

OBITUARY



WERNER HIRSCHMANN

Dr. Werner Hirschmann died on September 10, 1993 from lung cancer. He was born November 14, 1921 at Fürth, Germany, where he completed elementary and high school. During World War II he was a bandsman, playing trumpet. In 1951 he completed his doctorate at the University of Erlangen, with the thesis: "Subcorticale Parasitiformes und die Gattung *Digamasellus* Berlese 1905". At that time he discovered his life-long passion for mites, but like most German acarologists he earned his income as a talented teacher of high school biology, chemistry, and geography.

Even in his thesis Hirschmann utilized his complete acarological concept: to base the systematics of Parasitiformes upon characters of the hypostome, chelicera, exoskeletal structures and larvae. Thus, he defined genera in a new way, using a maximum number of characters shown to be stable within distinct generic boundaries. His initial depictions (e.g., dorsal setae and pores of all stages) looked like a star chart. His ideas culminated in the concept of "Gangsystematics", utilizing characters of a species from birth to death.

Criticism of his methods prompted him to edit a financially independent Journal, "ACAROLOGIE - Schriftenreihe für Vergleichende Milbenkunde", comprising 40 volumes since its origin in 1957. Up to volume 16, ACAROLOGIE published the work of stu-

dents of Professor Stammer, the last head of the Department of Zoology at the University of Erlangen (West Germany), who directed research in systematics; these included Zierngiebl-Nicol, Bernhard, Westerber, Kraus, Greim, Götz and Holzmann). Beginning with volume 17, the journal became international, with contributions from Hutu (Romania), Hiramatsu (Japan) and Wisniewski (Poland), and focused on the global uropodid mite fauna. Precisely catalogued by his untiring wife Hildegard, ACAROLOGIE includes descriptions of more than 1400 new species. In this work, Hirschmann made his major contributions to the systematics of Mesostigmata, including comprehensive reclassification of many mesostigmatic families and genera, especially of uropodids, and treatments of their natural, phylogenetic relationships. Included is information on habitats, world distribution, and nomenclatorial history of these groups.

Hirschmann's philosophy, with his rigorous changes and formation of new genera, sometimes shocked those who followed classical doctrine in acarology. He challenged schemes of setal positioning by Lindquist-Evans, Sellnick, and Zachvatkin, and grappled with the established classifications of Berlese, Oudemans, and Vitzthum, fighting their tendency to define taxa based only on adults.

From where did Hirschmann derive his enthusiasm for mites? He invested much money in his non-profit publishing enterprise and spent his lifetime bent over his microscope and drawing sheets. He worked independently and without grants, and forsook professional advance. He now belongs to a line of honorable acarologists, poor but pure, who established

this young science in Germany. His last publication, volume 40 (August, 1993) of ACAROLOGIE, "Die Uropodiden der Erde", was held in his moribund hands as a valid ticket to eternity.

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