



### Supervisor's evaluation of Vincent Maicher's doctoral dissertation

The PhD thesis of Vincent Maicher focuses on various aspects of diversity of moths and butterflies on Mount Cameroon, with a special focus on selected drivers affecting their communities. Altogether it consists of a broad and comprehensive introduction, 8 chapters (partly published papers, partly manuscripts more or less ready for submission) combining ecological, taxonomical and conservation research, and a summary. The summary is the only part of the thesis to which I could raise any critical comments as it lacks any real synthesis of the previous chapters. But it is the typical consequence of an imperfect time management by finishing PhD students and in this case, luckily, does not decrease the thesis' qualities. **Altogether, I am proud to recommend Vincent Maicher's doctoral thesis for defence.**

Vincent was my first PhD student and he thus experienced all advantages and disadvantages of being supervised by an „academic virgin “. It is also necessary to highlight that he had no experience with any ecological research nor with insects. Additionally, his thesis was an integral part of a bit 'megalomaniac' project, as typical for his supervisor. Last but not least, Mount Cameroon is also not the easiest area to start a large biodiversity project. Altogether, it has resulted in the slight delay of the thesis' submission, but 5 years are still fully within the 'normal' length of PhD studies. Especially if Vincent's contribution could be somehow quantified: 7 expeditions to Mount Cameroon (2 of them fully led by Vincent), 14 months spent in the field, countless sleepless nights of moth collection (after few in row, Vincent resembled a zombie), ca 80 thousand of butterflies and moths...

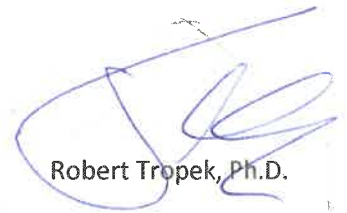
Vincent had participated on the project since its methodology was being planned (although still rather passively watching that time), through most of material sampling, identification of moths, analysing and interpretation of results, up to the manuscripts writing. Many of the related tasks he learned from a scratch with no previous experience and sometimes with just minimal supervision by me or some collaborators. In the meantime, he has started to bring his own ideas which resulted mainly in the side project on influence of elephants on butterflies and moths (Chapter III). This study was supported by Vincent's own student grant; he also fully planned the research, established study plots and led two independent sampling expeditions. As the best evidence of his experience, he was hired as an expert to work in Cameroonian rainforests, from which he has come back just a week before the defence.

Vincent has been very enthusiastic for any ecological and entomological research since the beginning (I will never forget how enthusiastically he asked if he would get a chance to describe some new species during his PhD) till now. It is always nice to work with somebody who enjoys work with nature so much. Besides work on his thesis, he has participated in several other projects of our group, especially focused on plant-pollinator interactions in both Czechia and Cameroon, but he has also joined our fieldwork on moths in Zimbabwe. During these projects, he was a substantially reliable team member, always offering a helpful hand to the others. Besides getting new skills, it has already been reflected in some co-authored scientific papers, others are on their way. It is also necessary to mention that Vincent was always a crucial social element sharing and keeping a good mood. Altogether, I am not afraid Vincent will be able to find a good postdoctoral position and continue in the successful scientific career.



In conclusion, I have really enjoyed watching Vincent's growth, both scientific and personal. From the strongly chaotic unexperienced student, Vincent has become a slightly less chaotic experienced researcher fully able to lead his own projects. I believe that we both have learned a lot from our collaboration. I hope he will utilise all his skills and experience during his future career, whatever it would be. Good luck, Vincent!

In Prague, 9<sup>th</sup> July 2019



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