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Preface
Studies on Mexican amber

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Mexican amber from the state of Chiapas is considered to be of Early Miocene age and derived mainly from the fossilized resin of the tree species *Hymenaea mexicana* (Angiospermae: Fabaceae). It is one of the most important amber resources from Central America. However, in comparison to the Dominican amber, the Mexican amber from Chiapas has been poorly studied.

The present volume presents not only systematic studies on fossil arthropods and plants from Simojovel and Totolapa amber (Chiapas, Mexico) but introduces also new collections that open the possibility to describe more material. All contributions provide new insights on the taxonomic diversity of Miocene arthropods, their morphological disparity and paleoecology.

The reconstruction of the paleoenvironment for this Mexican amber shows it was similar to modern lowland tropical forest, developed near the coast, in a mangrove paleoenvironment. Some of the articles presented here discuss the relation of fossils with living arthropods from the region of Chiapas, and support the hypothesis that, at least part of this amber, is derived from a mangrove environment and that many elements of the modern Neotropical fauna originated and remain in place since the Early Miocene. Since the better-known Dominican Republic amber is also of Miocene age and derived from a *Hymenaea* species *H. protera* comparisons between similar species in Mexican and Dominican amber are also discussed in the present volume.

We are grateful to Günter Bechly (Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde, Stuttgart, Germany) who allowed access of the Mexican amber collection, to colleagues and friends who contributed the different papers of all fossil inclusions and living arthropods; to the many referees for the critical reviews of the manuscripts and to the chief and technical editors of this volume, principally Antoni Camprubí i Cano for great support in editing of this work.

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