

OBITUARY



FRITZ LUKOSCHUS

(1919 - 1987)

All friends of Dr. F. Lukoschus were deeply saddened upon learning of his sudden death in Nijmegen, The Netherlands, on 23 August 1987. He succumbed to a recurrence of myocardial infarction which he had suffered a few years ago.

Fritz Lukoschus was born on 27 April 1919 in Grabsten, Kreis Memel, Germany. He obtained his Dr. Sc. in 1946 from the University of Göttingen with a thesis on the development of the castes in *Apis mellifica*.

From 1949 to 1953 he worked as an Assistant in the Zoology Department of the University of Göttingen. In 1954, he became a collaborator in the Professional School of Celle where he worked on the breeding of small animals and on the pathology caused by bees. From 1957 to 1960 he was director of a Bee-Keeping Institution in Kiel. From 1961 to 1962 he worked as a scientific collaborator successively in the firm of Bayer AG, Leverkusen and in the Zoological Institute of the University of Göttingen.

In 1962 he left Germany for the Netherlands where he was appointed by the Catholic University of Nijmegen to teach zoology. He spent the rest of his career there until he retired in 1984.

Fritz Lukoschus authored or co-authored about 220 publications and he trained numerous postdoctoral fellows some of whom have now become distinguished acarologists.

Fritz Lukoschus had already published 30 papers, mostly on bees, before he became interested in acarology. His first paper on mites dates from 1962. It dealt with the biology of *Nycteridocoptes poppei* Oudemans, 1898, a bat parasite. As I had published some papers on this group of mites, he got in touch with me and from that moment started a long and fruitful collaboration that only his death interrupted. This active collaboration resulted in the publication of 113 joint papers (Lukoschus and Fain or Fain and Lukoschus), all dealing with mites, mostly parasitic Acari.

The groups of mites he studied most extensively were those belonging to the families Myobiidae, Psorergatidae, Demodicidae, Myocoptidae, Glycyphagidae, Chirodiscidae, etc. His research involved the various

aspects of mites, particularly the systematics, distribution and life cycles.

Fritz Lukoschus was an enthusiastic and indefatigable worker and an exceptional observer. He was a perfectionist as shown by his very complete and detailed descriptions and drawings. He described a number of new taxa, most of them from his own material collected during his field trips.

Fritz Lukoschus loved collecting and made extensive trips in several parts of the world for collecting parasitic mites. He readily confessed that he was more interested in discovering new mites and new biotopes than in taxonomic descriptions.

In 1970, he spent a long time in Surinam where he collected a large number of bat mites. He collaborated actively with the Western Australian Field Programme (1976-1977) of the Field Museum of Natural History and the Western Australian Museum, Perth, and collected many new mites specially from marsupials. From April to June 1979 he stayed in Malaysia with Mr. M. Nadchatram, Kuala-Lumpur. During October and November 1980 he joined the Namaqualand-Namibia Expedition of King Leopold III organized by Professor X. Misonne, director of the Institut royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique.

Besides these main trips he also visited numerous Museums in Europe and in the U.S.A. collecting mites from preserved mammals. All these collecting trips resulted in the constitution of a very rich collection of parasitic mites which is now deposited in the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie in Leiden.

Dr. Lukoschus loved to visit his friends abroad. About three or four times a year he came to my laboratory in Antwerp to discuss the new material that he had collected during his last trips. These discussions generally ran from 10 a.m. until 6 or 7 p.m. without interruption except for a short lunch break. During these "marathon-like" discussions Fritz Lukoschus smoked his large dutch cigars which apparently contributed to stimulating the discussions. These visits with their interminable discussions were for me the most privileged moments in my relationship with Fritz Lukoschus and I shall never forget them. With the death of Dr. Lukoschus the World of Acarology has lost one of its most distinguished personalities. Fritz Lukoschus had a great sense of kindness and cooperation and he will be missed by all those who were fortunate enough to know him.

Fritz Lukoschus is survived by his wife Mrs. Margarethe Lukoschus-Eichmann, his brother Mr. H.S. Lukoschus, his three sons, Ehrard, Jürgen and Achim and his two grand-daughters, Julia and Sophie.

Alex Fain.
