

The coleopterist and specialist on Tenebrionidae Hans Kulzer (1889-1974), with a list of his publications

Wolfgang Schawaller*



Fig. 1. Hans Kulzer aged 75. Portrait modified from *Entomologische Arbeiten aus dem Museum G. Frey* 16, 1965.

Hans Kulzer was born in Munich on November 15, 1889. Nothing is known about his parents. Already as a young boy he collected beetles, guided by the Munich professor Karl Daniel. He did not attend higher school or university, but collected beetles from 1910 until 1914 for commercial purposes in Turkey, Kurdistan, northern Iran and in the Caucasus. These beetles were delivered in part to the following institutions/persons: Zoologische Staatssammlung in Munich; via Franklin Müller to the Deutsches Entomologisches Institut in Berlin; and to Otto Leonhard (1853–1929, Vienna) and Emil Moczarski (Vienna, known for the Winkler/Moczarski elector as an effective extractor for fungus and litter beetles). Thus we can assume that Hans Kulzer did

not receive any professional education besides his first steps in entomology, probably caused by the difficult economic situation in Germany before the World War I.

The outbreak of the First World War 1914, when Hans Kulzer was 25 years old, interrupted his entomological activities. In the first years of the war he served in the navy on the SMS Breslau, a German cruiser, in the eastern Mediterranean region in cooperation with the Turkish army (at that time in alliance with the German army). Later in the war he became commander in the “Georgian Legion”, part of the German army, with many Georgian soldiers fighting in the Caucasus against Russia. Nevertheless, his military time had some positive aspects for

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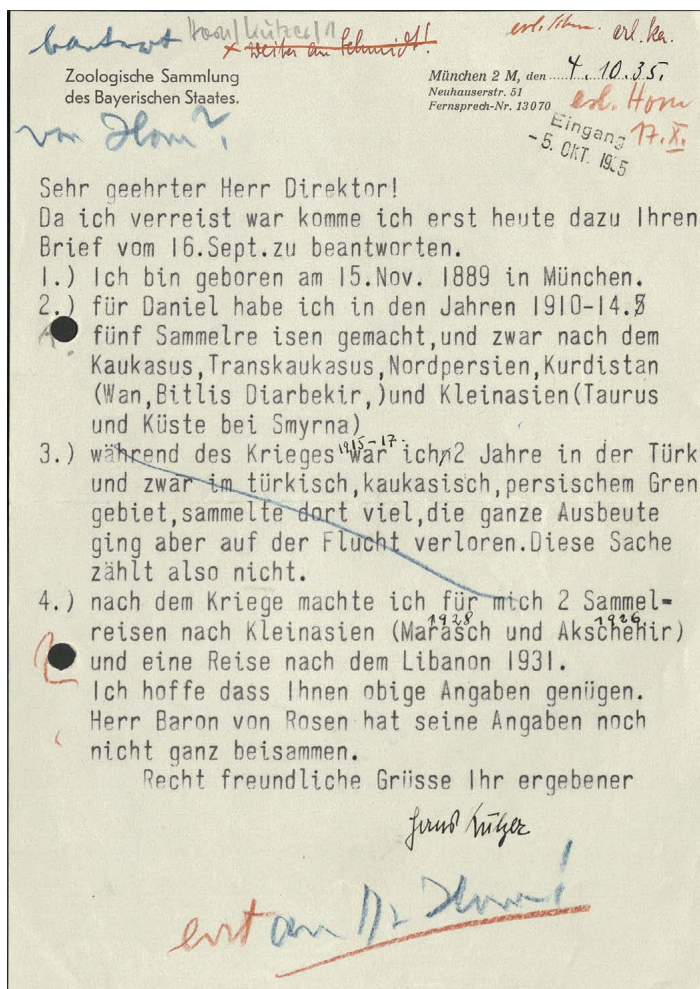


Fig. 2. Letter 4 October 1935 to W. Horn, Deutsches Entomologisches Institut. Original in Senckenberg Deutsches Entomologisches Institut Müncheberg, Inv. No. 20. Translation from German: "Dear director! I can answer your letter of September 16 only now because of a travel. 1.) I was born November 15, 1889 in Munich. 2.) For Daniel I conducted five collecting trips in the years 1910-14, to the Caucasus, Transcaucasus, northern Persia, Kurdistan (Wan, Bitlis, Diabekir) and Turkey (Taurus and coast near Smyrna). 3.) During the war (1915-17) I was two years in Turkey, border regions to Caucasus and Persia, and collected intensively, but the complete yield was lost while fleeing. So this point does not count. 4.) After the war I conducted for myself two collecting trips to Turkey (Akschehir 1926 and Marasch 1928) and a travel to Libanon 1931. I hope these informations are enough for you. Baron von Rosen is still compiling his data. Friendly greetings, your Hans Kulzer."

Hans Kulzer, as he learned both the Turkish and the Russian language, and became familiar with the geographical situation in the Near East. Both should later become important for his coleopterological exploration of that area.

On October 1, 1920 Hans Kulzer received a technician's position as "Präparator" in the Coleoptera collection of the Zoologische Staatssammlung in Munich (Scherer 1982, 1992). His main duty was the

new organisation of the collection, particularly to arrange several old single collections into a unified one. He did this with great enthusiasm with the families Scarabaeidae, Buprestidae, Elateridae, Cerambycidae and with Palaearctic Carabidae and Curculinoidea. During this time he became also familiar with the Central European Coleoptera fauna. Hans Kulzer could fulfil this function in the Zoologische Staatssammlung until the beginning of the World War II.

Zoologische u. vergleichend-anatomische
Sammlung des Bayerischen Staates

Fernsprecher 53711

München, den 27. 11. 23.
Neuhäuser Str. 51 (Ritte Akademie)

Staudinger & Bang-Haas
27/11/23

Sehr geehrter Herr Marquart!
gestern vorm. konnte ich glücklich
die Marken kaufen.

Dieselben kuffen die 5 Milliarden M. 5. Posten.
Die 10 Milliarden umsetzt 4 Billionen
nach Valuta v. 27. 11. vorm. Ich hoffe
mir sehr lieb, wenn Sie mir dafür
eine Karte zu 10 Milliarden grünen geben.

Sehr freundlich
Hans Kulzer

Hans Kulzer

Kulzer

Fig. 3. Letter 27 November 1923 to insect trader Staudinger & Bang-Haas, Dresden. Original in Senckenberg Deutsches Entomologisches Institut Müncheberg, Inv. No. 66. Translation from German: "Dear Mr. Marquart! This morning I could fortunately buy the stamps. These cost the 5 milliards Mark [German count]. 5 (?). 10 milliards are equivalent to 4 billions according to valuta at November 27 morning. But I would prefer if you send me for that a sheet over 10 milliards green. Sincerely yours, Hans Kulzer."

He also collected beetles in 1926 and 1928 in Turkey for the Zoologische Staatssammlung, and privately in Syria and Lebanon for the industrial director Carl Bosch (1874–1940, Heidelberg, collection after his death to Senckenberg-Museum Frankfurt/M.). Obviously, Hans Kulzer collected not only beetles, as he discovered a lizard new to science in the Levante (*Phoenicolacerta kulzeri* Müller & Wettstein, 1932). While working between the wars at the Zoologische Staatssammlung Hans Kulzer became acquainted with the textile manufacturer Georg Frey and inspired him for entomology. He travelled with Frey 1935 to Sicily, and 1936 to Iraq (gulf of Basra and close to the Iranian border).

Hans Kulzer participated in the Second World War again as an officer of the “Georgian Legion” with the rank of captain. After his release from captivity he retired on June 23, 1948 from his position in the Zoologische Staatssammlung. He was now 59 years old, had not published so far anything about Coleoptera, but was too young to stop working on Coleoptera.

The already above mentioned manufacturer Georg Frey (1902–1976) built up a private Coleoptera museum. For this museum he took on Hans Kulzer after his time at the Zoologische Staatssammlung for curation of the collection (Frey 1975). It is no surprise that Kulzer studied particularly the Tenebrionidae, because this family was already well represented by the collections of Hans Gebien (1874–1947), which came 1939 to the museum Frey, and that of Adrian Schuster (1860–1942), acquired 1942. Additionally, Carl Koch (1904–1970) started his tenebrionid studies in the museum from 1937 until 1948. The important Coleoptera collection of Georg Frey was delivered to the Natural History Museum in Basel, Switzerland, in 1997 where it is available since then for coleopterists all the world over.

This step into the Frey museum was the beginning of the career of Hans Kulzer as taxonomic specialist of Tenebrionidae. His first publication appeared in 1949 still in the journal of the Munich entomological Society (Mitteilungen der Münchner Entomologischen Gesellschaft). Later on, most of Kulzer’s studies were published in the journal of the Frey museum (Entomologische Arbeiten aus dem Museum Georg Frey). The last contribution on Tenebrionidae published Kulzer 1966 at the age of 77 years. Hans Kulzer died on October 25, 1974 in Starnberg two years before Georg Frey.

Hans Kulzer published exclusively about the taxonomy of Tenebrionidae with a single exception about South American Scarabaeidae, Hopliinae (Kulzer 1960b). The latter was a completion of a preliminary manuscript of Hans Schein, who died before publishing. Several papers of Kulzer appeared

under a general title (for example “3. Beitrag zur Kenntnis der Tenebrioniden”) with several mixed comparative studies with own subtitles. Main works are revisional studies about South American species-rich tribes like Nyctotelini, Scotobiini, and Praocioni. Kulzer (1963b) published also a type list of Tenebrionidae in the museum G. Frey with about 1700 holotypes and 2000 paratypes (mainly from the collection of Hans Gebien).

At least 15 species of beetles from different regions the world over were named in honour of Hans Kulzer by several specialists:

Carabidae

Bembidion kulzeri (Netolitzky, 1935) Turkey

Staphylinidae

Euplectus kulzeri Besuchet, 1958 Georgia

Scarabaeidae

Aulacoserica kulzeri Frey, 1975 Guinea

Meloidae

Lydomorphus kulzeri Kaszab, 1955 South Sahara

Teratolytta kulzeri Kaszab, 1958 Armenia

Tenebrionidae

Blapstinus kulzeri Marcuzzi, 1977 Jamaica

Cyriosomus kulzeri Peña, 1975 Chile

Nyctelia kulzeri Marcuzzi, 1977 Argentina

Paniasis kulzeri Ferrer & Odegaard, 2005 Central America

Prohylithus kulzeri Kaszab, 1964 Peru

Storthocnemis kulzeri Koch, 1969 Yemen

Cerambycidae

Cereopsis kulzeri Breuning, 1936 Borneo

Prosopocera kulzeri Breuning, 1936 East Africa

Curculionidae

Boragosioculus kulzeri Dieckmann, 1975 .. Armenia

Tychius kulzeri Penecke, 1934 Central Europe

These diverse dedications show that Hans Kulzer was well integrated in the coleopterist community of that time (Lucht 1981). He also had closer contacts with contemporary specialists of Tenebrionidae, at

least with Giorgio Marcuzzi and Luis E. Peña (who published orbitaries for Hans Kulzer in Italian and Chilean entomological journals, respectively: Marcuzzi 1974, Peña 1975). Co-operation with Zoltán Kaszab (1915–1986, Budapest), who started his outstanding taxonomic career also after the Second World War, was probable, because G. Frey inspired Z. Kaszab for Meloidae (Kaszab, personal communication). To this day, undescribed species are still being discovered in Kulzer's collections and made accessible to science (Fery & Hendrich 2011).

Nearly nothing is known about the private life of Hans Kulzer. Was he married, had he children? It seems probably that he concentrated fully on beetles, in early years with collecting, then in the Zoologische Staatssammlung with establishing order in the collection, and later in the museum G. Frey with the taxonomy of Tenebrionidae.

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