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### In memoriam Vladimir Gdalich Dolin (1932 – 2004)

Vladimir Gdalich Dolin was born on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1932, in the village of Torkovo (Vinnitsya Region, Ukraine) as the first child of Gdaliy Lvovich Dolin and Wanda Vladimirovna Gorodetskaya. His father was a chemical engineer, and his mother a music teacher.

During World War II the family lived in Dzerzhinsk, a small town near Nizhniy Novgorod (Russia), where his father worked at a chemical plant. As a child Vladimir Dolin dreamt of traveling to faraway countries, and under the influence of his favorite authors, Jules Verne and Henri Raider Haggard, he even started to write a book himself. In his later years at school he was thinking about entering the Institute of International Relationships in Moscow and of being employed in some embassy or working as an international reporter. However, a serious injury while playing volleyball and subsequent blood-poisoning put him in a hospital bed for almost a year. When his family moved to Kiev in 1949, the young Vladimir only changed hospitals, where he had to learn to use his legs again and where he became interested in medicine, even being allowed to attend medicinal lectures and practica there. A student of microbiology, however, sparked his interest in this subject, which he believed to have a great future.

After graduating from high school in 1950 he matriculated at the Biological Faculty of Kiev State University. Although he studied at the Department of Soil Science, he spent almost all his time at the Department of Invertebrate Zoology, because this department was the first to offer its students participation in expeditions. His scientific mentor was Aleksandr Filippovich Kryshstal', an eminent Ukrainian entomologist and ecologist, who advised Vladimir to specialize in soil zoology, then a relatively new branch of science. His first topic was the study of the soil-dwelling larvae of Elateridae, Tenebrionidae, and Alleculidae, which he had collected during his trip to the Izmail Region in southern Ukraine. The scientific study of these larvae was the content of his very first scientific paper.

In 1955 he graduated from the university with a specialization in soil science and a MS degree in biology. At this time he had already published three scientific papers on soil mesofauna. After graduation Vladimir Dolin was a junior research scientist at the Kanev Laboratory of Arachno-Entomology of the Kiev State University from 1956 to 1959, thereafter until 1975 at the



Vladimir Gdalich Dolin and Marie-Claudine Ranoroso (scientist at the Botanic-Zoological Garden Tsimbazaza in Antananarivo), in front of La Cascade Sacree, "Montagne d'Ambre" National Park, Madagascar, December, 2003.

Southern Section of the Ukraine Institute of Plant Protection of the Lenin All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences, since 1967 as scientific deputy director. In 1962 he received his Ph.D. with a dissertation on the larvae of the click-beetles of the Ukraine and in 1974 his Dr.Sci. degree with the dissertation on morphology, ecology, taxonomy, phylogeny, practical importance and pest control of click-beetles. During his stay at this institution Vladimir Dolin became the acknowledged founder of the Ukrainian school of soil entomology.

From 1975 to the end of his life he was head of the Department of General and Applied Entomology (after 1980 renamed Department of Entomology) at the I.I. Schmalhausen Institute of Zoology of the National Academy of Sciences of the Ukraine in Kiev. From 1976 to 1980 he held the position of a scientific deputy director. In 1978 he was appointed professor and in 1985 elected Corresponding Member of the National Academy of Sciences of the Ukraine.

Vladimir Dolin is survived by his ex-wife, Nadezhda Masyuk and their two children, Marina and Victor, as well as by his second wife Rimma Vasil'evna Andreeva and his stepson Igor. Like he himself, his family is devoted to the biological sciences. He first met his second wife in 1975, when he started to work at the I.I. Schmalhausen Institute of Zoology in Kiev, where she was already employed as a specialist in ecology and evolution of Tabanidae (Diptera). They married in December 1978, and in the following years were not only husband and wife, but also friends and colleagues. His wife accompanied him on his many expeditions, helping with the organization and with collecting, being very knowledgeable and keen-eyed herself. They co-authored seven papers on the taxonomy of Tabanidae. Vladimir named one species of Elateridae (*Ampedus rimmae*) and one species of Carabidae (*Laemostenus rimmae*) in her honor.

His life-long interest in click-beetles was established shortly after graduating from the university. He established himself as one of the world's leading taxonomists on Elateridae, with fundamental contributions in the fields of taxonomy, applied entomology, paleontology and phylogeny. His phylogenetic system of Elateroidea is generally accepted by scientists all over the world. Vladimir Dolin described one fossil family, four tribes, 32 fossil and living genera, 112 fossil and more than 200 extant species of Elateridae, as well as the larvae of more than 200 elaterid species. He studied morphology, distribution and ecology of elaterid larvae as well as their trophic relationships and agricultural significance. He worked successfully in both the fields of pure and applied entomology, combining the results of both approaches for better understanding of problems in each area. His interests were very wide-ranged, and in collaboration with taxonomic colleagues he also authored or co-authored papers on species of ground beetles, horse-flies and butterflies he collected during his many travels and expeditions.

Vladimir Dolin is author and coauthor of more than 200 scientific publications, including 12 monographs and five brochures. Several posthumous papers are yet to be published. He also received two patents for the invention of a laboratory test for the efficacy of systemic insecticides on the fertility of cereal aphids and for a method for protecting silkworm cocoons from damage by noxious insects.

Due to his early work in applied entomology, Vladimir Dolin was always interested in the practical aspects of entomology. He took part in projects to forecast the ecological consequences of diverting the river-bed of the Danube in South Ukraine and to evaluate the influence of the Chernobyl' catastrophe on flora and fauna in the so-called "red forests" near the reactor in the first hot summer after the accident.

His work brought him recognition from academia and also from the state authorities, who awarded him many prizes and medals for his achievements in both applied and pure science. His contributions to plant protection against soil pests by developing and introducing new approaches were especially recognized and applauded.

Vladimir Dolin compiled three large collections, now at the I.I. Schmalhausen Institute of Zoology, one each of click-beetles, ground-beetles, and click-beetle larvae. The latter is surely the most comprehensive in all Europe, perhaps even in the world. He was very bibliophile and had a rich entomological library with many rare and out-of-print books. Vladimir was always an optimistic and open-minded man, who collected stamps, played the piano, especially etudes of Liszt and Chopin, and wrote music and witty epigrams. I will always remember him playing the piano at an entomological meeting in Vienna, as an after-dinner treat for his colleagues.

He was always very active in the scientific community and attended numerous conferences, symposia and entomological meetings. He was elected to the Council of the Russian Entomological Society for a number of periods and was a member of the Organizing Committee of the International Symposium on the Entomofauna of Middle Europe since 1974. It was at the meeting of this symposium in Kiev in 1988 that I first met Vladimir, who was in charge of the organization of the conference. I was very impressed by his ability to master all the larger or smaller difficulties that arise when a few hundred scientists come together at such occasions. And I was honored that he took the time to show me his collection and to even invite me and other students of Elateridae home for dinner one evening.

He was a member of the Vienna Coleopterists Society (WCV) since 1998. He and his wife Rimma visited the entomological meetings in Vienna many times, staying with us at our apartment. During the last 12 years of his life he was president of the Ukrainian Entomological Society and editor of the Journal of the Ukrainian Entomological Society. He was also a member of the editorial council of the journals "Vestnik Zoologii" and "Entomologicheskoe Obozrenie" as well as of the series "Fauna Ukrainy".

He possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of Elateridae, especially of the Palearctic Region, but also worked on species from the Oriental Region and other realms. His specialty during all his life was the fauna of the former Soviet Union, but in later years his favorite groups were the subfamilies Negastrinae and Hypnoidinae, in which he described many taxa from the Palearctic and Oriental Regions. Many colleagues from all over the world sent him material for determination, and he was always very generous with knowledge, suggestions and reference specimens. Vladimir Dolin was a welcome guest in many of the most important museums of Natural History in Western and Central Europe.

He was also a great teacher, attracting the attention and interest of young students from all parts of the former Soviet Union to entomology, thus building up a circle of colleagues in almost all of the former republics. Under his sponsorship 38 young biology students received their doctorates, many of them also specializing in elaterids.

He fulfilled his life-long dream of traveling by leading expeditions to all biogeographic areas of the former Soviet Union, which were his only possibilities at that time. He collected beetles enthusiastically in the Ukraine, Russia, Moldavia, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, traveled extensively in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tadjikistan and Kazakhstan as well as to West Siberia, and, as soon as it was officially possible, to the Far East and Sakhalin.

The end of communism in the Soviet Union and the independence of the former republics, including the Ukraine, changed his life considerably. As a professor of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences he was honored, respected and in some respects privileged, with an above-average income, travel allowances and ticket reductions for transportation facilities. He had to do without many of these privileges then, and his income plunged to a level which forced him to seek additional forms of revenue. He organized collecting trips for foreign scientists to Middle Asia, using the many connections he had built up during the past years. I accompanied him twice to Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, fascinated by his organizing talent. No matter what was needed or wanted, he always found a way to get it: food, transportation, lodging, permits, you name it, even

up to getting an old carpet past customs surreptitiously. His buoyant personality, constant optimism and indefatigable energy conquered all difficulties and obstacles, natural and bureaucratic.

Financial problems did not keep him from his love for traveling. He financed his trips, as many other entomologists do, by selling the insects he collected at the various entomological fairs in Europe. He had always condemned the commercialization of entomology, but now he was forced to do so himself to be able to continue working with his life-long passion. In this, also, he was successful, and could put aside enough to take what were probably his most exciting trips. In the last years of his life he visited Madagascar three times, with plans for many further trips. He was fascinated by the unique elaterid fauna of this magnificent island, especially intrigued by the many endemic taxa. He especially wanted to collect larvae of these groups, which he believed would help him uncover as yet unknown phylogenetical relationships with exciting implications for elaterid taxonomy. He celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday on the island and was enthusiastic about writing an elaterid fauna of Madagascar. He had already published two papers on new species from there. Despite a complicated by-pass operation because of heart problems in 2003, he was perpetually on the move, and his enthusiasm made him look and probably feel much younger.

Vladimir Gdalich Dolin died suddenly on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2004 in Kiev at the age of 72. He was in the subway on his way to the railway station, wanting to catch a train to attend the entomological meetings in Vienna and Prague as well as to visit several West European museums. I waited in vain for him at my home in Vienna, but he had left on another trip, one from which he was not to return. Traveling was his childhood dream and it seems fitting for the life of this kind and gentle friend that he was called away not at home in bed, but when traveling, doing what he had always enjoyed most.

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