

Foreword

This book contains a selection of the communications presented at the Eighth International Polychaete Conference (IPC), held in July 2004 at the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid* (UAM, Cantoblanco, Madrid) in Spain under the sponsorship of the UAM and the *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas* (CSIC). Thanks are due to the effort and enthusiasm of a team whose composition is given at the end of the Foreword.

The first IPC was held at the Australian Museum in Sydney in 1983, and others followed at approximately three-year intervals (Copenhagen, Denmark 1986; Long Beach, USA 1989; Angers, France 1992; Qingdao, China 1995; Curitiba, Brazil 1998; and Reykjavik, Iceland 2001). Thus, this publication represents the latest in the unbroken series of IPC Proceedings devoted to the latest advances in polychaete research.

The 8th IPC was attended by 180 participants from 26 countries from around the world. During the six days of oral contributions, plenary and poster sessions, and excursions trips, a remarkably intense and fruitful scientific exchange took place. About 200 oral communications and posters were presented during the Conference. Each paper submitted for publication to these Proceedings was reviewed by at least three scientific referees and then scrutinized by the editors. A total of 37 manuscripts was finally approved for publication. They are arranged in the published Proceedings according to the following topics: taxonomy and systematics, ecology, biogeography, morphology, reproduction, development and miscellaneous other subjects.

The 8th IPC was organized together with the III International Course on Cladistics and Polychaetes taught by Arne Nygren, Fredrick Pleijel, and Greg Rouse. During the Conference, delegates had the opportunity to visit Segovia, with its old city centre and famous roman aqueduct, and we enjoyed a conference dinner on the terrace of the Aquarium of Madrid. During the business meeting, Guillermo San Martin was elected as the new president of the International Polychaete Association and Andrew S.Y. Mackie was asked to continue temporarily as a secretary-treasurer until a replacement could be found. Portland (Maine, USA) was selected by the delegates as the venue for the next IPC to be held during the summer of 2007.

Finally, we wish to thank all those who contributed with their time, effort and money to the organization of the 8th IPC and to the publication of these Proceedings. The Conference would not have been possible without the unfailing help of Raquel Fernández, Yolanda Lucas, Laura Sordo, Sergi Taboada, Paula Tirado and Julio Millán. We are particularly grateful to the Scientific Committee of the Conference: Florencio Aguirrezabalaga, Romana Capaccioni, Jorge Núñez, Carmen Brito, Julio Parapar and Jose Manuel Viéitez. We kindly acknowledge the financial support, both for the programme activities and publication costs, from the Spanish Ministry of Science and Education, the UAM, the CSIC, and the business firm *Grup Ros*. We are also indebted to the team of reviewers: María Teresa Aguado, Florencio Aguirrezabalaga, Carmé Alós, Jean Michel Amouroux, Christos Arvanitidis, Guy Bachelet, Torkild Bakken, Brendan Barrett, Ruth Barnich, Gérard Bellan, Nechama Ben-Eliahu, Matt Bentley, Michel Bhaud, Andreas Bick, James A. Blake, Markus Böggemann, David Bone, Claudia Bremen, Temir A. Britayev, María del Carmen Brito, Betsy Brown, Grazia Cantone, María Capa, Maite Carrasón, Alberto Castelli, Just Cebrian, Susan Chambers, Melih Çinar, Teresa Darbyshire. Daniel Dauer, Jean-Claude Dauvin, Robert Díaz, Sabine Dittmann, Jennifer Dreyer, Jean-Claude Duchene, Danny

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So now, enjoy the following pages. We hope to see you at the next Conference in Portland (Maine, USA).

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