



In Memoriam Dr. Imre Loksa (1923-1992)

The late Imre Loksa was an outstanding figure in the twentieth century zoological research in Hungary. He is probably most famous as the co-author of the university textbook, *Zoological Taxonomy*, because so many generations of biologists and teachers of biology grew up with his book in their hands. It is hard to imagine that there is anyone among them for whom the names Loksa and Dudich, his co-author, wouldn't ring a bell.

Imre Loksa was born in Budapest, in 1923 and graduated from Pázmány Péter University, the predecessor of today's Eötvös Loránt University, as a teacher of biology and geography. From 1946 until his death in 1992 he lectured in the Department of Zoology at the same university, including six years as the Head of the Department. Most of his research focused in the field of soil zoology and he belonged to a rare breed of taxonomists who possessed a thorough knowledge of several animal groups. One could say that he was the very last Hungarian zoologist who had an in-depth knowledge of more than ten groups of Arthropods and an unmatched knowledge of the fauna indigenous to the Carpathian Basin. Although he had a soft spot in his heart for spiders, harvest-men, pseudo-scorpions, myriapods and collembollas, he was very knowledgeable of other, inferior groups of hexapods such as Protura, Diplura, Machilidea, Lepismatidea, as well. In the Hungarian *Animal Identification Handbook*, which was edited by László Móczár and is still in use, Prof. Loksa wrote and illustrated the chapters covering ten different groups of animals. Although he lived in Budapest, Prof. Loksa had an excellent knowledge of many regions throughout the country as his field work had him restlessly strolling the countryside to collect specimens.

Although Prof. Loksa's main objective was to understand the fauna of Central Europe, he loved nature more than anything. His work on the zoology of the soil of the oak dominated scrub forests in South-East Europe was of international importance as it laid down the rudiments of this topic and the book on this subject is still widely used.

Two volumes in the series, *The Fauna of Hungary*, which introduced the spider species of 21 families (out of the 38 spider families indigenous to Hungary) were also written by him. Besides his field work in Hungary, Prof. Loksa also participated in tropical expeditions, which took him to Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Ecuador, Australia, New Guinea and Sri Lanka. His dedication to documenting the fauna of the world was also evident in the fact that he would also work with specimens collected by others. For example, he identified many of the spiders and myriapods collected by Zoltán Kaszab from Mongolia. Prof. Loksa published more than 80 articles and was

also the co-author or proofreader of several books. His drawings were always made with meticulous care and with the touch of a fine artist, which enhances the value of his books and articles. Prof. Loksa was a warm and modest man and was always ready to share his vast knowledge. Because of this, not only his fellow scientists but also his students cherish the memory of this never-resting field zoologist. On the tenth anniversary of his death, his students remember Prof. Imre Loksa with the profoundest gratitude not only for the knowledge he passed on both in the lecture halls and during the field work but also for his humane and respectful nature.

Csaba Szinetár

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