



FORAMS-2006

EVOLUTIONARY MORPHOMETRICS OF THE FORAMINIFERAL TEST IN TIME AND SPACE

Special Session chaired by Norman MacLeod

**GLOSSARY AND “eForams”: FREE RAPID ACCESS TO
THE CURRENT BASIC KNOWLEDGE ON FORAMINIFERA**

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Scientific research on foraminifera today demands access to a specialized library and to extensive collections for direct comparisons. This is the case for taxonomic identifications on the generic and even more so on the specific level, for morphogenetic studies, for the analysis of comparative and functional anatomy of the shells and last but not least for high resolution biostratigraphy. One of the most important basic instruments for this research is Loeblich and Tappan's book on foraminiferal genera published 1987 and still available from commercial sources for US\$ 800.–. This book, of daily use, resumes the general knowledge on the foraminiferal genera but has nevertheless several drawbacks. In contrast to most volumes of the *Treatise of Invertebrate Paleontology*, there are no general, descriptive introductions to particular groups of foraminifera, such as fusulinids for instance. The specialised terms supporting the diagnoses are in many cases copied in an uncritical way as they were used in the original diagnoses. These were established over more than a century. Over that period of time, the understanding of the significance and biological meaning of many characters have changed, in different countries in different direction, so that considerable uncertainties about the meaning of terms have emerged.

In order to give rapid and cheap access to the current basic knowledge on foraminifera, **eForams** is presented here, a project to create an electronic encyclopedia exclusively for foraminifera, along the lines and with the software of Wikipedia project. The modalities of access, choosing collaborators, fixing server capacities etc. will have to be discussed and worked out. We would like in particular to have the workshop to comment on opportunities and ways of realization of an incorporation of taxonomic units in this project, and if yes, at what systematic level.

eForams is driven by MediaWiki engine - software which is widely used in the free internet encyclopedia. One of the main advantages of MediaWiki is its ability to work on documents by using only web browser. Documents are stored on http-servers and available as web pages. Metalanguage used for defining documents layout is a very simplified version of HTML (the language of web pages). MediaWiki also keeps tracks of all changes and synchronizes cooperating editors. However, Wikipedias are freely available to edit by anyone, in particular cases, access and privileges can be strictly controlled by administrators. In our case, we have decided to limit the access for editing **eForams**. Nevertheless, every foraminiferologist interested in collaboration is welcome. We believe that the registration of all contributors should make this site more reliable. This way all information would be signed avoiding usual criticisms of Wikipedia including its open nature making it unauthoritative and unreliable (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_Wikipedia). Otherwise, **eForams** has all other benefits of Wikipedia, including multi-authorship, free access from all computers connected to the web, rapid publication, diverse coverage, and a local search engine. We are looking forward for your criticisms, inspiring comments and further contributions to **eForams**. The web site is already available at: <http://www.eforams.icsr.agh.edu.pl/>

We also present an illustrated glossary of morphological terms used to support the description of foraminiferal taxa, published as independent electronic paper in *Cahiers de Géologie* <<http://palaeopolis.rediris.es/cg/fr>> and to be incorporated in the same time in **eForams**.