



PREFACE



The iguanian lizard family Agamidae exists in more than 350 species which are grouped in about 45 genera. Agamid lizards are distributed through the Mediterranean, subtropical and tropical regions of the Old World with the exception of Madagascar. They occupy a great variety of biotopes ranging from deserts through steppes and savannas to tropical rain forest. The adaptations to specific habitats have led to an extraordinary morphological and ecological diversity. Agamids may be wide-ranging or confined to biodiversity hotspots, others are relictual endemics to small areas. Many of them, however, are under anthropogenic pressure, either by habitat loss or by direct persecution, thus being important for the conservation of biodiversity on a global scale.

New, intensive studies with multiple methods including molecular genetic approaches have shown that the taxonomic diversity of agamids, in Africa as well as in SE Asia, is still considerably underestimated. Also some phylogenetic hypotheses and concepts of the last decades have been challenged by new, current research. It was therefore overdue that the herpetologists working on various aspects of agamid systematics and biology in various parts of the world were brought together in order to present their results and ideas to each other and to create a new network of cooperative research on agamids (in Latin “de agamis”).

It was the idea and initiative of the Herpetology Section of the Zoologisches Forschungsmuseum Alexander Koenig (ZFMK), in particular of the young researcher Philipp WAGNER who devoted a part of his PhD thesis to these fascinating lizards, to invite colleagues from many countries to a first international symposium “DeAgamis”, and the resonance was very good. A part of the scientific outcome of this symposium is collected in the present issue of Bonner zoologische Beiträge. I hope this issue will stimulate colleagues to attend a second symposium DeAgamis which I am inviting to St. Petersburg in August 2010.

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