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Zdzisława Teresa STEBNICKA 1932-2012



Zdzisława Teresa STEBNICKA at the Canadian Museum of Nature, June 2000.
Photo by François GÉNIER.
source: <http://museum.unl.edu/research/entomology/workers/ZStebnicka.htm>

Zdzisława STEBNICKA had passed this year and this message filled the community of coleopterologists with grief, documented by abundant correspondence received by us. Some of your letters expressed sheer disbelief, as She was working almost till Her last days.

To the fellow coleopterologists from abroad She was known as an outstanding specialist of the beetles, especially of the tribe Aphodini, on which a book in four volumes, Her *opus vitae*, was completed just a year ago, to top the list of more than 100 publications. She was known to you under Her second name, Teresa, or Giga, as neither Zdzisława, nor the abbreviated form “Dzidka” used here was possible to remember and to pronounce by Her friends from abroad.

To us, She was a most amiable colleague, to some a friend, always happy to share Her rich experience, especially as an connoisseur of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, of which every new edition and novelties were traced by Her and enabled Her to cut the Gordian knot of our taxonomical problems.



Dzidka STEBNICKA in Ojców field station
(courtesy of Ewa STWORZEWICZ)

As an enthusiastic computer woman, especially keen on phylogenetic and graphic programs, She helped Her colleagues, often much younger than herself. Endowed with remarkable artistic skills, She used the graphic programs to create Her unique personal style which combined minimum effort with maximum information and accuracy in 3D.

Privately, She had been a happy wife to Władysław Stebnicki, and a mother of a daughter Monika. She loved dogs. Her favorites were especially the bulldogs and later, the dachshounds. Each year She was a keen participant of the “dachshounds parade” in Kraków – Her very tall silhouette accompanied by a tiny, but equally fierce and proud dog.

Life and works. Zdzisława STEBNICKA was born in 1932 in Przemyśl (eastern Poland). Time of her childhood and early youth was difficult: Her mother died in childbirth; the father, an officer in the underground State Army during the World

War II, was after the war arrested by communists' regime and as a political prisoner died in 1947. At age 18 She moved to Kraków, but the political activity of Her late father hindered Her start into grown up life; particularly, the studies were not available to Her in spite of passed exams to several high schools. She tried several jobs, some of them using Her artistic skills, until in 1962 started to work in our institute, where She worked for 50 years. She started as a curator and soon evolved to be an expert, especially, of the Aphodini, an abundant and difficult group of scarab beetles. In 1979 She accomplished PhD. Although retired since 1993, She worked part time until last days.

Her studies involved taxonomical, biogeographical and phylogenetic problems. Soon She recognized the importance of knowledge of entire world fauna for accurate reconstruction of routes of dispersal and evolution of the group. In search of Her beetles She visited many countries where She studied the museum collections as well as self collected field material, and participated in international teams, in some for many years. Especially fruitful was Her cooperation with Spanish teams from Alicante, Salamanca and Madrid, which started in 1980 and lasted 25 years. In this period, She visited Spain almost every year and took part in teaching PhD students as a visiting professor. (More on this

cooperation in the “Notes” by Eduardo Galante, below). Among other centres visited several times were: the Canadian Museum of Nature, Ottawa, Ontario (long lasting cooperation with Henry F. Howden), the Smithsonian Institution, the National Museum of Natural History, Washington, the Florida State Collection of Arthropods, and the University of Mississippi, Dept. of Biology, USA.

She visited also several times: Russia, Finland, Switzerland, Germany, and Czechoslovakia, and participated in scientific field excursions to Iraq, Vietnam, Korea, and Australia.

She was an active member of scientific societies: the Polskie Towarzystwo Taksonomiczne; Center for Systematic Entomology (Florida); European Association of Coleopterology; Entomological Society of Washington (Smithsonian Institution); Scarab Workers (Nebraska). Last but not least, She was also a long lasting Editor of our journal, the *Acta zoologica cracoviensia*.

Her list of publications exceeds 100 papers, listed below. The three parts of Her four-parted *opus magnum*, the Monograph of World Aphodiinae, were awarded in 2010 by the II Division of the Polish Academy of Sciences for Biological Sciences.

Ewa KRZEMIŃSKA