

With this special issue of *Annales Zoologici Fennici* we wish to honour the 60th birthday of our teacher and colleague Mikael Fortelius and wish him further creative work for years to come. To illustrate the breadth of Mikael's research interests, we invited contributions from his mentors over the years, as well as from former and present colleagues. It is needless to say that our invitations were met with enthusiasm.

Many of the papers in this volume cannot be strictly classified into one research field only. However, to help the readers we have grouped the papers under three broad topics: *Taxonomy, paleobiogeography and chronology, Teeth, diet and ecology*, and *Ecometrics, taxon-free analysis and community evolution*.

Reflecting the interdisciplinary and international nature of Mikael's work, the topics cover a variety of scientific approaches, including taxonomic description, specimen based studies in evolution, ecomorphology and ecophysiology, and large-scale computational data analysis testing evolutionary and ecological hypotheses. The data of the papers cover wide geographical areas, all the way from China through Iran to Europe and Eastern Mediterranean. In this sense Mikael's choice of work fields is as wide as the classic Pikermian paleobiome — Pan-Eurasian, with some influence to and from Africa. The recurrent theme in all this being the mammalian teeth. Mikael's importance and influence on the Finnish palaeontology becomes evident in the opening article.

We wish to express our gratitude to all collaborators who made this special issue possible in spite of the tight schedule. We would also like to thank the journal *Annales Zoologici Fennici* and especially its managing editor for the hard work and patience needed to finalize the project. The special issue was sponsored by the Helsinki EvoDevo-community.



Photo: Ari Aalto

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