Preface

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The amber is well-known as a source of the most valuable, otherwise inaccessible information on the biota and conditions in the past. The interest in studying Mesozoic and Paleogene ambers has recently sharply increased throughout the world. The studies included in this volume concern Coleoptera, Hymenoptera, and Diptera from the Cretaceous, Eocene, and Miocene amber of the Taimyr Peninsula, Sakhalin Island, Baltic Region, Ukraine, and Mexico.

Yantardakh is the most important Upper Cretaceous insect locality in northern Asia, which was discovered by an expedition of the Paleontological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (at present, Borissiak Paleontological Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences: PIN) in 1970 and additionally investigated in 1971 by the second expedition of that Institute. Important impetus to intense studies of the Taimyr amber was given by the third expedition of PIN to Yantardakh, which occurred in 2012. In the present volume, the first gall midges and midges from the Upper Cretaceous of Asiatic ambers.

Until recently, the Sakhalinian amber was assigned in paleoentomological publications to the Paleocene; in so doing, an important argument for this point of view was the primitiveness of the ant fauna from the Sakhalinian amber, which differs considerably from the thoroughly investigated ant fauna from Late

Eocene ambers. However, based on paleobotanical data, confirmed by new paleoentomological data, it is dated Middle Eocene. Detailed discussions of dating and relationships of Sakhalinian ants is provided in the first paper of the present volume, in which the earliest ant of the subfamily Myrmicinae is described from the Sakhalinian amber and assigned to an extant genus. The earliest pedogenetic gall midge of the tribe Heteropezini from the Sakhalinian amber is also described here.

The Late Eocene Baltic amber is investigated better than any other; nevertheless, more than half of its fauna remains undescribed; the contemporaneous fauna from the Rovno amber is investigated to a considerably lesser degree. In the present volume, weevils, darkling beetles, erotylids, and melyrids from the Baltic amber, weevils and melyrids from the Rovno amber, and one more new weevil species from the Miocene Mexican amber are newly described here. In addition, the first fossil representative of higher gall midges of the supertribe Mycodiplosidi from the Rovno amber is described.

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