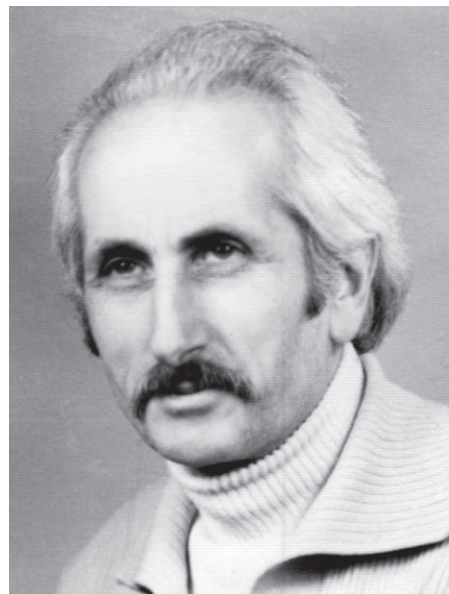




Venelin L. Beschovski 1933 – 2019



On December 3, 2019, the renowned Bulgarian entomologist Professor Venelin Lazarov Beshovski died unexpectedly. He was one of the recognised Bulgarian and European specialists in Diptera and Odonata and left numerous scientific contributions on their diversity, distribution and ecology.

Venelin Beshovski was born on April 4, 1933 in the town of Knezha, Vratsa District, Bulgaria. He graduated from the Faculty of Biology at the Sofia University in 1957. During his studies, he became interested in the study of aquatic organisms and developed a diploma thesis on dragonflies from high mountain lakes and wetlands in Bulgaria. The faunistic results of these studies were summarised in his first scientific article published in the Bulletin of the Zoological Institute with Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (1960, 9: 451-453).

After graduating from the university, he worked as a biology teacher for two years. In the autumn of 1959, he began working as a curator of the Natural History Museum in Rousse. For about two years, he developed a plan and organised the new exhibition at this museum. Since 1960, he moved to the Research Institute of Fisheries and Fish Industry in Varna, where he started his career as a professional researcher. In 1962, he was appointed as a junior research fellow in the Hydrobiology Division of this institute. In addition to the study of odonatanans, V. Beshovski also focused on research activities on the dipterans from the Black Sea coast, mainly those associated with seaweed aggregations thrown along beaches and dunes. Here, he also performed the first community and autecological studies on the dipterans from the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. The results of these studies, published in Bulgarian and international scientific journals, legitimated their author as a European specialist in the taxonomy and ecology of halophilic dipterans.

In the summer of 1971, V. Beshovski joined the Entomology Section at the Institute of Zoology – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, where he expanded his research to include frit flies (Diptera: Chloropidae) in Bulgaria. His specialisation in 1971, supervised by the world-renowned dipterologist Prof. A. Stackelberg at the Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, was very important for his further development as a dipterologist. In 1973, V. Beshovski summarised his research on dipterans from the Black Sea coast in a dissertation entitled *Ecological studies on Diptera – Brachycera from habitats at the Bulgarian Black Sea coast* and obtained PhD Degree. Two years later, he was promoted as a senior researcher (Associate Professor) at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Dr. Beshovski continued his research at the Institute of Zoology and received new duties and commitments. He was the head of four successful PhD students, which have become leading Bulgarian entomologists, and five graduate students at the universities of Sofia

and Plovdiv. He was the head of the Entomology Division of the Institute of Zoology for eight years and deputy director of the institute (1980–1993 and 1995–1997). In 1984, Dr. Beshovski prepared DSc dissertation entitled *The origin and formation of the family Chloropidae (Diptera) in the Palaearctic and its fauna on the Balkan Peninsula and Bulgaria* and successfully defended it.

The scientific work of Professor V. Beshovski is rich and diverse. He has published over 140 scientific articles in a large number of Bulgarian and international scientific journals as well as book chapters, articles in collections of scientific conferences and others. Undoubtedly, his most significant works are the three monographs in the frames of the fundamental series *Fauna of Bulgaria* published by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The first one, entitled *Diptera, Chloropidae* (vol. 14, 1985: 219 pp.), provides descriptions, identification keys and information on 43 genera and 180 species of frit flies in the country, of which 112 species were first recorded by the author. A significant part of them – 47 species – have been identified for the first time in the Balkan Peninsula, and 6 species have been described for the first time to science by Dr. Beshovski. He has also summarised the results of his long-term studies on the fauna, taxonomy, distribution and ecology of dragonflies in Bulgaria in the volume entitled *Insecta, Odonata* (Fauna of Bulgaria, vol. 23, 1994: 372 pp.). It provides information on 94 species and subspecies of dragonflies, 74 of which have been recorded from the territory of Bulgaria and 20 further species occurring in neighbouring countries and are expected to be recorded in this country. A few years later, he has summarised his research on three other families of dipterans from Bulgaria and published this monograph in the same series as *Coastal flies (Ephydriidae, Tethinidae and Canacidae)* (Fauna of Bulgaria, vol. 28, 2009: 421 pp.). For 139 species of the above-mentioned families, precise descriptions, identification keys and original illustrations have been prepared, which greatly facilitated the taxonomic identification of the members of this group. In addition to the orders and families of insects presented in the above monographs, Professor V. Beshovski has also performed taxonomic and zoogeographical studies on other smaller groups. Thus, he published the results of some of these studies in a volume of the faunistic series *Catalogus Faunae Bulgaricae* (vol. 8, 2013: 151 pp.) entitled *Carnoidea: Brachycera Acalyptrata*. It summarised information on the distribution in Bulgaria of 195 species of these insects and presented a complete bibliographic list of foreign and Bulgarian entomological literature on them.

Professor V. Beshovski left bright memories to his colleagues and students. He will be remembered for his active research, working capacity, modesty, responsiveness and willingness to help younger assistants, PhD students and colleagues. He was a member of the editorial board of *Acta Zoologica Bulgarica* acting as the specialist–editor for entomology as well as a member of the editorial boards of the multi-volume series *Fauna of Bulgaria* and *Catalogus Faunae Bulgaricae*. His criticism and competence contributed to elevating the quality of these series and to increasing their international recognition.

With the unexpected death of Professor Venelin Beshovski, the Bulgarian zoological science lost one of its most distinguished representatives – a worthy example of dedication to science, which left a lasting mark in entomology.

Vassil Golemansky
Member of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences