

Mesozoic Planktic Foraminifer Working Group meeting, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC, May 20th-22nd, 2004

Brian Huber hosted and chaired an NSF/CHRONOS sponsored meeting of the Mesozoic Planktic Foraminifer Working Group from May 20-22 at the NMNH. It was attended by 14 foraminifer paleontologists from nine different countries for the purpose of revising and completing an Image Atlas of Mesozoic Planktonic Foraminifera for online public access by Summer 2005. Conceived and developed at the Smithsonian, the Mesozoic Atlas is a relational database with over 300 senior synonym species records that include original and emended species descriptions, morphologic descriptor fields, biostratigraphic range information, images of the species holotypes (many with new SEM images obtained at the NMNH SEM lab), and SEM images that illustrate the morphologic variability of the species concept. Following presentations by various MPFWG participants, the WG systematically reviewed and revised all the morphologic descriptor categories, debated the senior synonym list, discussed various phylogenetic hypotheses for the major planktonic foraminifer lineages, and divided responsibility for completing the Atlas for final review at the next WG meeting in May 2005. Now that the Atlas has been migrated from a personal computer platform to the internet (see <http://test.chronos.org:8080/taxon/>) it is accessible to all WG participants for editorial revision and for addition of SEM and thin section images. A "public comment" field has been added to the species records to provide a forum for discussion and debate among the WG members and then as a means for recording comments from the internet user community once the database is online. The MPFWG feels strongly that this expert database, used in conjunction together with an Interactive Guide to Cretaceous Planktonic Foraminifera developed by Dan Georgescu, will be an invaluable lookup guide for the planktonic foraminifer and paleoceanographic research communities and it will provide a major step toward stabilizing taxonomic concepts of Mesozoic planktonic foraminifer species.

Attendee List: Ahuva Almogi-Labin, Atushi Ando, Brian Huber, Michele Caron, Rodolfo Coccioni, Dan Georgescu, Malcolm Hart, Eduardo Koutsoukos, Mark Leckie, Maria Rose Petrizzo, Isabella Premoli Silva, Silvia Spezzaferri, Natasha Tur, Davide Verga