



Proceedings of the Third European Workshop on Vertebrate Palaeontology (Maastricht, May 6–9, 1998): Preface

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The first and second European Workshops on Vertebrate Palaeontology were hosted by the Geological Museum of Copenhagen University (1996) and by the Musée des Dinosauriens at Espéraza-Quillan (1997). In 1998, it was the Natuurhistorisch Museum Maastricht's turn to organise the third meeting. After all, the Maastricht area featured prominently in the early days of palaeontology, and of vertebrate palaeontology in particular. The discovery, between 1765 and 1774, of two more or less complete skulls of what was later to become the type species of the marine lizard genus *Mosasaurus*, *M. hoffmanni* Mantell, 1829, at the St Pietersberg south of Maastricht, rapidly made the Maastricht area famous amongst scientists of the time. For the first time, the concept of extinction was discussed, long before Charles Darwin published his *On the origin of species*.

From May 6 to 9 1998, scientific sessions were held at the Bonbonnière theatre and at the Natuurhistorisch Museum Maastricht; subjects covered ranged from diminutive Italian dinosaurs to mosasaurs from southern Sweden, and to microscopic Palaeozoic fish remains. In an opening lecture, Niels Bonde commemorated Colin Patterson (1933–1998), illustrating Colin's achievements in fish palaeontology and cladistic methodology.

Obviously, many people are needed to make sure that things run smoothly, and the 1998 Maastricht workshop was no exception. We wish to extend our best thanks to the following colleagues for their much appreciated assistance during slide projection,

icebreaker party, lunch breaks, and the field trip to the ENCI-Maastricht BV quarry and the underground Geulhemmerberg Cretaceous/Tertiary boundary sections: Douwe Th. de Graaf, Chris Franssen, Hans Peeters, Theo Hemelaar, Jos Lardinoye, Fokeline Dingemans, Pierre Vandewall, Ed de Grood (all Natuurhistorisch Museum Maastricht), and Jan Smit (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam).

The present volume comprises a selection of the papers presented during the meeting, and illustrates the wide range of subjects, although a certain bias towards dinosaur systematics should be noted. Obviously, all contributions were peer reviewed, and for this help we wish to thank the following colleagues: M.J. Benton (University of Bristol), A. Blicek (Université de Lille), G.J. Boekschoten (Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam), N. Bonde (Geologisk Institut, Copenhagen), E. Buffetaut (Paris), W.B. Gallagher (New Jersey State Museum, Trenton), J.D. Harris (New Mexico Museum of Natural History, Albuquerque), P.W. Houde (New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM), W. Langston Jr (University of Texas, Austin), Y. Laurent (Musée des Dinosauriens, Espéraza), J. le Loeuff (Musée des Dinosauriens, Espéraza), C. Mourer-Chauviré (Université Claude Bernard, Villeurbanne), K. Padian (University of California, Berkeley), G. Rabeder (Universität Wien), J. Reumer (Natuurmuseum, Rotterdam), H.-P. Schultze (Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin), and S. Wenz (Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris).