Acta Zoologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae 48 (Suppl. 1), pp. 9–13, 2002

TIBOR JERMY ACADEMICIAN IS 85 YEARS OLD

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Anyone more or less familiar with the history of science knows that sudden progress in science is always linked with the appearance of a great personality. As opposed to the general view, it can be safely said that even human history has been and is formed by great statesmen, and the masses only play a secondary role.

The 100-year history of agricultural zoology, our field of science, clearly shows that important progress is always associated with the work and influence of an excellent person. The prominent personalities of the 20th century were GÉZA HORVÁTH, until the late twenties JÓZSEF JABLONOWSKI, from the thirties to the end of the fifties GUSZTÁV SZELÉNYI; while from the fifties up to present day TIBOR JERMY, ordinary member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences has determined the development of agricultural entomology in Hungary.

Prior to expressing our congratulations to the Jubilarian let me – as one who has worked with him more than a quarter of a century – recall in a few words his character.

TIBOR JERMY was born on 31 January 1917 in Lőcse (a town now in Slovakia). His father was an engineer at the Office of State Building who, following the Peace Treaty of Trianon, was employed first in Zalaegerszeg, then in Budapest. TIBOR JERMY's early years were determinative for him as regards languages: at home they spoke German, in the street he was acquainted with the Slovak language, and later, in the elementary school he spoke Hungarian. Between 1928 and 1935, he attended the Ferenc Toldy secondary school for modern languages in Budapest. The late GÁBOR REICHART, one of our colleagues, who had been JERMY's class-mate told me that JERMY was all along a student at the top of his class not only in languages but also in literature, mathematics and physics. He took his final examinations in 1935, then – as he himself told me – after some hesitation did not accede to his father's wish to go to the Technical University, but matriculated at the Péter Pázmány (now Loránd Eötvös) University, Faculty of Natural History-chemistry, since from his early childhood he had been attracted by Nature, whose secrets were unveiled for him by his maternal grandfather, a forest engineer in the Szepesség (a part of the present Slovakia). At the university, under the influence of the impressive personality of ENDRE DUDICH, professor of zoological taxonomy, JERMY chose zoology for his special field. Although his parents were living in Budapest he was admitted to the famous Eötvös College. Professor ALBERT

GYERGYAI, at that time teacher of French literature at the College (who translated works from LA FONTAINE, MONTAIGNE, VILLON, BALZAC, FLAUBERT, PROUST, GIDE into Hungarian) when spending his summer holiday in Nagybajom (Somogy County) in the early fifties asked me where I was working. I told him I worked at the Zoological Department of the Research Institute for Plant Protection Budapest, together with TIBOR JERMY, a former Eötvös collegiate. I cite professor GYERGYAI's answer word by word: "Oh, the TIBOR JERMY, the excellent student." This meant that JERMY distinguished himself by his gift for languages in GYERGYAI professor's French courses too.

He finished his university studies in 1940 acquiring a secondary school teacher's diploma. In 1942 with his dissertation "Taxonomic study on the Plesiocerata of Hungary" he passed a university examination. He won a scholarship to the Sorbonne University but the war situation prevented him from going to Paris. In 1947, he got his doctor's degree *summa cum laude*.

As there was no zoologist's post after graduation he was employed in the National Research Institute of Viti- and Viniculture as wine chemist (1940–1948).

In 1942 JERMY was called up for military service, and as an anti-aircraft artilleryman became a prisoner of war on 31 March 1945. From his captivity in the Soviet Union he returned home on 10 July 1947, and continued his activity in his earlier working place.

In 1948 he went to the Plant Protection Service until in 1949 his old dream came true: he received a zoologist-entomologist post at the Department of Zoology of the Research Institute for Plant Protection. Therefore, he was already 31 years old when starting scientific work in agricultural entomology. It was from here that as director of the Institute between 1969 and 1978 he retired in 1978.

JERMY's scientific activity first consisted of working up the taxonomy and biology of the insect pests of cultivated plants and elaborating control methods. At the very beginning of his career, he had a new approach to these research tasks: he placed the ecological and ethological aspects in the centre of his investigations. In the years following the appearance of the Colorado potato beetle (*Leptinotarsa decemlineata*) in Hungary new investments were made possible. It so happened that on the basis of JERMY's plans the Keszthely Laboratory of the Research Institute for Plant Protection came into existence (1957), and equipped for modern ecological investigations enabled the attainment of greater research results. Until 1967 JERMY regularly spent a considerable part of the growing season (from May to September) in Keszthely. Considering his scientific results, the years in Keszthely were determinative for JERMY's scientific oeuvre.

I should like to list some major fields of plant protection entomology in which internationally acknowledged results were attained by JERMY: the diapause

of *L. decemlineata, Hyphantria cunea* and *Cydia pomonella*; the correlation between temperature and rate of development studied with *C. pomonella* larvae living in apples growing at the northern and southern sides of the apple-tree; theoretical questions of the production biology of terrestrial biocenoses; JERMY was the first in the world who criticized the concept of "biological balance"; with the results obtained while studying the ethological questions of the food specialization of phytophagous insects JERMY became an international authority of the subject; by building up the light-trap network he laid down the bases for the prognosis of insect species flying to light, not to mention his faunistic achievements; by studying the methods of selective control he opened up new areas of research (antifeedants, sex attractants, sterile-male technique, etc.). He was the first to write a general work on biological control in Hungarian; elaborated the Hungarian programme of integrated control methods. He launched agroecosystem investigations in maize fields and apple plantations; on the basis of the results of extensive experimentation as well as by working up critically the relevant literature he established the evolutionary theory of the relation of insect to host plant; upon the request of foreign professional circles he explained his views about the competition among phytophagous insects in a comprehensive study.

Only the major research fields are listed above, in which outstanding results were attained. Looking over the list of his publications, we can see that there is hardly any area of agricultural entomology that JERMY did not touch in the course of his activity. I was lucky to sit for 15 years in the same room with him, so I can say that "everything he touched turned into gold".

We may ask what the secret of this successful career is. The answer can be given by the Roman poet's words: *Philosophus non fit sed nascitur* (The philosopher is not made but is born). JERMY was born to what he is. His brain structure combines the analysing- with the synthesizing type of researcher, that is why he is a creative man, a champion of his science. He is blessed with the faculty of seeing the point, which helped him not only in his profession but in his everyday life too.

We now celebrate the 85th birthday of a scientist who, blessed with an enormous faculty of intuition, recognizes the essence of the problems in an instant. This extraordinary mental quality is associated with an innate manual skill and practical common sense which greatly helped him in elaborating his research methods.

Nevertheless, nobody must think that on interpreting his results TIBOR JERMY contents himself with merely establishing the facts. As a reflective, speculative man, both instinctively and knowing the ontological and epistemological laws he is capable of grasping the ultimate reason of things. For me unforgettable are the pauses during our collecting tours when JERMY in a few words pointed to the uncertainty or even absurdity of statements that I had thought so far incontestable.

As to JERMY's tours abroad it is enough to say that he has visited almost all countries important from a scientific point of view, either when invited as a consultant, or on commission. It was imposing to see him on the speaker's platform at the XVI International Congress on Entomology held in August 1980 in Kyoto, Japan, expounding his views about the coevolution of phytophagous insects before a professional audience gathered from all quarters of the world.

JERMY's major works cover more than 200 Hungarian and foreign scientific papers. His books: JERMY, T. & SÁRINGER, GY. (1955) *A burgonyabogár* [The Colorado potato beetle.] (Leptinotarsa decemlineata Say). Mezőgazdasági Kiadó, Budapest, 188 pp., (translated in German, Russian and Polish); JERMY, T. (1967) *Biológiai védekezés a növények kártevői ellen*. [Biological control against pests of plants.] Mezőgazdasági Kiadó, Budapest, 196 pp.; JERMY, T. (ed.) (1976) *The host-plant is relation to insect behaviour and reproduction*. Symposia Biologica Hungarica 16. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 322 pp.; JERMY, T. (1983) Multiplicity of insect antifeedants in plants. *In* WHITEHEAD, D. L. & BOWERS, W. S. (eds) *Natural products for innovative pest management*. Pergamon Press, Oxford, pp. 223–236; JERMY, T. (1987) *Gondolatok a koevolúcióról*. [Thoughts on coevolution.] Akadémiai székfoglaló, 1986. március 11. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 44 pp.; JERMY, T. (1987) The role of experience in the host selection of phytophagous insects. *In* CHAPMAN, R. F., BERNAYS, E. A. & STOFFOLANO, J. G. (eds) *Perspectives in chemoreception and behaviour*. Springer Verlag, New York, pp. 143–157; JERMY, T. & BALÁZS, K. (1988) *A növényvédelmi állattan kézikönyve*. [Handbook of plant protection zoology.] Vol. 1, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 443 pp.; (1988) Vol. 2, 304 pp., (1989), Vol. 3/A, 322 pp., Vol. 3/B, pp. 329–673 (1990), Vol. 4/A, 1–447, Vol. 4/B, pp. 453–831 (1994), Vol. 5, 376 pp., Vol. 6, 307 pp. (1996); SZENTESI, Á. & JERMY, T. (eds) (1991) *Insects-Plants '89*. Symposia Biologica Hungarica 39, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 577 pp.

He was honoured with GÉZA HORVÁTH medal (1975) by the Hungarian Association of Agricultural Sciences, IMRE FRIVALDSZKY golden commemorative plaque (1976) by the Hungarian Entomological Society, State Prize (1983), Academy Gold Medal (1992).

He has been member of the editorial board of Acta Zoologica Hung., Acta Phytopath. et Entomol. Hung., Fauna Hungariae (from 1965); Archiv für Pflanzenschutz (Berlin), Entomologica Experimentalis et Applicata (Amsterdam), and a Foreign Correspondence of the Annual Review of Entomology, Palo Alto (USA).

Positions held by him in scientific organizations: vice-president of the Hungarian Society of Biology (MBT), president of the Ecological Section of the MBT, president of the Plant Protection Society of the Hungarian Association of Agricultural Sciences (MAE) (1969–1977), president of the Hungarian Entomological So-

ciety (1969–1972), deputy president, then president of the Biological Section of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1980–1990), member of the Zoological and Ecological Committee of the HAS.

From 1990 he has been an associate member of the American Philosophical Society (Philadelphia); the British Ecological Society elected him "Unanimously and enthusiastically" honorary member.

At the special opening board-meeting held on 11 September 1993 the Georgikon Faculty of Agricultural Sciences of the Pannon University conferred on him the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa.

It is regrettable that the Biological Section of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences elected him only in 1976, at the age of 59, corresponding member, then in 1985 ordinary member. However, being in good health he has been able to mark out the new lines of research and assist the young, talented researchers gathering around him.

Finally, let this commemoration by – both in my name and on behalf of the colleagues – an affectionate bow to the 85-year-old TIBOR JERMY.