

80th Anniversary of Professor Vassil Golemansky

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In December 2013, the eminent Bulgarian protozoologist and parasitologist Professor Vassil Golemansky, member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and Honorary Editor-in-Chief of *Acta Zoologica Bulgarica*, celebrated his 80th anniversary. It is a great privilege for us, his pupils and colleagues at the Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research and at the Editorial Board of this journal, to greet him for his jubilee and to wish him health and many more years of active research work.

Vassil Golemansky was born on 26 December 1933 in Golyam Izvor (Teteven Municipality), a mountainous village situated in the heart of the Balkan Range. In 1952, he became a student in biology at St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia. During the first years of his university education, he developed his research interest at protist diversity, especially at protozoan parasites. In 1957, he graduated in zoology, with a thesis on the coccidian parasites of turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) in Bulgaria, being supervised by Professor Atanas Popov of the Central Veterinary Institute in Sofia. In 1958-1966, he worked as assistant in zoology at the Faculty of Biology of the University of Sofia. In 1962-1963, he was seconded by the Ministry of Education to the Republic of Guinea as a lecturer of biology and worked at the newly-opened University of Conakry. During his stay in Guinea, he published 4 research articles on the fauna of testate amoebae of that country.

Since 1966, Vassil Golemansky joined the Institute of Zoology (now incorporated in the Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research), Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, initially as a junior researcher. In this institute, he became associate professor (1971) and professor (1982). He specialized for five months in 1969-1970 in the Laboratory of Protist Citology at the Institute of Citology in St. Petersburg (Russia), being supervised by the outstanding protozoologist Professor Yuriy Polyanskii. In 1980, he defended a thesis entitled *Interstitial testate amoebae fauna of the sandy marine supralitoral* and received the degree of Doctor of Sciences. Being involved in university education of biology students, he was awarded honorary professorship in zoology at the University of Shumen (1982) and at the University of Sofia (1986). His research achievements were also recognized by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and he was elected as its corresponding member in 1997 and real member (academician) in 2003.

Besides research work, Prof. V. Golemansky carried out and huge organizational activities. He was Scientific Secretary (deputy director responsible for research and PhD training programs) of the Institute of Zoology (1967-1972), Deputy Director of the institute (1972-1982), Deputy Director of the Centre of

Biology (1982-1988), Director of the Institute of Zoology (1989-2003). Between 1989 and 2008, he was the Head of the Department of Protozoology. He officially retired in 2008. Currently, he continues his research with unabated energy.

Areas of research of Professor V. Golemansky are diverse and include studies on biodiversity, taxonomy, morphology, biology and ecology of freshwater, marine and parasitic protozoans. He discovered and described for science more than 100 taxa (one family, 14 genera and over 90 species of various groups of Protozoa). He studied from morphological, taxonomic and ecological point of view marine interstitial associations of testate amoebae and foraminiferans, which were practically unknown till 1970; Golemansky proved their cosmopolitan distribution in the sand littoral of seas and oceans. In this specific environment, he discovered and described for the first time in science one family, 14 genera and over 40 species. Some of them have been studied morphologically, biometrically and ultrastructurally, and their specific morphological and ecological adaptations to the peculiar environment of sandy marine littoral were characterized.

Professor V. Golemansky has studied diversity, distribution, morphology and ecology of freshwater, soil and moss testate amoebae from Bulgaria and many other countries (Guinea, Thailand, Vietnam, Cuba, Mexico, Serbia, Poland, Macedonia, etc.). As a result, he found and described 12 new for science testate amoebae species. He also studies composition and distribution of coccidians in a large number of mammal and bird species in Bulgaria (deer, mouflons, hares, pheasants, etc.) in which he found 56 coccidian species of the genera *Eimeria*, *Isospora*, *Tyzzeria* and *Sarcocystis*. He discovered and described six new for science coccidian species of the genera *Eimeria* and *Isospora* and demonstrates that the jackal and the wolf are definitive hosts and vectors of sarcocystosis in wild and domestic mammals in our country. In collaboration with Czech and Bulgarian parasitologists, he studies protozoan parasites of main species of economically valuable freshwater fish (carp, grass carp, silver carp, trout, etc.) from fish farms and ponds in the country. The results are summarized in the *Catalogue of protozoan parasites of fishes in Bulgaria* (2006), which gives information on 127 species of protozoan parasites from 73 fish species.

Professor Vasil Golemansky has substantial contribution to the history of the Bulgarian zoology. He has published a series of books and articles on the history of zoology in Bulgaria.

Scientific activities and contributions of V. Golemansky are reflected in 193 original research papers. More than half of them are published in foreign languages and in international scientific journals. For the contribution of its scientific works, it is indicative that his articles have been cited more than 1 200 times by many zoologists from all over the World. Twelve new species (7 protists and 5 arthropods) were named after him. He also authored 6 textbooks and 12 books.

Along with his research work, V. Golemansky has had intensive teaching activities. He was a long-time professor in protozoology and zoology of invertebrates in the Faculty of Biology at the St. Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia (1986-2006), Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen (1982-2008) and New Bulgarian University (2000-2005). In his longstanding scientific and teaching career, he supervised 8 PhD and more than 10 MS students. He was head of school teams of Bulgaria in the International Biology Olympiads (1990-2000) and organizer of the 5th International Olympiad in Bulgaria (1994).

Professor V. Golemansky has been a member or a national representative in several international scientific organizations, including European Federation of Parasitologists, Groupement des Protistologues de la Langue Française, European Society of Protistologists, International Commission for the Study of Mediterranean, etc. He was president (1999-2007) of the Bulgarian Society for Parasitology, chairman (1980-2000) of the Bulgarian Society of Naturalists, member of the National Fund for Scientific Research (1990-2002), Chairman of the National Committee on the Problems of the Environment (SCOPE-ICSU) (1995-2008), Chairman of the National Committee of the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS) (1995-2008), etc. He is a member of editorial boards of a number of international and national journals and other publications, including *Acta Protozoologica* (since 1965), *Archives of Biological Sciences* (since 2000), *Acta Zoologica Bulgarica* (since 1989, editor-in-chief for 20 years), *Comptes Rendus de l'Academie Bulgare des Sciences* (since 2003), *Red-Data Book of Bulgaria* (Second Edition), *Encyclopedia A-Z, Encyclopedia Bulgaria, Fauna of Bulgaria* (since 1989) and others.

We wish to Professor Vassil Golemansky good health and new achievements in the field of protozoology and parasitology!

