

From J. Barrande to H.B. Whittington

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This special volume of the *Bulletin of Geosciences* emanates from the “Fifth Conference on Trilobites and their Relatives” held at Charles University in Prague in July 2012. It follows a series of volumes that have resulted from four earlier conferences, held in Oslo, Norway in 1973 (Martinsson 1975), St. Catharines, Canada in 1997 (Adrain & Westrop 1999), Oxford, UK in 2001 (Lane *et al.* 2003) and Toledo, Spain in 2007 (Rábano *et al.* 2008). Each of those volumes presented important new work that is representative of the plethora of publications on trilobite taxonomy, taphonomy, anatomy and palaeoecology that have appeared within the last 50 years. The meetings have also served a function in bringing the dispersed international community of specialists together and defining common goals. For example, completion of the revised trilobite volume of the *Treatise on invertebrate paleontology* (Kaesler 1997) and the list of all existing trilobite genera of Jell & Adrain (2003), both important milestones, benefited from the meetings.

The Prague meeting was preceded by an excursion to the Barrandian area and was followed by a post-conference excursion to Sardinia. Despite the financial crisis, over 90 participants from more than 20 countries presented nearly 40 oral and poster presentations on diverse aspects of trilobite systematics, palaeoecology and taphonomy, with some contributions also on their arthropod relatives. The conference was dedicated to the memory of Professor Harry Blackmore Whittington, and we also dedicate this special volume to him. We thank all who helped with the organization of the conference, namely Gian Luigi Pillolla, University of Cagliari, Cagliari, Italy; Michal Mergl, University of West Bohemia, Plzeň; Marika Steinová-Polechová and Radko Šarič, Czech Geological Survey, Praha; Lukáš Laibl, Jakub Vodička, Martina Aubrechtová, Martina Nohejlová and Ilona Horychová, Charles University, Praha; Štěpán Rak, Museum of the Czech Karst, Beroun; Martin Valent, National Museum, Praha; and Tomáš Lehotský, Palacký University, Olomouc.

The first paper of this volume, by Bruton (2014) is dedicated to Harry Whittington and his exceptional contributions to the study of trilobites and other early arthropods. The following papers are ordered stratigraphically and deal with diverse topics. The first is by Bushuev *et al.* (2014) and describes the oldest trilobites of the Siberian Platform and their incipient sutures. It is followed by a short description of the first known Furongian trilobites from the Cantabrian Zone of Spain by Aceñolaza *et al.* (2014), and by a detailed and provocative investigation of the internal structure of the eye in a Cambrian crustacean from the Orsten Lagerstätte by Schoenemann *et al.* (2014). The study of enrolled agnostids, interpreted as benthic, from the Cambrian of Spain by Esteve & Zamora (2014) precedes an evaluation of the early ontogeny of the Cambrian trilobite *Sao hirsuta* from Bohemia (Laibl *et al.* 2014). The Cambrian biostratigraphy in the Příbram-Jince Basin (Czech Republic) by Fatka & Szabad (2014) is based on analyses of the restricted distribution of agnostids and paradoxid trilobites. Geyer *et al.* (2014) thoroughly explore trilobites and other skeletal fauna of the Amgan (“middle” Cambrian, Stage 5) of Kyrgyzstan, while Pegel (2014) discusses Cambrian trilobite associations of the northern sector of the Siberian Platform. Slightly mineralised arthropod appendages from the Cambrian Weeks Formation Konservat-Lagerstätte are presented by Lerosey-Aubril *et al.* (2014).

Moving higher in the stratigraphic column, Pärnaste & Bergström (2014) present an extensive study of Lower to Middle Ordovician trilobite faunas along the Uralian border of Baltica and Rábano *et al.* (2014) describe new genus of illaenids from the Ordovician of Morocco. Shiino *et al.* (2014) study the autoecology of the Upper Ordovician remopleuridid *Hypodicranotus striatulus* and, analysing its mode of swimming, infer a near benthic habit for this spectacular genus. Mergl (2014) describes new odontopleurids from the Katian/Hirnantian boundary interval in the Prague Basin.

The depositional environment and taphonomy of the fossil assemblage of the Homerian “*Aulacopleura* shales” in the Prague Basin is the focus of the study by Hughes *et al.* (2014). Silurian carcinosomatid eurypterids and the earliest occurrence of Lochkovian dalmanitid trilobites in the Prague Basin are discussed in two contributions by Budil *et al.* (2014a, b), and Hyžný *et al.* (2014) revise the systematics of the decapod *Ctenocheles* in the Bohemian Cretaceous Basin. These diverse works are a reflection of the vitality and breadth of approaches now applied to the study of trilobites and other early arthropods.

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