

# 7th Micropalaeontological Workshop

Abstracts and Excursion Guide



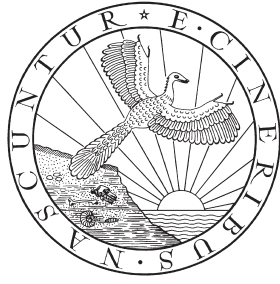
# Mikro-2009

Sw. Katarzyna, Poland

28–30 September, 2009

Edited by:

**D. Peryt  
and M.A. Kaminski**



# Seventh Micropalaeontological Workshop

## MIKRO-2009

Św. Katarzyna, Poland  
September 28–30, 2009

## ABSTRACTS and EXCURSION GUIDE

September, 2009

## Seventh Micropalaeontological Workshop MIKRO-2009

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## The Foraminifera.eu Internet Project

Michael HESEMANN

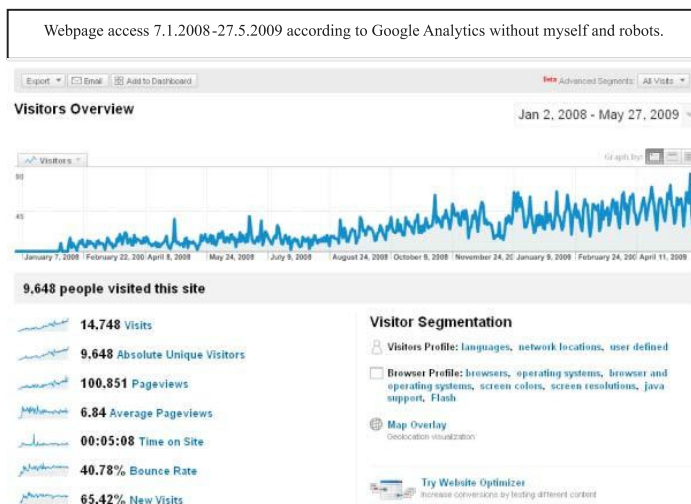
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Foraminifera are little-known to a broader public though forming a considerable part of Earth's biomass and being of substantial economical use as an indicator in the oil industry and for environmental politics. The project [www.foraminifera.eu](http://www.foraminifera.eu) wishes to foster interest in foraminifera by linking scientists with hobby-naturalists through a free accessible online-database of images. Its history, mission and an outlook will be presented.

**History and background.** The project started with the idea to show my collection of foraminifera to friends and family with the first release of 7 images on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 2007. My small collection has been built up at an evening course on micropalaeontology. As a hobby-photographer, I favoured to take images rather than producing slides. In 2008, I joined the local "Mikropaläontologische Arbeitsgruppe" of the "Mikrobiologische Vereinigung Hamburg" ([www.mikrohamburg.de/HomePalaeo.html](http://www.mikrohamburg.de/HomePalaeo.html)), a group of enthusiastic pensioners dealing with foraminifera since 30+ years and with an outstanding technical experience (e.g. having repaired and running a SEM, production of plummer-cells with up to 3000 specimen neatly lined up). This group inspired and helped me to enlarge the collection, and within half a year 150 images went online. I added a database to better access and handle the images and improved my own work-flow by e.g. automatising photoshop procedures. I joined the German online community of fossil-hunters [www.steinkern.de](http://www.steinkern.de) and offered to take images in return for sent-in samples. The reaction was overwhelming, several samples and images arrived. With rising popularity the web-page began to generate own contributors, such as Dr. Frontalini, the first scientist providing SEM images. At the end of 2008 more than 700 images were online and a group of 50+ contributors had been established and it was time to rethink the whole project.

**New Mission.** The progress of the webpage with more than 100.000 page-views motivates me and the contributors. Instead of working for the own cupboard, local clubs or hobby-magazines the project opened the opportunity to help others worldwide by providing images for a thesis, book, article, exchanging samples, organizing a field-trip or simply discuss an issue. So the idea arose to focus more on aspects of community and motivation. At the 2nd International Course on Benthic Foraminifera in Urbino April 2009 I was able to discuss the new mission with students and professional foraminiferologists. The new mission is to foster the interest in foraminifera by linking scientists with hobby-naturalists through a free accessible online-database of images and additional features. Operational single steps will be:

- to attract scientists by improving the quality of taxonomy, by enlarging the database-features, and simply by adding more images and show that other scientists contribute.
- to attract non-scientists by adding specific content/offers for each key-group: dedicated forum-collectors with outstanding collections and experience by personalised pages, non-commercial fossil hunters, teachers and undergraduate students, hobby-microbiologists by processing their samples and providing additional help, single editors and small publishing



houses, graduate students and scientists of other areas by providing images, and people interested in Bio-Art. Presence in and contributions to different online-communities is essential. I started with mini-lectures and will add a taxonomical, morphological guide run through a database-query. The processing of sent in samples in exchange for images will be still the backbone, as only interested people have samples.

**Outlook.** As hundreds of images, tens of samples and several projects are waiting to be dealt with, a major challenge will be the organization without losing control and wasting time with coordination. I plan to go on with my way of project-orientated delegation within the overall frame set and webpage programming done solely by me.

The project has not attracted a big mass of people as the internet-statistics might indicate. Only 1.2% of the 10 000 visitors have contacted me. From whole of Asia it has been just one person from Iran, in contrast to 2000+ visitors. Nonetheless about 55 people are continuously contributing now, which indicates they are seriously studying foraminifera and want to share their enthusiasm. They may be seen as “lighthouses in a world of ignorance” and the emphasis will be to help these dedicated people with their projects.

