



Obituary

**Professor Dr. Alex Fain (1912-2009)**

Professor Dr. Alex Fain died suddenly on 4 January 2009, at the age of 96.

He was born in Mechelen (Belgium) in a family with French, German and Flemish roots. He spent his childhood and youth in Brussels and received a Christian education at St Mary College (1932-1938). His father was an artist.

As physician, holder of a diploma from the Catholic University of Louvain (1932-1938), his career began from 1939 to 1957 in the Belgian Congo where he was director of a hospital in which he carried out mainly surgery and then director of a medical laboratory, and in Rwanda where he was also director of a medical laboratory. On his return to Belgium, Professor Alex Fain taught parasitology in the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp and in the Catholic University of Louvain in Louvain-la-Neuve, as well as acarology in several universities in England, in France and in Switzerland. When he retired from active service in 1982 he became a scientific collaborator of the Department of Entomology in the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, and carried on his activities of research till 2006.

Professor Alex Fain was a courteous and hospitable scientist, and a hard worker interested in all that concerned biology and medicine. He had a strong will, was persevering, and made no secret of his great passion for acarology. This passion led him to set up and to develop during his whole career a very large collection of mites made up of around 100,000 microscopic slides and estimated to contain more than 30,000 specimens of type series. Because of its size, species representation and wide breadth of coverage in certain groups such as e.g. parasitic mites, Fain's collection is an important national and worldwide resource.

Known throughout the world for his acarological works, the first contributions of Professor Alex Fain, besides purely medical works, were devoted to parasitology (Trypanosomiasis and parasitic worms), insects (Tabanidae, Culicidae and Simuliidae) and molluscs. His first paper on mites was published in 1947 and concerned



histopathological injuries due to *Pneumonyssus duttoni*. Actually, Professor Alex Fain became rapidly interested essentially in systematics and taxonomy so that the largest part of his 1,160 contributions was devoted to these subjects. All in all, he described more than 2,580 taxa new to science and distributed in a quite eclectic way among Bacteria (12 serogroups), Protozoa (1 subspecies), Nematoda (10 species), Cestoda (14 species), Trematoda (77 species), Pentastomida (3 species), Insecta (58 species), and Acari (2,407 species).

Professor Alex Fain joined in several scientific, Belgian or foreign associations as co-founder of the Belgian Society of Parasitology, honorary member of the Royal Academy of Medicine of Belgium, titular member of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Overseas, honorary member of the American Society of Parasitologists, member of the International Council of the International Congresses of Acarology, expert of the WHO for parasitic diseases, and Belgian delegate to World Federation of Parasitology.

Honours received by Professor Alex Fain include: Chevalier de l'Ordre Royal du Lion (1947), Médaille de l'effort de Guerre Colonial 1940-45 (1948), Étoile de Service en or du Congo Belge (1956), Grand Officier de l'Ordre de la Couronne (1976), and Grand Officier de l'Ordre de Léopold (1982).

Several rewards were conferred upon Professor Alex Fain: lauréat des Bourses de voyage, lauréat de l'Institut Royal Colonial Belge, prix Broden de la Société belge de Médecine Tropicale, prix Lamarck de l'Académie Royale de Belgique, prix Wetrens de l'Académie Royale de Belgique, Berlese Award 1977, and honorary member of the International Congress of Acarology in Columbus (U.S.A.).

A list of the contributions of Professor Alex Fain and of the new species he described can be found in the following internet address of the Royal Belgian Society of Entomology:

<http://www.srbe-kbve.be/fr/content/dr-alex-fain>

Georges Wauthy<sup>1</sup>  
André V. Bochkov<sup>2</sup>  
Sergey V. Mironov<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, rue Vautier 29, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium

<sup>2</sup> Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg, Russia

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In memoriam – dix ans déjà

## Ernst Jünger et « la saphyrina » - la poursuite d'un fantôme

Nicolas RADISIC

### Abstract

In 1836, Gené discovered on San Pietro island a population of intense blue *Cicindela campestris*, described it and named "saphyrina". More than hundred years later Jünger read about it, was fascinated and started visiting the island in an attempt to find it. After a decade of thorough but unsuccessful search he concluded that Gené was mistaken and that he described an « unicum » and not a population specific to the island. But Gené was right... and Jünger was chasing a wrong prey ?

L'écrivain allemand Ernst Jünger (1895 - 1998), « l'entomologiste écrivain » (FRANCOTTE, 1998), est bien connu des amateurs qui ont suivi avec passion ses voyages dans tous les coins de la planète sur les traces d'insectes rares et avec attachement ses visites en Sardaigne à la recherche, qu'il a dite vaine, de la *Cicindela campestris saphyrina* Gené 1836 (JUNGER, 1967).

Rappelons que la *saphyrina* est une variété de la *Cicindela campestris* Linné, 1758 endémique de l'île de San Pietro. Elle est le produit du détachement du complexe sardo corse du continent d'abord et, de celui de la petite île de San Pietro de la Sardaigne ensuite. D'un bleu intense, elle est pour le reste semblable à la cicindèle sardo corse *Cicindela campestris corsicana* Roeschke, 1891 (*nigrita* Dejean, 1825) dont elle est issue (CASSOLA, 1964, 1969).

Décrite pour la première fois par le zoologiste italien Gené en 1836 (GENE, 1836), elle a



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immédiatement suscité l'intérêt des entomologistes par sa couleur bleue contrastant avec le vert et le rouge habituels. Bien sûr, il se trouve des individus