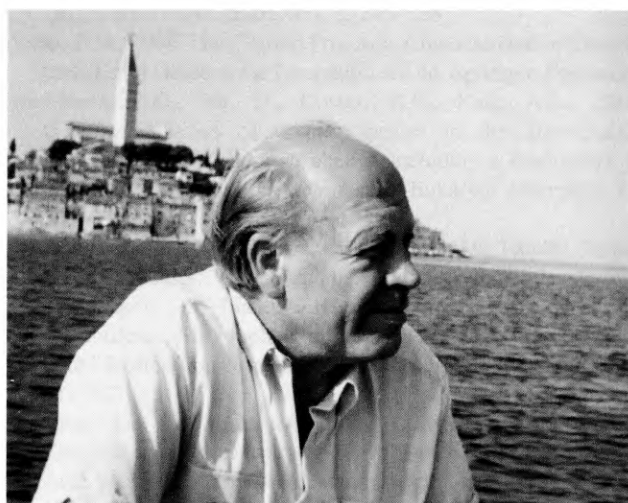


Obituary

In memoriam: Dieter Matthes (1919–2012)

On March 9, 2012, Prof. Dr. Dieter Matthes, a talented and diligent zoologist and protozoologist passed away. He was born in the city of Auerbach, Saxonia (Germany) on August 21, 1919. His love in biology was early roused by one of the biology teachers, Karl Friedrich Max Voigt, a famous rotifer specialist. Voigt also stimulated Matthes to publish some interesting observations in the 'Mikrokosmos', a journal for amateur as well as professional microscopists. Matthes finished school in 1938. He then started his studies of chemistry at the University of Leipzig. In World War II, he was a soldier in Russia and Denmark. During this time, he had the possibility to study chemistry and biology for two semesters at the University of Innsbruck (Austria). After the war, he worked as a primary teacher in Franconia. Then he finished his studies of zoology and botany at the University of Erlangen. Matthes was advised by Prof. H.-J. Stammer, a famous zoologist also interested in protozoology, and wrote his dissertation on "Die Kiemenfauna unserer Landasseln (The gill fauna of terrestrial woodlouses)". He was awarded his doctoral degree (Dr. phil. nat.) in 1948. In 1949, he became an assistant at the Zoological Institute of the University of Erlangen, where he habilitated by performing a study on the "Excitatoren und Paarungsverhalten mitteleuropäischer Malachiiden (Excitants and mating behaviour of Central European Malachiids)" in 1962. In 1968, he was nominated as apl. Professor (adjunct professor) – this title was changed in the seventies to Extraordinarius (associate professor) – and in 1969, as Wissenschaftlicher Rat and Professor (scientific councillor and professor). He was co-editor of the "Archiv für Protistenkunde", Gustav Fischer Verlag and since 1993 honorary member of the "Deutsche Protozoologische Gesellschaft".

Matthes had a broad field of interest, ranging from ciliate morphology to general parasitology, animal psychology, and sexual biology of insects. He and his students published more than 200 papers, the best-known works probably being those on peritrichs and suctorians living on other animals in the Erlangen area. These studies and some further dissertations of the Stammer school are still unsurpassed in their accuracy and completeness, describing almost 200 new ciliate species from exactly identified hosts. Matthes wrote 12 books and book contributions and was editor and author of the "Protozoen-fauna", an unfinished project of Fischer-Verlag (publisher).



Furthermore, he passed on his specific knowledge to the general community, e.g. by contributing frequently to the 'Mikrokosmos' magazine mentioned above. Indeed, Matthes became famous in the German speaking community as well for his books "Tierische Parasiten" (animal parasites), Verlag Vieweg & Sohn and Tiersymbiosen" (animal symbioses), Gustav Fischer Verlag as for the "Wimpertiere", a booklet published together with Prof. Wenzel by Frankh'sche Verlagshandlung.

Professor Matthes was an engaged and humorous academic teacher giving students good advice and much support. He guided many field trips and organized courses on marine biology at Rovinj (Croatia, see photograph). Matthes, although being popular among the students he taught, was always keen on asking them unexpected questions. The students therefore needed to have good general knowledge.

The German Society of Protozoologists and the international scientific community will miss this modest and friendly man.

Wilhelm Foissner
Salzburg, Austria

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Haan, Germany

Available online 7 September 2012