

# BACTERIA

## TIJDSCHRIFT VAN DE NEDERLANDSCHE MALACOLOGISCHE VEREENIGING

Obituary: Professor C. M. Steenberg

by

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The Netherlands Malacological Society has to deplore the loss of one of its most prominent foreign members; Professor Carl Marinus Steenberg died at Copenhagen on February 1, 1946, after a long and very painful illness.

Steenberg was born November 24, 1882, at Brønderslev in the north of Jutland. As a boy he showed a remarkable interest in nature; music and mathematics also appealed to him. Already as a schoolboy he resolved to be a zoologist afterwards and he spent his spare time in the field in summer and in the Zoological Museum in winter. He entered the University of Copenhagen as a student of zoology in 1902, passed his examination of magister scientiarum in 1909 and took his doctor's degree in 1925, for which purpose he had written his well known thesis on the anatomy of Pupillidae.

Meanwhile he got an appointment as assistant at the Laboratory of Histology and Embryology in 1908, and in 1923 was made „lektor” (assistant professor), in 1929 extraordinary professor of comparative anatomy. This last appointment he held until his death, teaching also embryology and histology since the death of docent R. H. Stamm in 1934.

Steenberg's special interest in malacology dates from his school-days. He was an assiduous collector of mollusca, not only in Denmark but also abroad, and also enlarged his collections considerably by purchase. At the moment of his death he therefore possessed an extensive collection, containing for instance fine series of Tanganyika mollusca, Pulmonates from the Phillippines, Cypraeidae, Danish Pisidium, etc.

His malacological library was of still greater importance. It contained complete series of all the malacological journals excepting the *Bolletino malacologico italiano*, nearly every malacological handbook and monograph, and countless separates. Both the collection and the malacological library are bequeathed to the Zoological Museum of Copenhagen.

It may be mentioned here that Steenberg also possessed an extensive library on anatomy, which will be amalgamated with the library of the fine modern laboratory of Comparative Anatomy, the arrange-

ment of which was such an important part of Steenberg's life work.

The malacological investigations of Steenberg had two principal aims, one faunistic and one anatomical.

His contribution to the series „Danmarks Fauna”, in which he dealt with the land mollusca, is the most notable fruit of his faunistic work. Although it is his first malacological publication, it clearly shows Steenberg's very accurate methods. It is not necessary to insist on the qualities of this booklet here, as owing to many conformities between the Danish and Dutch faunas it is often consulted by Dutch malacologists. The „Verzeichnis der Landschnecke Dänemarks” resulted from the work necessary for the preparation of the volume in „Danmarks Fauna”.

In 1917 he published the description of the mollusca of a Danish lake, the Furesø, which had been investigated by Wesenberg-Lund with several collaborators, and in another paper he recorded some mollusca from Jutland, among which the freshwater pearl mussel may be mentioned here.

Let us now turn our attention to Steenberg's anatomical work. His investigations on the genital organs of the Danish Clausiliidae contributed to the better understanding of the affinities of the various genera involved. His dissection of the same organs of some minute snails belonging to the genera *Acanthinula* and *Vallonia* brought the evidence that they cannot be classed with the Helicidae, but are related to the Pupillidae and the Enidae, as had already been assumed by some authors.

The anatomy of Pupillidae (*sensu latiori*) is the subject of Steenberg's thesis. For this magnum opus the anatomical structure of 25 species, among which several of our smallest landsnails are to be found, has been thoroughly investigated and described. The fine figures will be a lasting evidence of Steenberg's skill in microdissection and his gifts as an artist. The results of these investigations are of great importance for classification. A number of genera lumped by Pilsbry in the family Pupillidae have now been classified by Steenberg in the families Chondrinidae, Orculidae, Pupillidae, Vertiginidae, and Valloniidae. In a subsequent paper he was able to assign the right place to the genus *Agardhia* in this improved system.

Steenberg's last malacological publication deals with the anatomy and affinities of *Gonidomus pagoda* (Férussac), of which species Th. Mortensen had brought him specimens from Mauritius. Germain had separated *Gibbus* and *Gonidomus* from the Streptaxidae in a family of their own. According to Steenberg's investigation they must, however, be considered Streptaxidae, but are to be separated from the other genera belonging to that family in a special subfamily: *Gonidominae*.

It is a pity that the early death of Steenberg prevented him from

finishing other anatomical investigations in which he was engaged, among others those on the genus *Eremina*.

In 1919 Steenberg married Johanne Møller, a teacher of biology, who has been a faithful help to him in all his work. Professor Steenberg and his wife liked to receive foreign colleagues in their hospitable home at Copenhagen-Søborg. To me it was a great privilege to be their guest in November 1945. The nearly insupportable sufferings of my host threw a dark shadow on this visit, but what a pleasure it was nevertheless to him to lead his guests along the series of portraits of malacologists which adorned his staircase to his study and to show them his collections and library there. Undoubtedly his charming personality will remain indelibly in the memory of all who knew him.

#### Malacological publications by C. M. Steenberg

- 1911 Bløddyr, 1. Landsnegle. Danmarks Fauna, vol. 10, 221 pp., 181 figs.
- 1913 Verzeichnis der Landschnecken Dänemarks. Nachrichtsbl. d. mal. Ges., vol. 45, pp. 124—133, 163—171.
- 1914 Anatomie des Clausilies Danoises. 1. Les organes génitaux. Min-deskrift Jap. Steenstrup, n. 29, 46 pp., 1 pl.
- 1917 Furesøens Molluskfauna. D. Kgl. Danske Vidensk. Selsk. Skrifter, Naturv. Math. Afd., (8) vol. 3, pp. 78—118, 194—301 (Summary in French), figs. 12—51, 5 maps, pls. 1—8.
- Om *Margaritana margaritifera* L. fra Varde Aa samt om en lille Mollusksamfund fra Ribe Marsk. Vidensk. Medd. Dansk naturh. For., vol. 68, pp. 65—72.
- Anatomie des *Acanthinula* et des *Vallonia*. Les organes génitaux. Ibid., vol. 69, pp. 1—15, 7 figs.
- 1925 Etudes sur l'anatomie et la systématique des maillots (fam. Pupillidae s. lat.). Ibid., vol. 80 pp. 1—215, 50 figs., 34 pls. (= Diss. Copenhagen, VIII + 211 + III pp., 50 figs., 34 pls.
- 1929 Recherches sur l'anatomie et la place systématique du genre *Agardhia* Gude. (Gastropoda pulmonata, fam. Pupillidae s. lat.). Ibid., vol. 88, pp. 15—29, 10 figs., pl. 1.
- 1936 Recherches anatomiques et systématiques sur le Gastéropode Pulmoné, *Gonidomus pagoda* (Férussac) de l'île Maurice. Mém. Mus. R. Hist. Nat. Belg., (2) vol. 3 (Mélanges Paul Pelseener), pp. 15—148, 21 figs.