

PREFACE

The First International Conference "Recent Advances in Graptolite Research" was held in Warsaw, September 13—17, 1977. Organized by the International Research Group on Graptolites at the International Palaeontological Association, the Warsaw conference was sponsored by the Committee of Evolutionary and Theoretical Biology of the Polish Academy of Sciences and cosponsored along by the International Palaeontological Association and the International Union of Geological Sciences. The aim of the Conference was to review the state of graptolite research and to discuss new ideas, trends and methods of study. Another task was to stimulate personal contacts between participants.

The conference was attended by 23 scientists from abroad and 12 from Poland. The programme of the sessions included four topical lectures, some of them followed by a supporting lecture, and 17 contributions on stratigraphic, taxonomic and evolutionary aspects of graptolite studies. All topical lectures with their supporting lectures and vast majority of contributions are printed in the present symposium volume. Main lines of discussion are marked by those who sent or left a written summary of their communication.

An excursion to Iwiczna drill core storehouse of the Geological Institute in Warsaw and a field excursion to examine the graptolite-bearing Silurian and Lower Devonian strata at Żdanów (Bardo Mountains, Sude-ten) were also organized.

The most heated discussions were held on the mode of secretion of graptolite skeleton in the light of recent ultrastructural studies and on the interpretation of the section encountered at Żdanów.

The social events included a reception given by the conference chairman, at the Biological Sciences Division of the Polish Academy of Sciences in the Palace of Culture in Warsaw, and a banquet at which new officers of the Working Group were elected and Cambridge was selected as the site of the next conference in 1981. The full list of the officers and members of the International Research Group on Graptolites for 1977—1981 is given above.

We believe that Warsaw Conference may be considered as highly form of exchange of opinions and of bringing together specialists in grap-

tolite research from a number of countries. We are glad that the international co-operation in this field which stems from the initiative of the Soviet colleagues (Tallin, 1973) will continue and we wish every success to the Cambridge Conference.

The proceedings of the Warsaw Conference come out in two parts. The present volume which constitutes the first part deals with problems of palaeobiology, morphology, taxonomy and evolution of graptolites. The second part will contain the papers on stratigraphic distribution of graptolites and will appear in the Vol. 24, No. 1 of the *Acta Palaeontologica Polonica* in 1979.

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on Graptolites 1973—1977*