

PREFACE

This issue of *Studia Quaternaria* is dedicated to **Burkhard W. Scharf** on the occasion of his 60th birthday and the retirement from his professional activities. His students and friends paid homage to Burkhard in the Palace of Kulice, Pomerania, just on the very day when the unification of Europe was completed by the integration of 10 central and central-east European countries that had belonged to the former Soviet empire. Since Burkhard was born in Poznan (Posen at the time of his birth), the place of celebration indicates, in a way, a completion of his personal journey: back to the country of his very early childhood, east of the River Odra. It is almost unnecessary to say that the hospitality of the Polish friends was overwhelming, the personal and scientific talks and discussions seemed to have no end, and the papers dedicated to Burkhard are of high quality. They reflect the three fields of his study.

Burkhard Scharf started as a doctoral student in the Max-Planck Institute of Limnology in Plön, Germany, where his scientific interest in aquatic invertebrates was incited. As many students of environmental sciences at that time, his primary goal was, rather than joining academia, to exercise his sound knowledge of limnology in applied issues. He went to the State Office of Water Management in Mainz and was involved in lake restoration-related activities. His focus was mainly on the Maar lakes in the Eifel, water bodies unique in origin and beauty. His work was very rewarding; rather than regarding him as an administrator, one should not hesitate to call him the saviour of those unique lakes. Judging by his publication record, it is obvious that the work in the State Office, although successful, failed to provide Burkhard with a challenge he was seeking. He devoted his spare time to the

faunistic study of the Ostracoda and even discovered new species in the Maar lakes. Later on, he applied the bioindicative potential of the sediment record of those small animals (and also of diatoms, in collaboration with colleagues) to the reconstruction of palaeoenvironmental conditions of lakes and their surroundings. To summarise that stage of his scientific activity: he was on his way back to the academic research. Consequently, he left the State Office of Water Management and joined the newly established Institute of Aquatic Research in Magdeburg where he was charged with lake restoration issues. However, Burkhard's heart was in palaeolimnology, the subject of his most interesting papers. A measure of Burkard's achievements in this respect is the fact that the lacustrine palaeostates Burkhard described are used as a point of reference to the current management measures.

Wherever and whatever he worked, Burkhard made lots of friends. Hence, it is self explanatory that the lectures and papers presented at the Kulice symposium reflect all Burkhard's fields of interest and almost all phases of his scientific life.

We all are glad and privileged to know Burkhard Scharf and happy to dedicate this Special Issue of *Studia Quaternaria* to him. It was a pleasure to review and edit the manuscripts. We hope that the reader will share Burkhard's enthusiasm for the Ostracoda, palaeolimnology, and lake management – at least partly, if not wholly.

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