



Preface

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We are excited to present this special volume in honor of the distinguished Cuban zoologist, Dr. Luis F. de Armas, in celebration of his 80th birthday. Luis has dedicated his academic career to the study of the arachnid fauna and their ecological relationships with other zoological groups. Through more than five decades of field studies, his research has significantly contributed to a greater understanding of the richness of Neotropical biodiversity, mainly Caribbean, Central America and Mexico, especially in the context of its endemic arachnid species, and he has been pivotal in the education of younger generations of arachnologists.

The global reach of his work is exemplified by the enthusiastic support for this *Festschrift* by zoologist colleagues all over the world. We had the pleasure of overseeing the editorial process for this special volume, which includes four editorial and 17 scientific papers contributed by authors from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Germany, Laos, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Venezuela. Additionally, we received many messages from colleagues who warmly congratulated us on the idea, though they expressed regret at being unable to submit a manuscript in time for the special volume.

The primary focus of the articles included in this *Festschrift* naturally centers on arachnids and the taxonomy of both fossil and extant taxa. The contributions collectively describe 26 new species and one new genus across six arachnid orders. The order Araneae features the highest number of new taxa, with 14 new species, followed by Opiliones with seven. Two new species of Schizomida are introduced, one of which represents a new genus as well. Additionally, a single new species is described for each of the orders Pseudoscorpiones, Ricinulei, and Amblypygi, the latter being a fossil species preserved in Miocene Dominican amber. Expanding beyond arachnids, the volume includes a paper on the class Insecta, describing a new species of the family Blattidae.

Of particular note, almost half of the new species described—13 in total—have been named to recognize and honor the significant contributions and legacy of Dr. Luis F. de Armas, and many of those species names are patronymic. This tribute not only underscores his profound impact on the field of arachnology but also reflects the admiration and respect he has garnered within the scientific community. The taxonomic papers not only offer new descriptions but also numerous nomenclatural acts and solutions for some challenging, long lasting taxonomic puzzles, by clarifying the status of poorly known species.

The organization of this special volume was, for us as guest editors, an arduous yet deeply enriching experience. On the one hand, we had the opportunity to interact with a large number of *Zootaxa*'s subject editors, who oversaw the manuscripts submitted in their respective areas of expertise within the journal. Miquel Arnedo, Alireza Zamani and Lubomir Vidlicka voluntarily undertook editorial work for this special volume. Their unwavering support and guidance were invaluable throughout the process. On the other hand, this endeavor allowed us to engage in editorial work beyond our "comfort zone," delving into new domains and exploring a broader zoological spectrum. It provided us with the chance to deepen our understanding of less familiar taxonomic groups and foster connections with new reviewers, further enriching our experience as academic editors.

After seeing the quantity, variety, and especially high quality of the contributions, we are delighted with the outcome of this *Festschrift*. We are hopeful that it will be one of the best birthday presents for Luis: widespread recognition and sincere gratitude from his colleagues in the form of meaningful scientific contributions. We cannot conclude this preface without thanking the authors, reviewers, other subject editors, *Zootaxa*'s chief editor, and the production team for their efforts in making this tribute possible. And, of course, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to Luis F. de Armas for his inspiring dedication and influential scientific work. We wish him many years of continued scientific contributions, collaborations, and good health!

Happy birthday, Luis! Enjoy your reading!