



## European Association of Vertebrate Palaeontologists

Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde, Geologische Abteilung,  
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<http://www.eavp.alettra.de>

### EAVP Newsletter - No 1, April 2005

#### The words of the President

The European Association of Vertebrate Palaeontologists is now well into its second year of official existence, after its foundation at the Basel meeting in July 2003, following upon preliminary discussions in Sibiu in 2002. It is probably too early to judge whether the EAVP will be a success in the long term, but what has been achieved is definitely encouraging. First, thanks to the hard work of Dino Frey and those who helped him through the intricacies of German law (and it would have been just as difficult in any other country!), the EAVP now has an official and legal existence, being recognised as a charity. Its financial basis has also been established and Daniela Schwarz is managing this rather tricky part of an association's business with great ability.

The most visible part of the association's activity is of course the annual workshops, which are the continuation of the European Workshops launched in Copenhagen in 1996. The number of participants at these workshops has fluctuated over the years, but it is certainly no exaggeration to say that they have all been successes in terms of scientific content and exchanges - which is just what the EAVP is for. Maintaining a plurality of approaches is one of the main goals of EAVP, and the workshops have, in my opinion, illustrated such a diversity. An especially satisfying fact about them is the large attendance of students and young researchers - helped in that by the Raymonde Rivoallan Fund, set up to facilitate their participation through the generosity of Marie-Céline Buchy (and already supported by several donors, to whom we are sincerely grateful). We must now make sure that the fund will remain at a sufficiently stable level to enable it to serve its purpose in the future, and all fund-raising suggestions are welcome. Another highly satisfying point is that offers for future venues for the workshop have always been forthcoming. The next one will be in Darmstadt, and we are invited to come to Budapest in 2006. I have no doubt that in Darmstadt suggestions will be made for 2007 and beyond. This willingness to host the meeting, in various parts of Europe, shows that it has become a well-established part of scientific activity for a significant part of the European community of vertebrate palaeontologists.

It should be noted that the EAVP has begun to enlarge its

activities beyond the annual workshop. In 2004, it gave its patronage to the Sixth International Meeting of the Society of Avian Paleontology and Evolution, held in Quillan (France) from 28th September to 3rd October. In 2005, it will be an official patron of the exhibition on Fossils and Myths organised at the Moravian Museum by Ružena Gregorová, our host for the annual workshop in 2004. All of this is of course excellent for the image of the Association, which definitely must become more "visible", both among the international palaeontological community and among the public at large. In 2006, the first EAVP themed symposium, on the Sauropterygia, will take place in Karlsruhe. All suggestions for other activities in which the association could get involved are welcome.

The decision to make *Oryctos* the official journal of the EAVP is of obvious importance both for the journal, as it will hopefully boost its circulation, and for the association, because experience shows that a scientific society without its own journal is severely limited in its influence and development. Much remains to be done, however, to make *Oryctos* one of the leading journals in vertebrate palaeontology. What we need to achieve that are good papers in sufficient numbers. Hence an appeal to EAVP members: please think of *Oryctos* when you consider where to publish your next paper! Its impact factor may not be very high at the moment, but the only way to raise it is to submit good papers to it.

A final remark: whatever the successes it has achieved so far, the EAVP needs to grow if it wants to fulfil its aim of furthering cooperation between vertebrate palaeontologists at the European level. We must increase our membership, and I think this can be done only through the efforts of individual members of the association. Each of us should encourage colleagues and students to join, and a good way to do so is to convince them they should attend the next workshop. The combination of relaxed atmosphere and high-quality scientific content at the workshops is definitely a strong enticement to join the association. The EAVP has an attractive web site, to which potential members can be referred for information. So I wish you all good luck in your recruiting efforts - and see you in Darmstadt!

Eric

#### EAVP Members - April 2005

**Laurent Borrelli**, Aix-en-Provence, France, ediacara70@aol.com - **Marie-Céline Buchy**, Universität Karlsruhe, Germany, buchy@smnk.de (*fossil marine reptiles*) - **Eric Buffetaut**, CNRS, Paris, France, Eric.Buffetaut@wanadoo.fr (*Mesozoic vertebrates: dinosaurs, pterosaurs, birds*) - **José Ignacio Canudo**, Universidad de Zaragoza, Spain, jicanudo@unizar.es (*mesozoic vertebrates: dinosaurs, mammals*) - **Lionel Cavin**, Bex, Switzerland, lionelcavin@yahoo.com (*fossil fishes*) - **Vlad-Aurel Codrea**, Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, vcodrea@bioge.ubbcluj.ro - **Paul Constantin**, Geological Institute of Romania, Bucharest, Romania, paulct@igr.ro - **Zoltan Csiki**, University of Bucharest, Romania, dinozoli@geo.edu.ro - **Gilles Cuny**, Geological Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark, gilles@savik.geomus.ku.dk (*fossil sharks, microvertebrates*) - **Soledad De Esteban-Trivigno**, Institut Cavanille i biologia Evolutiva, Paterna, Spain (*fossil mammals*) - **Eberhard Frey**, Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde Karlsruhe, Germany, dinofrey@aol.com (*constructional morphology, evolution, mesozoic reptiles*) - **Erika Gál**, Archaeological Institute, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary, gal\_erika@yahoo.com - **Mihály Gasparik**, Hungarian National History Museum, Budapest, Hungary, gasparik@nhmus.hu - **Ruzena Gregorová**, Moravian Museum, Brno, Czech Republic, rgregorova@mzm.cz - **Dan Grigorescu**, Universitatea din Bucuresti, Bucharest, Romania, dan.grigorescu@socrates.ro (*dinosaurs, dino eggs, mesozoic reptiles*) - **Ella Hoch**, Midtsønderjyllands Museum, Gram, Denmark, ella.hoch@mail.dk (*Cetacea, Cainozoic birds, palaeontology*) - **Jeff Liston**, Institute for BioMedical & Life Sciences, University of Glasgow,

jliston@museum.gla.ac.uk (*fossil fishes*) - **Bente T. Loudon**, Sale, Cheshire, U.K., benteloudon@hotmail.com - **Daniel Marty**, Basel, Switzerland, daniel.marty@palaeojura.ch (*fossil vertebrates, ichnology, sedimentology*) - **David Martill**, School of Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Portsmouth, UK, david.martill@port.ac.uk (*pterosaurs, sedimentology*) - **Octavio Mateus**, Museu da Lourinha, Portugal (*dinosaurs: saurischians*) - **Christian A. Meyer**, Naturhistorisches Museum Basel, Switzerland, Christian.Meyer@bs.ch - **Jesper Milàn**, Valby, Denmark, milan@geol.ku.dk (*vertebrate ichnology*) - **Attila Ósi**, Eotvös L. University Department of Paleontology, Budapest, Hungary, theropoda@freemail.hu (*dinosaurs, pterosaurs, crocodiles*) - **Halszka Osmólska**, Instytut Paleobiologii PAN, Warszawa, Poland, osm@twarda.pan.pl (*dinosaurs*) - **Piroska Pazonyi**, Hungarian National History Museum, Budapest, Hungary, rangifer@freemail.hu - **Erika Posmosanu**, Muzeul Tarii Crisurilor, Oradea, Romania, spelemat@rdsor.ro - **Christina Karla Reimann**, Geologisch-Paläontologisches Institut der Universität Münster, Germany, reimi@uni-muenster.de (*fossil mammals - pleistocene*) - **Kristian Remes**, Bayerische Staatssammlung für Paläontologie und Geologie, München, Germany, kristian.remes@gmx.de (*fossil reptiles: dinosaurs, birds, functional morphology, phylogeny*) - **Gertrud Rössner**, Department für Geo- und Umweltwissenschaften, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany, g.roessner@lrz.uni-muenchen.de (*mammal palaeontology, Ruminantia*) - **Martin Rücklin**, Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde Karlsruhe, Germany, martin\_ruecklin@web.de (*palaeoichthyology, palaeozoic fishes, placoderms*) - **Dieter Schreiber**, Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde Karlsruhe, Germany, dieter.schreiber@gmx.de (*Quaternary mammals: Rhinocerotidae, comparative osteology, palaeoenvironments*) - **Anne S. Schulp**, Natuurhistorisch Museum Maastricht, The Netherlands (*fossil reptiles, mosasaurs*) - **Daniela Schwarz**, Naturhistorisches Museum Basel, Switzerland, Daniela.Schwarz@bs.ch (*constructional morphology, reptiles: crocodiles, dinosaurs, evolution, gross anatomy*) - **Krister T. Smith**, Department of Geology and Geophysics, Yale University, USA, krister.smith@yale.edu (*squamates*) - **Wolfgang Stinnesbeck**, Geologisches Institut der Universität Karlsruhe, Germany, wolfgang.stinnesbeck@bio-geo.uni-karlsruhe.de (*fossil invertebrates, sedimentology*) - **Michael Taylor**, National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh Scotland, m.taylor@nms.ac.uk (*marine reptiles*) - **Basil Thüring**, Naturhistorisches Museum Basel, Switzerland, basil.thuring@bs.ch (*Dinotracks, Museum exhibitions, geology and sedimentology*) - **Hajan Tong**, Paris, France, Eric.Buffetaut@wanadoo.fr (*fossil reptiles: turtles*) - **Marton Venczel**, Muzeul Tarii Crisurilor, Oradea, Romania, mvenczel@rdslink.ro

### Our stars and logo

The partial skeleton of the animal shown in the logo was first named *Homo diluvii testis* by the Swiss doctor Johann Jakob Scheuchzer (1672-1783). He claimed it to be the remains of a sinner drowned by the Flood, and regarded it as a proof of the veracity of the Bible. Although some later scientists suggested it was a silurid fish, Georges Cuvier (1769-1832) properly described it in 1811 and identified it as a giant salamander, castigating Scheuchzer's blindness, for whom science could only serve the religious dogma.

We selected *Andrias scheuchzeri* for the logo for the EAVP, because it is a historical and world famous off-shoot of vertebrate palaeontology in Europe. It also stands for the fact that vertebrate palaeontology has always been and still is subject to a permanent change of social conventions and prejudice.

Stars were chosen as a symbol for Europe, six only as a reminder of the six founding countries of the European Community in 1957, which has constantly expanded since then. As a symbol for our geographical understanding of Europe, these stars, instead of forming a circle, draw an oval, extending eastward to countries which are not members of the EC.

May this logo encourage the members of the association to argue and discuss in the clear and honest way Cuvier did.



### EAVP patronage: Mysterious Unicorn - The History of Understanding Fossils

Ružena Gregorová, Moravian Museum, Brno - Historical sources show that fossils played an interesting and important role in the areas of mythology, philosophy, theology, art, history, medieval medicine, folk culture and science. Many world-famous personalities were interested in fossil remains, such as Aristotle, Avicenna, Boccaccio, Leonardo da Vinci, Voltaire, Georges Cuvier and Charles Darwin.

Fossils were explained according to the understanding of the World (theology versus sciences) prevalent at the time. They were considered as ritual objects, as the result of the forces vis plastica or vis lapidifica, as evidence of The Deluge, as relicts of Saints, remains of dragons, unicorns, giants, griffins and basilisks. Until the 18th century, fossils were frequently used as recognised medication (above all horn of 'fossil unicorn', belemnites and ammonites) as well as in folk medicine. People believed in the supernatural and magic power of fossils. Also, secondarily fossils appear in many artworks in painting, sculpture, architecture etc. Many old books contain beautiful graphic illustrations of various magic creatures expressing original ideas, and some of them are based on real fossil discoveries.

Direct evidence of this is deposited in the European museums, universities, castles, cabinets of curiosities, historical pharmacies, etc. A number of cultural landscapes are connected with the presence of fossils.

Many of these artefacts have already been recorded but the present research discovered new facts and materials in European territory. These results will be presented in the exhibition **Mysterious Unicorn** in the **Moravian museum in Brno** (Czech republic) in collaboration with many European Institutions, and under patronage of the EAVP. Precious specimens come from Naturhistorisches Museum (Karlsruhe), Musée Georges Cuvier (Montbéliard), MNHN Paris, Teyler Museum (Haarlem), Vienna University, National Museum (Prague) etc. A video-film production records the heritage that cannot be displayed within the exhibition (constructed heritage, cultural landscapes).

By means of these artefacts, the project intends to show to the public at large - including children - the evolution of the understanding of Nature throughout various periods of human civilisation. In the case of fossil artefacts, the project presents, in a multidisciplinary way, the influence of the social environment in every historical period.

Various meetings to come: **II Latin American Congress of Vertebrate Paleontology**, Rio de Janeiro, 10-12 August 2005 - **Symposium on Mesozoic Terrestrial Ecosystems and Biota**, Manchester, UK, June 2006 - **Fumanya International Symposium on Dinosaurs and other Vertebrates Palaeoichnology**, Fumanya, Spain, 4-8 October 2005 - **5th National Symposium of Paleontology**, Bucharest, Romania, 15-17

September 2005 - **IGCP 491 Meeting "Middle Palaeozoic vertebrates of Laurussia: relationships with Siberia, Kazakhstan, Asia and Gondwana"** & **6th Baltic Stratigraphical Conference**, St. Petersburg, Russia, 22-26 August 2005 - **International Meeting on Mesozoic Fishes: Systematics, Homology, and Character Definition** Miraflores De La Sierra, Madrid, Spain, August 8th-14th, 2005 - **4th International Symposium on Lithographic Limestone and Plattenkalk**, Eichstätt/Solnhofen, Germany, September 12-18, 2005 - **Early/Lower Vertebrates meeting**, Uppsala, Sweden, week of Aug. 13, 2007. All links are posted on our blackboard: <http://www.eavp.alettra.de>



Coming soon! 3rd Workshop of the EAVP, Darmstadt, Germany



The **3rd WEAVP** will be held in the **Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt**, Germany, from **July 18th to July 23th, 2005**. The **Rivoallan Fund** offers **two grants** for attending the meeting. All details are included in the second circular, available online. In order to fill up the Fund for next year, a **tombola** will be organised on Thursday, July 21st. For this tombola we need a wide range of **"valuable" prizes**. Please have a look at your magazines, libraries for suitable objects (e.g., completely articulated dinosaur skeletons) and don't forget to bring them with you to the conference.

The **general assembly of the EAVP** will take place during the course of the WEAVP: our secretary, Dino Frey, **calls for topics!** (DinoFrey@aol.com)

The **second circular** is posted on our web site: <http://www.eavp.alettra.de>

- Gabriele Gruber, Norbert Micklich, Oliver Sandrock, Torsten Wappler (Organisation Committee)



### Naturhistorisches Museum Basel: New permanent Dinosaur-Exhibition

Daniela Schwarz, Naturhistorisches Museum Basel - In the Natural History Museum in Basel, a new permanent exhibition about dinosaurs and their environment has been opened after the great success of the Special Dinosaur Exhibition in 2003 (76000 visitors) in August 2004.

The new exhibition gives an overview about different dinosaurs and their Mesozoic environment. Centred in the exhibition room are a new 7.5 m long skeletal mount of *Allosaurus* and a life-sized model of *Plateosaurus*. Showcases provide information about skeletal differences between dinosaurs and other vertebrates, early dinosaur reconstructions (example *Iguanodon*), differences between meat- and plant-eating dinosaurs, contemporary biota like pterosaurs, mammals and plants, dinosaur extinction, life in Mesozoic seas, dinosaur tracks and the transition from theropod dinosaurs to birds.



The highlights of the exhibition are a high-quality cast of a Chinese *Psittacosaurus* with soft-part preservation like skin impressions and scutes, bristles at the tail and stomach content, and an egg with a *Psittacosaurus* embryo in situ. The Mesozoic underwater world is displayed in a diorama with dynamic reconstructions. In the middle of the exhibition room a broad stairs leads to a window, where visitors can take a look at the 27 m long *Diplocodus* reconstruction in the yard, but can also gather together and have a rest or watch video sequences of dinosaurs. Additional information sheets on different topics about dinosaurs are available in boxes all over the room.

### Mexico, land of giants: 'The Monster of Aramberri', to be continued

Marie-Céline Buchy, Universität Karlsruhe - During the last field campaign in Aramberri, northeastern Mexico, organised by the University of Karlsruhe, the Natural History Museum of Karlsruhe, the University of Linares and the Museo del Desierto, Saltillo, and with financial support of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), more of the giant pliosaur nick-named 'The Monster of Aramberri' was exposed. The pelvic girdle is visible (photo), preserved within a 3\*6 m concretion that continues downward and eastward. A transatlantic brainstorming is now aiming at safely extracting the baby. More about the beast, its history and baby-sitters is available at [www.geo-smnk.alettra.de](http://www.geo-smnk.alettra.de)



### Ten thousand dinosaur eggs...

Eric Buffetaut and Haiyan Tong, Paris - From April 8th to 12th, 2005, an International Dinosaur Symposium, sponsored by Heyuan People's Government and the Guangdong Rising Assets Management Co., was held in Heyuan, a middle-sized city (3.5 million inhabitants) in Guangdong Province, in southern China.



Late Cretaceous continental red beds, containing abundant dinosaur eggs, at Heyuan.

It brought together vertebrate palaeontologists from Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, the United States and of course China. The lectures were not only about dinosaurs - pterosaurs, crocodylians and even snakes were also discussed. The participants enjoyed the very friendly hospitality of the local authorities (including a series of memorable Chinese banquets - the local rice wine is definitely worth trying), and the opportunity to discover the hitherto relatively little known fossil riches of Heyuan. The city is now known in palaeontological circles mainly because of the well-preserved oviraptorosaur material, recently described by Lü Junchang (Institute of Geology, Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences, Beijing) as *Heyuannia huangi*<sup>1</sup>, and kept in Heyuan Museum. The skeletons were found in Late Cretaceous sandstones, together with sauropod and

turtle material. Even more unexpected perhaps was the huge collection of dinosaur eggs held in the museum. It totals more than 10,000 specimens, and recently won for Heyuan Museum a place in the Guinness Book of World Records, for the largest dinosaur egg collection in the world ! The eggs belong to different types and their study is just beginning. Not unexpectedly, the local government of Heyuan is enthusiastic about dinosaurs, and the city has been officially nicknamed "the mother town of dinosaurs in China". There are plans for the development of a dinosaur park for the protection and presentation to the public of some of the main fossil localities, and there is little doubt that Heyuan will soon become one of the major palaeontological sites in China.



Some of the 10,000 dinosaur eggs kept at Heyuan Museum...



A life-size reconstruction of *Heyuannia huangi*, in Heyuan Museum.

*1 A detailed description (bilingual, Chinese/English) of Heyuannia and other oviraptorosaurs from South China has just been published by Lü Junchang: Oviraptorid Dinosaurs from South China, Geological Publishing House, Beijing, 2005, 200 pp.*

First EAVP Themed Symposium - The Sauropterygia

The Sauropterygia will be first international conference devoted exclusively to sauropterygian palaeontology. It will be a wide-ranging 'state of the science' summary of all the latest and most exciting research into the sauropterygian reptiles, ranging from historical perspectives and current successes to future prospects. The meeting will provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas, to promote discussion and develop future collaborative work. We are inviting international keynote speakers, among them Olivier Rieppel (Field Museum): full details will shortly appear in the first circular on the EAVP web site.

- Dino Frey, Karlsruhe, Leslie Noè, Cambridge, Marie-Céline Buchy, Karlsruhe, Marcela Gomez, Cambridge



Look at that ridiculous hat!

The second meeting of the EAVP Board in the restaurant Pivovarska, Brno, 21 July 2004 - excellent beer.



A call for contributions!

We are longing to receive your exhibition and meeting announcements and/or reviews, book and article reviews, news from your last field campaign, calls for help, job offers, and whatever else you wish to read in here. Our ambition is to make this Newsletter quarterly. The next issue is therefore scheduled for this summer.

Contributions may be up to about 500 words (as a Word file), with or without illustration (as a .jpg file). Please send them electronically to our Newsletter Team: Daniela Schwarz (Daniela.Schwarz@bs.ch), Jeff Liston (jliston@museum.gla.ac.uk), Martin Rücklin (martin\_ruecklin@web.de) and/or Marie-Céline Buchy (buchy@smnk.de). Contributions will be subject to informal (and friendly) review by ourselves.