markus Knapp, Günther Krisper, Ladislav Miko, María Lourdes Moraza, Denise Navia, Roy Norton, Maria Pappas, Tobias Pfingstl, Salvatore Ragusa, Heinrich Schatz, Peter Schausberger, Anna Seniczak, Haralabos Tsolakis and Eddie Ueckermann.

Since the Symposium in Valencia, EURAAC has suffered uncertain times, mainly due to the legal status of the Association. These problems are fixed right now and I am convinced that EURAAC meetings will remain important occasions in the future to promote the collaboration between acarologists from different scientific disciplines and different parts of the world.