

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

LEON STUCHLIK

W. Szafer Institute of Botany, Polish Academy of Sciences, Lubicz 46, 31–512 Kraków, Poland; e-mail: stuchlik@ib-pan.krakow.pl

In this volume are published papers originally presented at the Fifth European Palaeobotanical and Palynological Conference, which was held in Kraków from June 26 – 30 1998, followed by four field sessions from June 30 – July 5. This was the first time the conference was organized in Eastern Europe, with previous meetings taking place in Montpellier (France 1983), Madrid (Spain 1989), Vienna (Austria 1991) and Kerkrade near Heerlen (the Netherlands 1994). Kraków was chosen for the conference location because of its scientific and cultural significance not only for Poland but also for this part of Europe. Kraków is the former capital of Poland and has a rich cultural and scientific tradition. It is the second largest university center in Poland, seat of one of the oldest European universities, the Jagiellonian University founded in 1364. With its medieval layout and priceless monuments Kraków has been included in the UNESCO Registers as one of the twelve most outstanding ancient cities in the world. Kraków with its environment of the Beskidy, Podhale and Pieniny Mts, as well as the Tatra Mts further to the south, and the Ojców National Park to the north, is one of the most picturesque cities in Central Europe. The nearby Wieliczka Salt Mine, an object unique on world scale, with its old shafts, the huge expanses in that mysterious underworld, the fine decorations all carved in rock salt and a Museum, has also been entered on the UNESCO Register list.

The opening session of the 5th European Palaeobotanical and Palynological Conference took place on June 26th 1998 in the Assembly Hall of the Academy of Physical Education. After welcoming the members of the Honorary Committee and all participants the president of the Conference expressed his sincere thanks to the following bodies for their financial support: State Committee for Scientific Research, Polish Academy of Sciences, Cracow Salt-Works Museum Wieliczka, “Wieliczka” Salt Mine-Tourists Route Ltd., Turów Brown Coal Open-cast Mine, Bełchatów Brown Coal Open-cast Mine, Bank Przemysłowo-Handlowy S.A., Kraków, The First Polish-American Bank, Kraków, PRECOPTIC Ltd. Warszawa, HORTEX Holding S.A., Warszawa, PPH Żywiec Zdrój spółka z o.o., Cięcina, P.K. Distribution “DAR NATURY”, POLKOMTEL S.A. Their contribu-

tions have enabled the Organizing Committee to offer reduced fees to participants from Eastern European Countries, young scientists and students.

The scientific session began with three invited speakers which have presented the following contributions: Prof. Dr. W. Chaloner, Department of Geology, Royal Holloway, University of London, “The evolution of the carbon cycle”; Dr. M. Fairon-Demaret, Université de Liege, Paléobotanique et Paléopalynologie, Belgium, “Middle Devonian Cladoxylopsida – where are we now?; Prof. Dr. K.-E. Behre, Niedersächsisches Institut für historische Küstenforschung, Wilhelmshaven, Germany, “The present state of the Weichselian biostratigraphic correlation”.

All together 81 oral contributions in two parallel sessions were presented: 33 Mezo-Palaeophytic, 23 Tertiary, 19 Quaternary and 6 general contributions, and during two poster sessions a total of 91 posters were presented. During the Conference one sightseeing tour of Kraków and excursion to the Wieliczka Salt Mine were organized for all participants. During the Conference some informal meetings took place. Eduardo Martinetto (Italy) organized a meeting giving the directory of European Palaeocarpology. Adam Walanus and Dorota Nalepka (Poland) presented a computer program POLPAL for Windows – pollen diagrams, data base, numerical analysis. William Rember (USA) gave a talk entitled: “A survey of geology and taxonomic composition of the *Clarkia* flora”. On the last evening of the Conference a general meeting for members of the IOP took place. Before the closing ceremony another solemn event took place: the official ceremony to present the Jongmans Award. The Board of the Dutch Geology and Palaeontology Foundation decided to award the 1998 medal to Prof. Dr. M. Streel, Liege (Belgium). The medal was presented to Prof. Streel by H.W. J. van Ameron, chairman of the Foundation, and the Laudatio speech was delivered by madam Dr M. Fairon-Demaret.

After the Conference four optional field sessions were organized:

1. A two-day field trip to the Carboniferous and Permian of the Upper Silesian Coal Basin.
2. A five-day field trip to the Tertiary – Quaternary

flora excavations of Bełchatów (Central Poland) and several localities in south-western Poland.

3. A three-day field trip to localities of the Tertiary – Quaternary (Holocene) floras and recent vegetation of the Sub-Tatra and Tatra Mts regions.

4. A one-day field trip to localities of the Holocene and archaeological excavation of Neolithic settlements near Kraków and recent vegetation of the Niepołomice forest.

In the 5th European Palaeobotanical and Palynological Conference 217 palaeobotanists and palynologists

participated from nearly all European countries and also from Saudi Arabia and USA. The most numerous groups apart from the Polish (78), came from United Kingdom (25), Germany (20), Czech Republic (11), Russia (10), Hungary (9), Belarus, Sweden and The Netherlands (7 respectively), Bulgaria and Italy (5), Ukraine (4), Austria, France and Spain (respectively 3), Belgium, Georgia, Ireland, Slovak Republic and USA (2), and Croatia, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Yugoslavia represented by single participants.