

Editorial

Introduction—A tribute to Prof. Georges Ubaghs (1916–2005)



Georges Jean Charles Ubaghs (Angleur, Belgium, 29 February 1916 – Liège, Belgium, 31 January 2005) was certainly one of the greatest and most influential specialists of Palaeozoic echinoderms in the second half of the XXth century. His most significant legacy is certainly his major contribution to the French *Traité de Paléontologie* (1953) and the North American *Treatise on Invertebrate Paleontology* (1966–1978), in both of which he represents, by far, the largest contributor to chapters devoted to echinoderms. Apart from some early papers devoted to Early Carboniferous dendroid graptolites from Belgium (Ubaghs, 1941) and the regional geology of the Liège area (e.g., Ubaghs, 1943), his full career was devoted to the study of Palaeozoic echinoderms. From 1941 to 1958, he first mostly focused on the anatomy and systematics of Siluro–Devonian crinoids and ophiuroids. Then, from 1959 to 1999, he devoted most of his time to the description

and interpretation of various groups of Cambro–Ordovician echinoderms (carpoids, crinoids, and eocrinoids). Two of his most significant contributions to the understanding of these early echinoderms are probably (1) to have pointed out – for the first time – the fundamental difference between arms (as in crinoids) and brachioles (cystoids, eocrinoids; Ubaghs, 1953), and (2) to have reinterpreted the stylophoran appendage (aulacophore) as a feeding arm (Ubaghs, 1961). The scientific legacy of Georges Ubaghs to our current knowledge of Palaeozoic echinoderms is invaluable. Moreover, all the people who had the chance to meet and know him personally will regret not only the great scientist, but also the man. Everybody will remember his extreme courtesy and kindness, his discretion, his modesty, and his great open-mindedness.

This thematic issue of *Annales de Paléontologie* represents a tribute to Pr. Georges Ubaghs, who published several key papers in this journal (Ubaghs, 1950, 1960, 1972, 1981, 1987, 1994). This volume contains four contributions dealing with various – mostly Palaeozoic – echinoderm groups. All of these papers were initially presented as oral communications at the international meeting “*Journées G. Ubaghs*” held on 30–31 January 2006, at the université de Bourgogne (Dijon, France). This conference was sponsored by the Association paléontologique française (APF) and the Groupe français du Paléozoïque (GFP). Additional papers related to this international meeting will be published in a forthcoming issue of *Annales de Paléontologie*.

In this volume, the first three papers present fresh new data on various Ordovician echinoderms previously investigated by Georges Ubaghs: the eocrinoids *Ascocystites* (Ubaghs, 1968b) and *Lingulocystis* (Ubaghs, 1960, 1968b), and the mitrate stylophoran *Peltocystis* (Ubaghs, 1968c, 1970). Serge Régnault describes abundant and exquisitely preserved specimens of *Ascocystites* from the Upper Ordovician of Morocco (Anti-Atlas). This report extends the palaeogeographic distribution of the *Ascocystitidae* Ubaghs, 1968b, which were previously documented in Czech Republic (Bohemia), France (Armorican Massif), and Portugal. In the next paper, Elise Nardin proposes a global survey of the two species of *Lingulocystis* from the Lower Ordovician of Montagne Noire (Southern France), based on all available articulated specimens, and also on an abundant material of isolated skeletal elements. This detailed study investigates for the first time morphological variability within this genus of eocrinoids, and provides new data on its stratigraphic range and associated palaeoenvironments. Then, Bertrand Lefebvre and Joe Botting describe the first occurrence of the mitrate *Peltocystis cornuta* outside of Montagne Noire. This new material from the Lower Ordovician of Morocco (Anti-Atlas) also documents some previously unknown details of the anatomy of this stylophoran (e.g., the location and morphology of the periproct).

Finally, Sébastien Moyné et al. describe morphological variability in the plating of the test of the Middle Jurassic echinoid *Collyrites*, based on material from Paris Basin. Although Georges Ubaghs was not himself a specialist of echinoids, two of his papers dealt, at least partly, with this class of echinoderms (Ubaghs, 1963, 1968a).

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