

Obituary
Viktor Grigorievich NOVOKSHONOV
26. 02. 1966 – 29. 01. 2003



Only a year has passed since we suffered a great loss in palaeoentomology, the untimely death of Vladimir ZHERIKHIN, a person of diverse and profound influence in the field and beyond. Now another disaster comes, another great loss, even more unexpected. A young (under 37), talented, versatile, and hardworking scientist of wide knowledge and long (for his age) list of publications, a nice person, and one of the most promising contemporaneous palaeoentomologists, Viktor NOVOKSHONOV has left us during the steep ascent of his scientific activity, when his life had just started improving, after heavy storms had threatened both his private and university life. These storms were the real cause of his untimely departure, with the immediate cause being an aneurysm brought about by high blood pressure. He left behind in Perm his parents and sister, his daughter Katya (Ekaterina, 12) and son Nikita (8), and his closest friend Larisa ZUZHGOVA, who was his main support during the last year of his life.

Viktor graduated from the Geological Faculty of the Perm State University in 1990, and taught there in 1990-1991. From December 1991 through December 1993 he was a postgraduate student at the Palaeontological Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences, in Moscow. During these two years he completed a three-year-long course of postgraduate education and defended the PhD thesis – a very rare case, at least in the Russian postgraduate system. Since 1994, Viktor taught historical geology and general biology at the Perm University until he was forced to leave in 2002, and found asylum at the Perm Regional Museum, unfortunately only for a short time.

After his undergraduate studies, Viktor's main scientific interest became focussed on insects from the famous Lower Permian (Kungurian) fossil site of Tshekarda (Chekarda), not far from the city of Perm. While at the Palaeontological Institute RAS in Moscow, he began to specialise in the scorpionfly order (Panorpida or Mecoptera), and prepared his thesis "Early evolution of the scorpionflies", which was later extended into a book of the same title, published in 1997. In that book he mainly considered Permian scorpionflies, but also examined the roots of extant families, as well as the connections of scorpionflies to their related orders, in particular the origin and early evolution of the caddisfly order Trichoptera. All of these topics became favourites of his subsequent research, resulting in many publications, including his chapters in the book *History of Insects*.

At the same time, Viktor continued work on his earlier passions, viz., collecting, inventory and description of the Tshekarda insect fauna, which also resulted in numerous publications, including a review and annotated list of all insect taxa described from that locality (NOVOKSHONOV, 1998).

In addition to his research and general teaching practice at Perm University, Viktor devoted much of his efforts to training further palaeontologists at his *alma mater*. Unfortunately, due to local resistance, this aspect of his activity was difficult at Perm University. Nevertheless, one of his students, Daniil ARISTOV, is currently a promising postgraduate student at the Palaeontological Institute in Moscow.

Although Viktor NOVOKSHONOV left us so early and unexpectedly, he is still alive, not only as a person in the memory of his friends, colleagues and students, but also through his living and developing ideas, by their expression in thoughts, discussions and research including his chapters on scorpionflies in the book *History of Insects*.

3.03.2003

Alex RASNITSYN
 Paleontological Institute
 Russian Academy of Sciences
 Profsoyuznaya Str. 123
 Russia 117868 Moscow
 e-mail: rasna@online.ru

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

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