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Obituary

Professor Jehoshua Kugler (1916 - 2007)

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Professor Jehoshua Kugler passed away in Tel Aviv on 24 October 2007. He was born in Chortkov, Galicia (then in Austro-Hungary) on 1 February 1916, and grew up in Czernowitz (then in Romania). In 1934, shortly after matriculating, he emigrated to Palestine and immediately began studying at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Within four years he completed his M.Sc. degree in zoology (botany and geology as minors) with a thesis on the Vespiformes of Jerusalem, supervised by Prof. F.S. Bodenheimer; and in 1960 was awarded his Ph.D. for the dissertation, "A taxonomic and faunistic study of the tachinid flies of Israel", supervisor Prof. O. Theodor.

In 1939 Kugler gained his teaching certificate and began his long and fruitful career as educator. He taught biology at a high school (1939 - 1947), and zoology at a teachers' training college (1947 - 1960). In 1954 he joined the department of zoology at the newly-established Tel Aviv University, as a lecturer in zoology, and between 1956 and 1969 he taught methodology for high school zoology teachers at the university's department of education. Although he officially retired in 1988, as a professor emeritus, Kugler maintained his office, continuing to teach for a number of years and carrying on his research.

The list of entomological topics and groups dealt with by Kugler is amazingly wide and seldom attempted by scientists nowadays. The greater part of his research was devoted to the taxonomy and biology of Tachinidae, a family of parasitic flies. After the Tachinidae, the Chironomidae formed the second group of interest for him, but he also published on the Israeli fauna of other families of flies (Diptera), such as the Muscidae and the Rhinophoridae. Kugler's work placed him among the top figures associated with this field in Israel and elsewhere, serving as a model to several graduate students. Their work manifestly enriched our taxonomic and faunistic knowledge of the Israeli fauna of Trichoptera, Ephemeroptera, Neuroptera, Isoptera and Diptera (Chironomidae, Tephritidae, Syrphidae, and Chloropidae). Other areas covered by Kugler's research and publications in this period included the biology of parasitic wasps, biology of phytophagous insects that feed on weeds, and biology of social wasps.

One of his greatest achievements was the compilation and editing of the weighty volume on insects in the Encyclopedia of the Plants and Animals of the Land of Israel, to which he devoted about a decade of work and for which he himself wrote about half of the entries.

While still working primarily on the Diptera, Kugler maintained both an interest and fondness for the Hymenoptera, and especially the social Hymenoptera. It was this that seems to have led him around 1980 to "abandon" the Diptera. He now turned his attention to the taxonomy of the ants of Israel. His objective was the challenging task of revising the ants of Israel, a fauna rich with many subspecies and varieties described from the "Holy Land" at the turn of the 20th century. This meant sorting out many synonyms and amending numerous erroneous taxa reports. He also prepared identification-keys for the use of researchers and graduate students, published seven articles on ants, and had other three nearly completed. Due to his work, our knowledge of the ant fauna of Israel, especially of rare taxa, greatly increased, and the number of species known from Israel has been doubling up during the past 25 years.

He constantly involved himself in additional activities both within and outside Tel Aviv University, such as participation in departmental committees, membership of the Fauna Palaestina Committee of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities (from 1971 until his death) and membership of the International Advisory Committee of the journal "Entomologica Germanica" (1974 - 1984).

Kugler was a devoted family man. He and his wife Ida have two children, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, the youngest born only a few months ago.

List of Kugler's publications concerning ants

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- COLLINGWOOD, C.A. & KUGLER, J. 1994: *Solenopsis dentata* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae): a new species from Israel. – Israel Journal of Entomology 28: 119-122.
- KUGLER, J. & IONESCU, A. 2007: *Anochetus bytinskii*, a new ant species from Israel (Hymenoptera: Formicidae). – Israel Journal of Entomology 37: 287-298.

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