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Dear Friends,

as far as I remember it is the first time that a special symposium (within the 3rd International Congress of Systematic and Evolutionary Biology in Brighton) dealt with 'The Evolution of Marine Meiofauna'. It is, I think, indicative for the state of the arts that in the research of meiofauna we begin to give thoughts on its evolution a somewhat wider range. Of course, there have been some papers around that dealt with evolutionary aspects of meiofauna, but, to my knowledge, it were mainly just P. Boaden and R. Rieger who really concentrated to a larger extent on that topic.

In fact, what we heard and discussed in Brighton was more the evolutionary position which typical meiofauna groups attain in the interrelationships of invertebrate phyla rather than the 'evolution of meiofauna' per se. And the contents were controversial enough to evoke heated debates (Reinhard Rieger almost got a heart attack!), the issues complicated enough to keep the meiobenthologists attending the meeting busy for hours of discussions and beer-drinking. As a matter of fact, other delegates (non-meiobenthologists) admired our enthusiasm!

I cannot go into details here, but the main impression I received from the lectures and subsequent comments was, how necessary it is for us to include much more protozoology in the scope of our reasoning on meiofauna. We have too few protistologists among our group!

But let me come back to the phenomenon that not too many of us have focussed on evolution when dealing with meiobenthos. I don't think this is merely by chance. The short history of meiobenthology, doesn't it recapitulate to some extent the much longer development of zoology in general? When it started off, one accumulated morphological knowledge on new forms, recorded their geographical occurrence, described structures, mainly in interstitial animals which deviated from the general body plan of their 'normal' relatives, although, in many cases, their function was not really understood.

This phase dominated by

collecting morphological data, shifted into a period which focussed more on ecological studies, tried to understand the habitat interacting with the meiobenthic animals, to explain their distribution pattern and analyze their behaviour. Pollution studies began to gain importance, often accompanied by sophisticated mathematical treatment. And it is not more than some 15 or 20 years ago that by application of experiments and by physiological studies one tried to quantify energy flows and integrate microbial aspects. Thus, an ever growing number of meiobenthologists attempts to assess the role of meiofauna in the general cycle of life, its relevance between micro- and macrofauna.

And still, good old morphology is alive and vivid, presenting us similar surprises as it did in the old days, new taxa (even phyla!) are discovered, more structures understood. And from a new morphological approach, that of ultrastructural studies, radiated many new results into other fields of zoology. Details, so far occluded by the limited resolution of light microscopes, led to new interpretations, to a deeper understanding of functions. Seemingly isolated groups began to reveal their relation to other taxa.

Time matured for considerations on evolution of meiofauna as a new facet in the field of meiobenthology. That the conclusions, presented today, are yet much controversial is not unusual in studies on evolution and almost to be expected in a new field. But I am sure, they will attribute meiobenthic studies a new role within zoology in general. Or, as Reinhard Rieger put it in Brighton: "If people want to discuss evolution, they have to go into meiobenthology!"

Well, many of you may conceive the meiofauna (hi-)story I outlined above differently, may emphasize other aspects. Please, don't consider this as more than some subjective thoughts - but to me the Symposium in Brighton was an excellent time to discuss evolution of meiofauna.

Sincerely yours



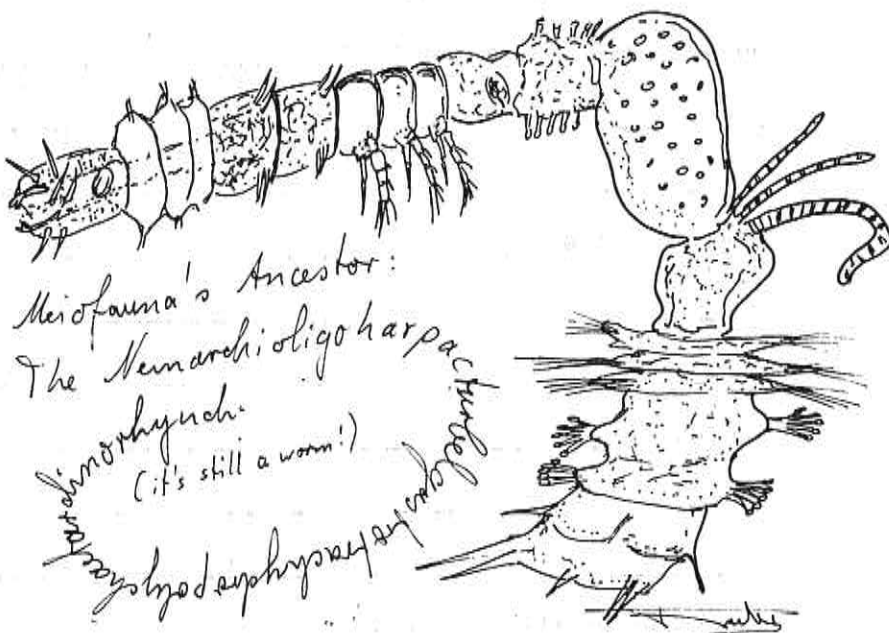
Olav Giere

THROUGH THE DRINKING GLASS

There was this symposium in Brighton,
which all of us seemed to enlighten:
Meiofauna gave rise
to fish, fleas and flies.
No cladogram, no pint could us frighten!

"Primitive animals should live in
primitive habitats."

P.J.S. Boaden
(Brighton)



Sincere thanks again
to Rudy Herman.

SIXTH INTERNATIONAL MEIOFAUNA CONFERENCE
(SIMCO)

July 13 - 19, 1986 Tampa, Florida, U.S.A.

Call for papers

Participants wishing to present a paper or poster are requested to return the enclosed form and abstract (please use an exact copy if you don't want to destroy your valuable PSAMMONALIA) by April 1, 1986 to Susan S. Bell, Department of Biology, University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida 33620, U.S.A. Time for scheduling is limited, so papers may need to be scheduled on basis of date of receipt. A speaker may present at most one oral and poster presentation. Tentative time limits are 20 minutes presentation and 5 minutes discussion.

A special session on freshwater meiofauna will be organized. Persons wanting to participate in this session should annotate their abstract form.

Abstracts

Directions: Use new ribbon and elite type. Avoid old mechanical typewriters and micro-dot printers. Underline scientific species and genus names only. Your abstract will appear exactly as you submit it except for

a slight reduction. Do not exceed the space in the box of the abstract form overleaf.

Abstract form (example)

Bell, S.S. and J.W. Bell. Department of Biology. University of South Florida, Tampa, FL. USA 33620. HOW TO THROW A PARTY FOR 200 OUT OF TOWN GUESTS. In July 1986 we anticipate that....

Housing and schedules

Information regarding housing and schedules for the meeting will be published in upcoming issues of PSAMMONALIA. Housing will be provided on-campus in studio/efficiency rooms in the USF Village from July 12-19. Persons will be able to stay extra days in the housing if they so desire. Special family housing can also be provided on a limited basis.

Those delegates wishing to conduct or participate in a workshop (e.g. copepods, nematodes) should notify S.S. Bell as soon as possible so that this information can be shared with others and meeting rooms can be scheduled.

Final Call for Papers
Please type the following:

Author(s) (last name first): _____

Institution(s): _____

Address: _____

Check one of the following:

Oral Contributed paper _____

Poster session _____

Oral or poster session _____

Equipment needed for presentation other than 35 mm carousel slide projector

ABSTRACT FORM

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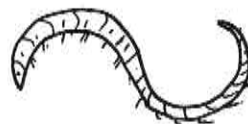
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Marine and freshwater meiofauna has been a fascinating subject of study since the previous century, mainly by students of morphology and systematics in an evolutionary context. Almost all animal phyla have representatives in the meiofauna and some phyla are exclusively composed of animals of small size; e.g. Gastrotricha, Kinorhyncha and the newly described Loricifera whose existence was announced for the first time at the Gent symposium on which this volume is based. In the last decades much ecological information has been gathered as well and more and more the picture emerges that these small creatures are important in marine sediments, indirectly by processes such as bioturbation and the stimulation of bacterial metabolism but also directly as food sources for higher trophic levels such as shrimp and juvenile fish. They also begin to play an important role in pollution research.

This volume contains 13 papers presented at the Fifth International Meiofauna Conference, held in Gent, Belgium, from 16 to 20 August 1983. These conferences are organized triannually by the International Association of Meiobenthologists and previous conferences were in Tunis (1969), York (1973), Hamburg (1977) and Columbia (1980). Only the proceedings of the first conference have been published (Smithsonian Contributions to Zoology) and are widely used as a reference work, so the time was ripe for a new publication. That only 13 papers of the 35 presented at the conference finally appear is a logical consequence of the philosophy of these conferences, where often new results and highly speculative papers are presented. I believe, however, that the papers presented here provide a good representation of current research in meiofauna biology.

The Fifth International Meiofauna Conference was financially supported by the Belgian National Fund for Scientific Research and the Belgian Ministry of Education.

Carlo Heip

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NEWS FROM THE MEMBERS

Jean de VAUGELAS
Laboratoire de Biologie et Ecologie
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France

I would like to know the name(s) and address(es) of specialists on hydroid taxonomy. I found colonies of small (appr. 2 mm long) hydroids attached to the walls of the tubes of callianassid shrimps (Crustacea, Thalassinidea) which borrow deep systems of galleries in the coral sand of tropical lagoons. Judging from the size of the hydroids they should be considered "meiofauna", but they could also be associated with "cryptofauna" for their way of living.

To whom should I write to get my specimens identified?

J. de Vaugelas

ADDRESS MISSING

We would like to know the present address of

James A. BLAKE

formerly
15 Sunset Rd.
DUXBURY, MA. 02332
U.S.A.

Please help us, so that we can mail his PSAMMONALIA correctly.

SCIENTIST'S MOTTO IN HOT SUMMER DAYS

"A good talk is like a bikini:
Short enough to raise interest,
but covering all essential points."

NEW OR REINSTATED MEMBERS

David J. PATTERSON
Zoology Department
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I am interested in evolution, classification and natural history of free-living protozoa - including those of sediments - and have collaborated with Jacob Larsen (University of Copenhagen) on estuarine benthic flagellates. At present, I mostly work with sediments from the Severn Estuary. I am Co-editor of the new journal "Progress in Protistology", together with John Corliss.

Molly V. STURDEVANT
School of Fisheries and Science
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I am a graduate student at the University of Alaska, Juneau, School of Fisheries and Science, studying the trophic interactions of meiofauna and juvenile flatfish. My field research is in progress this summer.

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