

In memory of Professor dr hab. Maria JORDAN (1922-2011)*



Fig. 1. Professor Maria JORDAN, 1977. Photo Z. SZYNDLAR.

Maria JORDAN, emeritus professor at the Institute of Systematics and Evolution of Animals, Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków, Poland, died on the 1st of June 2011.

She was not only an academic, but also an interesting person with a broad range of interests expanding beyond zoology, a great patriot, a person with a deep faith, a social worker, and an enthusiast of mountains and animals, especially dogs.

She was born in Stanisławów on August 9th, 1922 into an intelligentsia family with strong patriotic traditions. Her father was a gymnasium professor murdered by the Germans in 1941. The life of Prof. JORDAN portrays the fate of Poles from the Kresy region (eastern most parts of the second Polish Commonwealth 1918-1945) surviving under an array of occupying forces during World War II, and finally deprived of their small homeland and forced to start life anew in very modest conditions. As a child and adolescent, she explored her home city, its vicinities and also the Eastern Carpathians (Czornohora), witnessing the intermingling of cultures and the coexistence of Poles, Ruthenians and Jews. She always reminisced warmly about her

hometown and actively participated in the Stanisławów branch of Towarzystwo Miłośników Lwowa (part of a society focusing on the city of Lwów). After World War II, her life and scientific career were linked with the city of Kraków.

Prof. JORDAN obtained a doctorate in pharmacy at the Jagiellonian University (UJ), and then studied biology at the same university. In 1966 she completed her habilitation and became a full professor in 1976. Maria JORDAN began her career in 1947 at the Department of Biology and Embriology UJ, and worked in the Department of Experimental Zoology at the Polish Academy of Sciences from 1955 until retirement in 1988. It successively was part of the Department of Systematics and Experimental Zoology, and later the Institute of Systematics and Evolution of Animals. She headed the Department of Experimental Zoology in the years 1976-1988. During this time she was also chief editor of the quarterly, "Folia biologica". Through her efforts and the endeavors of dr Karol RZEHAJ (acting as the journal's secretary at the time), Folia biologica was accepted into Current Contents, a move that increased the exchange and rating of the periodical.

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Fig. 2. Professor Maria Jordan among colleagues from Department of Experimental Zoology and Library of ISEA PAS, Kraków 1987. Photo E. WARCHAŁOWSKA-SŁIWA.

The scientific activities of Prof. JORDAN revolved around three main themes. One of these pertained to the study of regeneration of the amphibian central nervous system (she was a representative of the so-called Kraków school of regeneration formed by Prof. Stanisław SKOWRON). Another main research theme involved karyology and karyosystematics of mammals including humans (she embarked upon karyology at the end of the 1950's after training in the lab of Prof. R. MATTHEY in Lausanne). Her third major research topic concerned the influence of pesticides on the environment: in the 1970's she initiated investigations on the effects of environmental pollutants on indicator animal species such as *Paramecium* spp., *Tubifex* sp., tadpoles of *Xenopus* sp. and *Rana* sp. In 1986-1990 she participated in studies on the toxicity of industrial dust (from Silesia) in rainwater and snow (from the Silesian Beskid mountains).

Professor Maria JORDAN trained many scientists, reviewed a number of PhD theses and habilitations, and opined the work of other professors.

Her interests encompassed areas outside of zoology and included broadly defined humanistic matters.

Prof. JORDAN was an avid reader of classical literature and also religious, social and philosophical texts. She was a social worker and a passionate patriot, active during the socio-political changes that took place in Poland in the 1980's "Solidarity".

She was a person with a deep faith, augmented by intellectual literature. After retirement she actively participated in the life of St. Casimir parish in Grzegórzki and wrote articles for the parish periodical "Królewicz".

It is impossible not to mention her enthusiasm for active tourism, for instance expeditions to the Tatra mountains and holidays in Szczawnica, a town in the Pieniny mountains. She was always a very social person, with a great sense of humor.

Maria JORDAN was a brilliant person, honourable, sincere, with a kindness to others that will always be remembered.

Prof. dr hab. Ewa PRZYBOŚ-RAZOWSKA