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Preface

The theme of this volume evolved at the XVIIth International Congress of Entomology in Hamburg, Federal Republic of Germany, in 1984. 25 entomologists from 11 countries met at a symposium entitled "2nd International Conference on Classification, Phylogeny, and Natural History of Hydradephaga (Coleoptera)" to talk about various aspects of water beetle research. Certainly this not inconsiderable number of speakers at the symposium was partly due to the stimulating effect of the First Hydradephaga Conference in Toronto, Canada, in 1982. From the 25 invited speakers of the Hamburg meeting 21 have now contributed their papers which amply illustrate the fascinating diversity of water beetle research; they cover the morphology, systematics, phylogeny, physiology, ecology and zoogeography of this interesting beetle group.

The symposium attracted so much enthusiasm and lively discussion from participants and audience alike that a publication on the subject is timely. Together with the special issue of the Toronto meeting (*Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia* 137 (1): 1–201; 1985) this volume of *Entomologica Basiliensia* provides a stimulating collection of water beetle papers which additionally reflects fruitful international collaboration, especially between Europe and North America.

The book is divided into seven sections, each dealing with one of the above-mentioned topics. One additional paper in memory of the Dytiscid specialist Leopold Gschwendtner has been included (H. Schaefflein) together with the Annual compilation (1985) of Hydradephaga (Coleoptera) papers (M. Brancucci & K. Dettner) although they were not formally presented at the Hamburg meeting.

We have enjoyed our editorial work and hope that our enthusiasm will be shared by the readers of this volume. We are grateful to those specialists who have kindly reviewed manuscripts and we especially thank the Fond Pro Entomologia, Basel and the Swiss Academy of Sciences for enabling the production of this special issue.

Michel Brancucci
Konrad Dettner

