

## Obituary Aleksandr Mikhailovich Djakonov

On the 1st of April, 1956, there died in Leningrad Aleksandr Mikhailovich DJAKONOV (D'AKONOV), an eminent Russian naturalist. He was born on the 4th of January, 1886, and was oldest son of Mikhail Aleksandrovich DJAKONOV,



Professor of the History of the Russian Law, and of Nadezhda Aleksandrovna Poretskaja, a scholar of Russian literature. The deceased had many talents. He was an excellent artist, and drew so well in his youth that he was advised to become a professional engraver. He developed more than one speciality: he was interested in Odonata, but more so in Lepidoptera, chiefly Geometridae and the Microlepidoptera. Besides this he was an eminent specialist of the Echinodermata of the U.S.S.R., and in addition worked on general biology, zoogeography and geography.

I heard of the earliest record of his enthusiasm for entomology from his mother. She recalled an excursion made by the very young entomologist, and his first encounter of a *Papilio machaon*. So great was his childish enthusiasm that he did not trust his own trembling hands,

but asked his mother to catch the butterfly.

Official records of his scientific activity begin in the year 1906, an expedition to the White Sea, together with K. SAINT-SSÈRE. In 1910 there followed a stay at the Murmansk Biological Station, and in 1913 a European trip to Copenhagen, where he attended classes by MONTERSON, to Strassburg (DÖDERLEIN), to Stockholm (TILL), to Berlin and Stuttgart.

The following is an impressive list of collecting trips and expeditions made in the following years, which provide a good indication of his unceasing activity: 1907 Switzerland, 1908 Saxonia, 1909 Urals, 1911 Crimea, 1913 France, 1915 Barents Sea, 1920—1921, 1923 Olonetsk Expedition, 1926—1927 Ussuri Region, 1924, 1925, 1927, 1930, 1931, 1935, 1937—1939 Crimea and Caucasus, 1927 Armenia, 1931 Akhalkalak Plateau, 1935 Northern Caucasus; 1941—1945 are the years of the evacuation of the Zoological Institute of the Academy of Sciences to Alma Ata; 1934 Japan Sea, 1947, 1949 Kurilo-Sakhalin Expedition.

From the alternation of marine and land excursions we may deduce how regularly he divided his attention and interest between the Echinodermata and Insecta. Despite his great interest for the Lepidoptera, eye trouble (which seems to have been only partly remedied by surgery forced him to concentrate on larger objects — the Echinodermata. His publications on this phylum amount to some 80 titles, whereas some 35 papers concern taxonomy, biology, and distribution of

Lepidoptera. The number of his papers on other subjects is not known to me.

The deceased was a member of the Russian Entomological Society since 1912, and its Honorary Secretary from 1922 till 1932. He was on the staff of the Zoological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., of Leningrad. His collections will probably go to that Institute.

He was married, but had no children.

However short my personal contact with my uncle was, hardly half a year in the winter of 1922—1923, he influenced the choice of my specialisation, and thus affected my whole subsequent life. Never shall I forget my first visit to his Leningrad home, where in neat cabinets small glasstopped boxes stood book-fashion in many rows — and my gasp of admiration at the sight of the contents of each box ! Hundreds of minute Microlepidoptera, masterfully set — for my uncle was an expert at mounting and setting all arranged in meticulous order. This was an important moment of my life: the choice of my entomological specialisation was made. I was 15 then. Never afterwards did I regret my choice.

I recall a very tall, fair man in his middle thirties, always extremely kind, attentive, and nice to me. Unforgettable evenings of entomological chats, instruction, and planning of joint excursions followed my first visit, but, alas, ended too soon by my departure from Russia. In subsequent years we had very little contact. In 1946 I heard that Aleksandr Mikhailovich on his 60th birthday was awarded an order, for his contribution to the science of the U.S.S.R.

His death ended a rich life, such as any naturalist might wish to have led. The indefatigable traveller and collector may rest at last. Our sympathy goes to his wife.

A. N. DIAKONOFF

Leiden, the Netherlands.

## Een nieuwe zweefvliegsoort in Nederland, *Chilosia velutina* Loew

door

V. VAN DER GOOT

*Chilosia velutina* Loew behoort tot de groep van *Chilosia proxima* Zett. en *Chilosia vernalis* Fall. Ze kan het lichtst met *proxima* verwisseld worden, omdat *velutina* wit behaarde ogen heeft en een niet glimmende onderzijde van het achterlijf, evenals *proxima*. De ogen van *vernalis* zijn zwart behaard en het achterlijf is van onder zwart glimmend.

Aangezien ik een behoorlijke serie verzameld heb kon ik iets over de variabiliteit van de determinatiekenmerken te weten komen, bij zweefvliegen zeker geen overbodige weelde.

Een goed kenmerk t.o.v. *proxima* is de betrekkelijk platte middenknobbel van de kop, waardoor van opzij gezien, het gezicht onder de antenne-inplanting niet ver naar voren gaat. Goede tekeningen hiervan staan in COE en LUNDBECK. Een veel gebruikt kenmerk is ook de tarskleur, maar voorzichtigheid is geboden. Alle tarsen zijn van boven constant zwart, maar bij LUNDBECK belandt men via „tarsi black” prompt bij *vernalis* en *proxima* in plaats van bij *velutina* ! In zijn uitvoerige soortsbeschrijving zegt LUNDBECK: „tarsi black, the anterior with the two basal joints more or less yellowish”. Een nadere beschouwing van de dieren leert, dat alleen de metatarsen van tars 1 en 2 van onder constant licht gekleurd zijn, maar