



Foreword*

PIERFILIPPO CERRETTI^{1,2}, FRANCO MASON³, ALESSANDRO MINELLI⁴, GIANLUCA NARDI⁵ & DANIEL WHITMORE^{2,6}

^{1,3,5,6}*Centro Nazionale per lo Studio e la Conservazione della Biodiversità Forestale “Bosco Fontana” – Corpo Forestale dello Stato, Via Carlo Ederle 16/a, I-37100 Verona, Italy. E-mails: ¹pierfilippocerretti@yahoo.it; ³fmason@tin.it; ⁵l_nardi@hotmail.com;*

⁶*whitmore_d@yahoo.it*

²*Dipartimento di Biologia Animale e dell’Uomo, Sapienza Università di Roma, Viale dell’Università 32, I-00185 Rome, Italy*

⁴*Department of Biology, University of Padova, Via Ugo Bassi 58B, I-35131 Padua, Italy. E-mail: alessandro.minelli@unipd.it*

**In: Cerretti, P., Mason, F., Minelli, A., Nardi, G. & Whitmore, D. (Eds), Research on the Terrestrial Arthropods of Sardinia (Italy). Zootaxa, 2318, 1–602.*

It was the late summer of 2003 when we first travelled to Sardinia to set up traps in the forest of Marganai, an area owned by the regional administration, in the south-western part of the island. Our *Centro Nazionale per lo Studio e la Conservazione della Biodiversità Forestale* in Verona—a research institute of the Italian State Forestry Service—had been entrusted with the assessment of arthropod diversity in permanent monitoring sites of the ICP Forests network, a European body for long-term research in forest ecosystems (Mason *et al.* 2006). The project included a total of twelve forests in Italy, and we were setting up a standard sampling design at each site.

Marganai is a limestone massif covered by 9,000 ha of *Quercus ilex* and *Arbutus unedo* forest, interrupted only by the occasional dry meadow and by a dense network of tracks once used to connect a series of now abandoned mine shafts. We were not sure exactly what to expect from this site, as the Sardinian fauna is on the one hand relatively species-poor compared to surrounding continental areas, and on the other hand very interesting with nearly 7% endemic species, a consequence of the island’s marked isolation and unique geological history (Minelli *et al.* 2006). It was not long before we found out what Marganai had in store for us: since our first visit, we collected a quantity of very interesting material, including many species new to science and a number of rare endemics.

The area deserved further investigation, and we coordinated another eight trips to Sardinia between 2004 and 2007. We extended our surveys from Marganai to the neighbouring forest of Montimannu, the coastal dunes of the Costa Verde to the west and Barbagia to the east. Most of the sampling effort was made in 2006, when Malaise and pitfall traps were placed from spring until autumn at several locations of Marganai and Montimannu, and arthropods were collected by many taxonomists and parataxonomists in over one hundred and fifty sites. The conspicuous material—mainly insects, myriapods, arachnids and crustaceans—resulting from these field trips was sorted to order or family and sent to specialists for identification.

New taxa, as well as taxonomic and nomenclatural problems, arose from the first identification work, proving the need for these results to be published before any comprehensive faunistic account of the surveys could be achieved. Hence the idea of this monograph.

A few papers were published already during the project, including several new records and the descriptions of a new species of Trichoceridae (Diptera) and four new species of Tachinidae (Diptera) (Cerretti 2004a, 2004b, 2005; Mason *et al.* 2006; Cerretti & Tschorsnig 2007, 2008; Petrašiūnas 2009). This special issue brings together 22 papers, with data on 38 families of Arachnida Oribatida, 27 families of Insecta, 9 families of Chilopoda, and 3 families of Isopoda. Thirteen papers contain descriptions of new taxa: 16 species of Diptera (Cerretti & Pape 2009; Chandler 2009; Daugeron 2009; Haenni 2009a, 2009b; Nartshuk 2009; Whitmore 2009), 11 species and one subspecies of Coleoptera (Audisio *et al.* 2009a, 2009b; Fancello *et al.* 2009; Leo 2009), 4 species of Isopoda Oniscidea (Taiti & Argano 2009) and one species of Hymenoptera Chrysididae (Strumia 2009); nine papers include new nomenclatural acts (Canepari 2009; Cerretti & Pape 2009; Chandler 2009; Colonnelli & Osella 2009; Haenni 2009a; Leo 2009; Mason *et al.* 2009; Whitmore 2009; Zapparoli 2009), while four papers represent complete and up-to-date catalogues and/or checklists of the Sardinian fauna (Casale *et al.* 2009; Liberti 2009; Penati 2009; Vigna Taglianti 2009; Zapparoli 2009); finally, the paper on the Arachnida