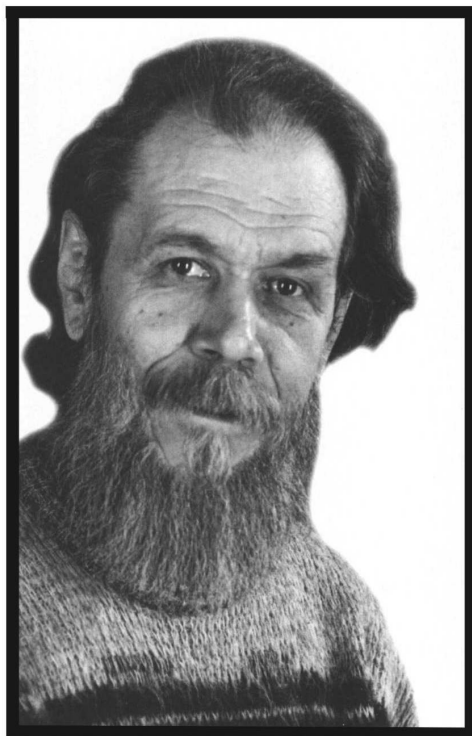


Obituary
Vladimir Vassilievich ZHERIKHIN
(1945 – 2001)



Vladimir ZHERIKHIN, the distinguished entomologist, paleontologist and evolutionary biologist, died suddenly and absolutely unexpectedly on 21 December, 2001, from overlooked intestine cancer hidden by an ulcer.

Vladimir, or Volodya as we called him, was born in Moscow, Russia, July 22, 1945. His father, Vasilii ZHERIKHIN, was born in 1895 in Velikiy Ustyug, North Russia. He participated in World War I and received a head wound, which resulted in the life-long paralysis of his right side. In spite of this, he was able to regain his ability to speak and walk. For many years he taught mathematics at the Land Exploitation Institute in Moscow. His mother, Aleksandra, born in 1897 in Kamenka village not far from Moscow, was mainly a housewife.

Since his schoolboy years, Volodya had a keen interest in insects, particularly beetles, which eventually led him to study at the Zoological Museum, Moscow State University. N. N. PLAVILSHCHIKOV, the famous Russian coleopterist and author of popular books on nature, and S. I. KELEYNIKOVA, a tenebrionid beetle specialist, were his first teachers there. Here, in the museum, he

met D. V. PANFILOV, entomologist, biogeographer and biocenologist, whose influence on, and deep respect from ZHERIKHIN were deep and life-long. The atmosphere of ardent devotion to science that governed at the Young Biologist Circle of the Moscow Zoo also deeply influenced him, and provided many life-long friends.

Even before entering the Moscow State University, ZHERIKHIN took part in the fieldwork to various Siberian rivers of the medical entomologist group, headed by S. P. RASNITSYN, who was his primary teacher and friend. His association with the entomologists of the Paleontological Institute in Moscow began his interest in fossil insects, and also acquainted him with the prominent plant sociologist S. M. RAZUMOVSKY. ZHERIKHIN was deeply influenced by RAZUMOVSKY's concept of the succession system as the central biocenotic structure, of which he became a devoted proponent.

Paleoentomological research by ZHERIKHIN began in his fourth-year at university, with a study of the Baltic amber weevils, supervised by B. B. ROHDENDORF, who was at that time the head of the Arthropoda Laboratory, Paleontological Institute, Academy of Sciences of the USSR (now the Russian Academy of Sciences). After graduating from the Chair of Entomology, Moscow State University, in 1967, ZHERIKHIN entered the Arthropoda Laboratory, where he worked the rest his life and advanced from probationer to become the head of Lab. From the very beginning, he actively participated in various multi-authored projects. One of these, a study of Paleogene biogeography, focused his attention on all of the major insect groups, which he became closely acquainted with. This facility allowed him later to consider the broad diversity of the Meso- and Cenozoic insects, leading to considerable taxonomic works in a variety of orders. Yet he did not forget his beloved weevils: besides lower-scale descriptive and revisional publications on the extant and extinct *Rhynchophora*, he published a collaborative work on a new systematics of the group as a whole, including a comparative study of their wing morphology.

ZHERIKHIN was one of the leading authors of the multi-authored monograph "Historical development of the class Insecta" (ROHDENDORF & RASNITSYN 1980) and the new and much expanded English version "History of Insects," now out. ZHERIKHIN's chapters are on patterns of insect burial (taphonomy), terrestrial paleoecology, trace fossils, as well as on thrips and praying mantids.

Beginning in 1970, ZHERIKHIN organized field trips to collect fossil insects, particularly those preserved in Cretaceous and Paleogene fossil resins. These included expeditions to northernmost Siberia (Taimyr Peninsula), the Russian Far East, and to the Caucasus. This work was aimed at revealing changes in the insect world across the Meso-Cenozoic boundary. Materials gathered in this fieldwork made it possible for him to demonstrate the most deep and sharp changes in the composition of fossil assemblages in mid-Cretaceous time, as is the case in floral assemblages, rather than at the Meso-Cenozoic boundary, as is typical for marine animals.

The concept of the mid-Cretaceous biocenotic crisis, coupled with the further, advanced and seminal ideas of RAZUMOVSKY, was used by ZHERIKHIN as the base of his concept of community-level evolution. He developed a paleontological method of recreating past successions, proposed a model of biocenotic control of evolution, introduced a notion of extinct ecosystem types (illustrated with various types of Mesozoic lakes), and traced the history of several important types of contemporary biomes (including steppe, savanna and rain tropical forest). This series of research, titled "Main patterns of the phylocenogenetic processes (exemplified by non-marine communities of the Mesozoic and Cenozoic)," was the basis of his dissertation leading to a DSc in Biology from the Paleontological Institute RAS.

ZHERIKHIN took part in many meetings, both in Russia and internationally, and actively cooperated with colleagues from all over the world. He participated in the Coordinating Committee of the international project "European Science Foundation Network on Fossil Insects" (1997-1999), initiated the database on the fossil insects, myriapods and arachnids, organized the first fossil insect exhibition abroad (in Australia, incl. Tasmania).

An exceptionally wide range of interests, thirst for new knowledge, and a phenomenal memory made ZHERIKHIN a real "living encyclopedia," as his friends and colleagues permanently addressed him. His knowledge and interests embraced a wide variety of the sciences, as well as fiction and po-

etry. Besides scientific works, he published papers in popular science and literary magazines. He liked to teach, and did it well, while reading courses on ecology, both in a university and in a high school.

But even more, his enjoyment of fieldwork remained. He joined or headed many expedition groups to the corners of Siberia (from Taimyr to Dahuria, Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands), Soviet Central Asia, Mongolia and the Caucasus. The only thing that could sometimes distract him from collecting fossils was the collecting of living insects, where he was no less successful: his neontologist colleagues and museum curators were always anxious to see his rich harvest.

With his inexhaustible optimism, ZHERIKHIN supported good spirit in other people. He enjoyed each new find, each bright idea, and shared a lot of his time in communication with his friends and colleagues, discussing their results. It was always of great interest to follow his considerations irrespective of their subject: whether these concerned beetles, ecological crises, or the re-organization of society. He was always able to respect the opinion of his opponent. It was his point of view that discussions and diversity of opinions are necessary for development – not only in science.

His untimely death has left us with a large and painful lacuna in the integrity of our knowledge, communication, plans and hopes. A long time will be needed to tighten somehow this hole, to heal this wound. Fortunately, he has left his students and colleagues to develop his ideas and approaches. Also, many files were left as well in his computer containing the results of his research, either nearly ready for publication, or half-ready, with some outlined enough to be possible to continue. So ZHERIKHIN will be alive not only in our memory, but also in the continuation of his research.

by

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SELECTED ENGLISH LANGUAGE PUBLICATIONS BY VLADIMIR ZHERIKHIN

(for the complete list see *Byulleten' Moskovskogo Obshchestva Ispytateley Prirody*,
Geol. Sect., 77, 2002, in press):

Beetles

- ARNOLDI L. V., ZHERIKHIN V. V., NIKRITIN L. M., PONOMARENKO A. G. 1991. Mesozoic Coleoptera. New Delhi: Oxonian Press. 285 p. (translation of Russian publication of 1977; ZHERIKHIN's chapters cover Cero-phytidae, Acanthocnemidae, Cryptophagidae, Lathridiidae, Attelabidae, and Curculionidae).
- ZHERIKHIN V. V. 1987. Curculionidae from the Nepal Himalayas. Part 1. Molytinae (Insecta: Coleoptera). *Stuttgarter Beiträge zur Naturkunde*, Ser. A (Biol.), **411**: 1-43.
- ZHERIKHIN V. V. 1992. Tertiary weevils (Insecta, Coleoptera: Curculionoidea) identified from the collections of the Senckenberg Museum. *Senckenbergiana lethaea*, **72**: 169-178.
- ZHERIKHIN V. V., GRATSHEV V. G. 1993. Obrieniidae, fam. nov., the oldest Mesozoic weevils (Coleoptera, Curculionoidea). *Paleontological Journal*, **27**(1A): 50-69.
- ZHERIKHIN V. V., GRATSHEV V. G. 1995. A comparative study of the hind wing venation of the superfamily Curculionoidea, with phylogenetic implications. PAKALUK J., ŚLIPINSKI S. A. (eds) – Biology, Phylogeny, and Classification of Coleoptera: Papers celebrating 80th Birthday of Roy A. CROWSON. Warszawa: Muzeum i Instytut Zoologii PAN. Vol. 2. Pp. 634-777.
- GRATSHEV V. G., ZHERIKHIN V. V. 1995. A revision of the nemonychid weevil subfamily Brenthorrhiniinae (Insecta, Coleoptera, Nemonychidae). *Paleontological Journal*, **29**(4): 112-127.
- ZHERIKHIN V. V. 2000. Tertiary brachycerid weevils (Coleoptera: Brachyceridae) from the collections of Musée national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris, with a review of other fossil Brachyceridae. *Paleontological Journal*, **34**(Suppl. 3): S333-S343.

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GRATSHEV V. G., ZHERIKHIN V. V. 2000. New Early Cretaceous weevil taxa from Spain (Coleoptera, Curculionoidea). *Acta geologica hispanica*, **35**(1-2): 37-46.

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RASNITSYN A. P., ZHERIKHIN V. V. 1999. First fossil chewing louse from the Lower Cretaceous of Baisa, Transbaikalia (Insecta, Pediculida = Phthiraptera, Saurodectidae fam. n.). *Russian Entomological Journal*, **8**(4): 253-255.

ZHERIKHIN V. V. 2000. A new genus and species of Lophioneuridae from Burmese amber (Thripida (=Thysanoptera): Lophioneurina). *Bulletin of the British Museum (Natural History) Geology Series*, **56**(1): 39-41.

Insects in amber

ZHERIKHIN V. V., ESKOV K. Yu. 1999. Mesozoic and Lower Tertiary resins in former USSR. *Estudios del Museo de Ciencias Naturales de Alava*, **14**(Núm. Espec. 2): 119-131.

ZHERIKHIN V. V., ROSS A. J. 2000. A review of the history, geology and age of Burmese amber (Burmite). *Bulletin of the British Museum (Natural History) Geology Series*, **56**(1): 3-10.

Other fossil insect assemblages

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ZHERIKHIN V. V., MOSTOVSKI M. B., VRZANSKÝ P., BLAGODEROV V. A., LUKASHEVICH E. D. 1999. The unique Lower Cretaceous locality Baissa and other contemporaneous insect sites in North and West Transbaikalia. Proceedings of the First International Palaeontological Conference, Moscow 1998. AMBA projects, Bratislava. Pp: 185-191.

General and theoretical publications (unfortunately, few are in English)

ZHERIKHIN V. V. 1987. Biocoenotic regulation of evolution. *Paleontological Journal*, **21**(1): 12-19.

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SINICHENKOVA N. D., ZHERIKHIN V. V. 1996. Mesozoic lacustrine biota: extinction and persistence of communities. *Paleontological Journal*, **30**(6): 710-715.

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Order Thripida FALLÉN, 1914. The thrips, p. 133-143; Order Manteida LATREILLE, 1802. The mantises, p. 273-276; Insect trace fossils, p. 303-324; Ecological history of terrestrial insects, p. 331-388; [Ecological history of the aquatic insects.] Cainozoic (with N. D. SINITSHENKOVA), p. 417-426). [In:] A. P. RASNITSYN, D. L. J. QUICKE (eds) – History of Insects Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publ.