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In memoriam Hubert Schumann 07.05.1930–10.04.2010

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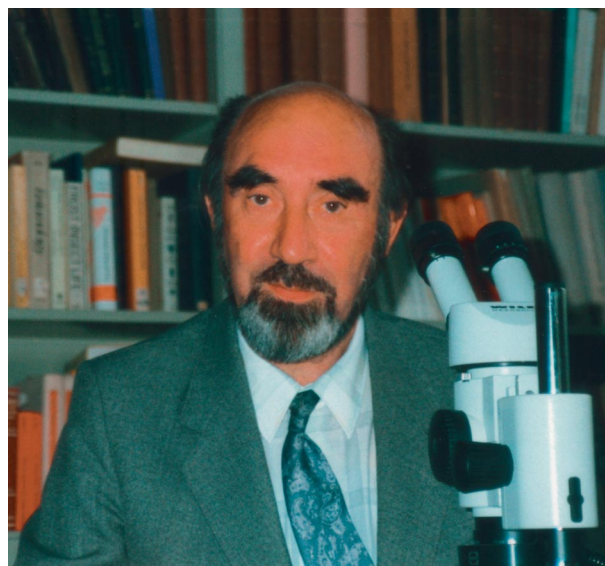
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On 10 April 2010, after a short illness and only a few weeks before his 80th birthday, our long-standing colleague at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin, Dr Hubert Schumann, passed away. In him we have lost a respected colleague who was valued not only for his scientific knowledge and achievements but also for his sincere and warm nature. From 1962 to 1995 he was Curator of the Diptera section, from 1980 the Head of the Entomology department, and from 1990 to 1995 editor-in-chief of the “Deutsche Entomologische Zeitschrift”.

Hubert Schumann grew up in the small village of Zorbau, near Weissenfels in the present federal state of Sachsen-Anhalt, and was interested from an early age in the natural history of his rural environment. These were turbulent times, but in 1948 he completed his advanced level exams (“Abitur”) and in the same year he began to study Biology at the Martin-Luther-University of Halle-Wittenberg, being inspired to take up entomology by the future supervisor of his diploma and doctoral theses, Professor R. Keilbach. He completed his studies in Halle in 1953 with a diploma thesis of morphological and systematic studies on the larvae of hygienically important Calliphoridae and Muscidae in Central Europe, and in 1957 he obtained his doctorate at the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-University in Greifswald with a thesis entitled “The morphology and biology of coprophagous and carnivorous Diptera larvae”.

The decisive moment in his scientific career then came in 1962, when he took the position of Curator of Diptera & Siphonaptera at the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin as the successor of Professor F. Peus. Still only a young man, he now had at his disposal an important collection and extensive library which underpinned his professional work for more than 32 years. Here, one focus of his research was on the taxonomy and systematics, morphology, biology and faunistics of the Diptera and Siphonaptera, whilst another was the practical application of the results of basic research. His special interest was in the Calliphoridae and also in

inclusions in Saxon amber. In this connection, it is good to recall his initiative in using the carnivorous larvae of *Ophyra aenescens* (Wiedemann, 1830) for the biological control of *Musca domestica* Linnaeus, 1758, in livestock stables and sheds. This project was so successful that in 1990 his working-group received a certificate from the Conservation Foundation of the European Environmental Protection Agency in London, in recognition of their commitment to conservation and environmental protection. For many years, he gave lectures, led students on field courses, and supervised diploma and doctoral students. And we should particularly appreciate his efforts in saving the extensive library of the German Entomological Society (Deutsche Entomologische Gesellschaft) of which he was the honorary librarian from 1963 and which he was able to preserve intact over the years in spite of all the prevailing political turmoil in Germany.



Hubert Schumann at his desk in the Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin, in 1995.

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During the difficult years of the Cold War, dipterists in the “West” rapidly came to appreciate Hubert Schumann’s outstanding qualities as a true exemplar of the scientific spirit that transcends all political barriers. At a time when, for example, dipterists at the British Museum (Natural History) in London were unable to travel with their Government Service passports to eastern Europe, with East Berlin especially “out-of-bounds”, Dr Schumann was a punctilious correspondent and was always ready to search out types and other materials that were needed for study. Such was the gratitude felt for these many years of collaboration that during the 2004 International Simuliidae Symposium in Berlin the first action of Dr Roger Crosskey was to seek out Dr Schumann and shake his hand. On another occasion, when Amnon Freidberg from Tel Aviv was visiting Berlin, Dr Schumann was forbidden by the Museum and by the University administration to allow him access to the scientific collections. On advice from Dr Schumann, however, Amnon Freidberg turned to the Foreign Ministry of the DDR (German Democratic Republic) and was immediately given permission to work in the Museum.

As co-editor and sometime editor-in-chief of the series founded by F. Dahl “Die Tierwelt Deutschlands”, Dr Schumann oversaw the publication of several volumes. He was also a member of the editorial board for the “Catalogue of Palaearctic Diptera”. In addition, he made substantial contributions to Stresemann’s “Exkursionsfauna von Deutschland”, to the Encyclopedia “Urania-Tierreich”, and to the “Checkliste der Dipteren Deutschlands”. A complete listing of Dr Schumann’s scientific publications is given in the obituary by Werner et al. His substantial and productive entomological

life work received due recognition in the year 1997, when he was awarded the Meigen Medal of the German Society for General and Applied Entomology (Deutsche Gesellschaft für allgemeine und angewandte Entomologie).

In retirement Dr Schumann devoted himself most especially to the faunistics of the German Diptera. In addition to keeping the “Checkliste der Dipteren Deutschlands” up-to-date, he began work on a list of the regional Diptera fauna of Berlin and Brandenburg, which unfortunately remains incomplete.

Dr Schumann’s life’s work can be seen in his scientific publications and in the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin, and especially in the Diptera collection – whilst Hubert Schumann the man lives on in the memory of his family and of his many friends and colleagues.

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