

*Nachruf/Obituary***Prof. dr hab. Wojciech Krzysztof Staręga (1939–2015)**

Born on November 16th, 1939 to a family of a veterinary surgeon (father) and a medical doctor (mother), Professor Wojciech Krzysztof Staręga spent his childhood in the small town of Węgrów in eastern Poland in the period of political turmoil during World War II.

Just before the war, his father was called up to the army to be soon arrested by the Soviets right after their troops had been withdrawn to eastern Poland, following the Nazis' invasion. Very young as he was, Wojciech had to learn quite early how to cope with the loss of a parent as his father was murdered in Starobelsk by the Stalin's regime a year later – together with thousands of other Polish soldiers, officers, teachers, professors as well as ordinary citizens.

It was after the war when Wojciech completed his primary and, then, secondary education in Siedlce before being admitted to the Biological Faculty at the University of Warsaw in 1958. Having completed a Master's Diploma in zoology in 1962, Wojciech found his first employment at the Institute of Zoology, Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw where he successfully climbed up the academic career ladder of a successful research worker. In 1969 he was awarded a PhD degree at his home institute, followed by a DSc degree (Habilitation) from the Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences of the University of Poznań in 1977. His distinguished academic career was finally crowned by the conferment of the title of professor by the President of Poland in 1998.

Prof. Staręga's professional life was primarily built around two institutions, that is the Institute of Zoology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (1958–1977, 1999–2001) and the University of Siedlce (1977–1986, 1999–2009). In 1980, during the short episode of freedom and democracy in Poland, he became the first Solidarity (Solidarność) Trade Union leader. He was later democratically elected the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture (Department of Zoology being its sub-unit).

After the declaration of martial law, the communist-military regime dismissed Prof. Staręga from his position as dean. Several years later (1986) he resigned from employment in Siedlce and left for the Republic of South Africa in 1987 to work at the



Prof. Wojciech Staręga as a Dean of the Agriculture Faculty, University of Siedlce, 1981

Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg, entirely devoting himself to research work. It was no sooner than three years later, however, when he was compelled to return to Poland due to the health problems he began to suffer from. Initially, he found a short-term employment at the Centre of Teacher's Education (Warsaw) and then (1990) joined the Faculty of Biology, University of Białystok (NE Poland) where he continued to work until 1999. In 1998 he joined the academic staff of Siedlce University again and remained a member until his retirement in 2009.

Prof. Staręga's research work focused on ecology, systematics, biodiversity, biogeography and evolution of arachnids. He was one of the pioneers of spider and harvestmen biodiversity research in Poland, taking part in several major projects on the fauna of several national parks (e.g. the Pieniny Mountains and the Świętokrzyskie Mountains), nature reserves and

urban areas (the fauna of Warsaw). The list of publications comprises more than 80 papers, mainly large monographs on harvestmen systematics, biogeography, in which areas he was a widely respected authority. He described tens of new harvestmen species, 12 new genera and one subfamily. In recognition of his scientific achievements, several harvestmen and spider species have been named after him. One of his significant contributions was a monograph of the Opiliones of Poland, which has become a primary text-book for Polish and Middle European harvestmen researchers and lovers.

Moreover, Wojciech Staręga was a member of the editorial board of *Arachnologische Mitteilungen* and the chief editor of *Annales Zoologici* and *Fragmenta Faunistica*. He also served in various scientific committees and advisory bodies.

In addition to his scientific research, university lecturing was an equally important part of Prof. Staręga's professional career. He supervised tens of MSc theses and some 10 PhD dissertations. Many of his doctoral students, both in Poland and abroad, proudly continue his arachnological heritage.



Prof. Wojciech Staręga during the Annual Meeting of Polish arachnologists, Siedlce, September 2014 (photo Paweł Szymowiak)

Wojciech was a warm personality, friendly and helpful to everybody, ready to share his expertise with others. Privately, he was an excellent husband to Joanna with whom he spent 50 years of happy marriage. He also enjoyed being a father and grandfather.

After he retired in 2009, Prof. Staręga continued to be an active researcher and member of the Polish arachnological community and, despite his health problems over the last few years, his sudden death on May 8, 2015 was shocking news to all of us. He will remain in our memories as a distinguished university professor, excellent researcher, friend and a good man – with a great sense of humour and true joy of life.

Marek ŻABKA; E-Mail: marek.zabka@uph.edu.pl

Selected papers by Professor Wojciech Staręga

(in chronological order)

Harvestmen/Opiliones

- 1964 Materialien zur Kenntnis der ostasiatischen Weberknechte (Opiliones). I-IV. – *Annales Zoologici* 22(17): 387-410
- 1966 Beitrag zur Kenntnis der Weberknecht-Fauna (Opiliones) der Kaukasusländer. – *Annales Zoologici* 23(13): 387-411
- 1972 Revision der Phalangiidae (Opiliones), I. Gattung *Bunochelis* Roewer, 1923. – *Annales Zoologici* 29(14): 461-471
- 1973 Beitrag zur Kenntnis der Weberknechte (Opiliones) des Nahen Ostens. – *Annales Zoologici* 30(6): 129-153
- 1973 Bemerkungen über einige westpaläarktische Weberknechte (Opiliones. Revision der Phalangiidae, II. – *Annales Zoologici* 30(12): 361-373
- 1976 Die Weberknechte (Opiliones, excl. Sironidae) Bulgariens. – *Annales Zoologici* 33(18): 287-433
- 1976 Opiliones Kosarze (Arachnoidea). – *Fauna Polonica* 5: 1-197
- 1978 Katalog der Weberknechte (Opiliones) der Sowjet-Union. – *Fragmenta Faunistica* 23(10): 197-241
- & Chevrizov BP 1978 [New species of the genus *Zacheus* C. L. Koch (Opiliones, Phalangiidae) from northern Caucasus]. – *Entomologicheskoe Obozrenie* 57(2): 419-422
- 1984 Revision der Phalangiidae (Opiliones), III. Die afrikanischen Gattungen der Phalangiinae, nebst Katalog aller afrikanischen Arten der Familie. – *Annales Zoologici* 38(1): 1-79
- 1987 Eine neue Art der Nemastomatidae (Opiliones) aus dem Pamir, nebst nomenklatorisch-taxonomischen Anmerkungen. – *Bulletin de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences, Série des Sciences Biologiques* 34(10-12): 301-305

- 1988 A new species of *Caddella* (Opiliones: Caddidae) from South Africa. – *Annals of the Natal Museum* 29: 529-532
 - 1990 Zoogeographical relationships of southern African harvestmen (Opiliones) – a preliminary account. – *Cimbebasia* 11: 55-57
 - 1992 An annotated check-list of harvestmen, excluding Phalangidae, of the Afrotropical Region (Opiliones). – *Annals of the Natal Museum* 33(2): 271-336
 - 2000 Check-list of harvestmen (Opiliones) of Poland. 31. July 2000. – Internet: <http://www.arachnologia.edu.pl/en/species/10-harvestmen-of-poland.html>
 - 2003 On the identity and synonymies of some Asiatic Opilioninae (Opiliones: Phalangidae). – *Acta Arachnologica* 52(2): 91-102 – doi: [10.2476/asjaa.52.91](https://doi.org/10.2476/asjaa.52.91)
 - 2004 Interessante Weberknechtfinde aus Polen (Arachnida: Opiliones). – *Arachnologische Mitteilungen* 27/28: 78-88 – doi: [10.5431/aramit2705](https://doi.org/10.5431/aramit2705)
 - 2004 On some species of *Metaphalangium* Roewer from the Mediterranean Region (Opiliones, Phalangidae). – *Revista Ibérica de Aracnología* 9: 235-240
 - Snegovaya NY & – 2008 *Redikorveia platybunoides* gen. & sp. n., a new harvestman from Kazakhstan, with establishment of a new tribe Scleropilionini trib. n. (Opiliones: Phalangidae). *Acta Arachnologica* 57(1): 5-7 – doi: [10.2476/asjaa.57.5](https://doi.org/10.2476/asjaa.57.5)
 - Snegovaya NY & – 2008 A new *Homolophus* species (Opiliones: Phalangidae) from Lenkoran zone in Azerbaijan. – *Acta Arachnologica* 57(1): 15-17 – doi: [10.2476/asjaa.57.15](https://doi.org/10.2476/asjaa.57.15)
 - Snegovaya NY & – 2008 A new species of *Zachaeus* C.L.Koch from Azerbaijan (Opiliones, Phalangidae). – *Acta Arachnologica* 57(2): 71-73 – doi: [10.2476/asjaa.57.71](https://doi.org/10.2476/asjaa.57.71)
 - & Snegovaya NY 2008 A new harvestman from Cameroon (Arachnida: Opiliones: Phalangidae). – *Polish Journal of Entomology* 77: 321-327
 - & Snegovaya NY 2008. New species of Opilioninae from the mountains of Kyrgyzstan, Tadjikistan and Uzbekistan. – *Acta Arachnologica* 57(2): 75-85 – doi: [10.2476/asjaa.57.75](https://doi.org/10.2476/asjaa.57.75)
 - 2009 Some southern African species of the genus *Rhampsinitus* Simon (Opiliones: Phalangidae). – *Zootaxa* 1981: 43-56
 - & Snegovaya NY 2009 Report on a Southern African collection of harvestmen in the Royal Museum for Central Africa: Family Assamiidae (Arachnida: Opiliones). – *Journal of Afrotropical Zoology* 5: 15-20
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 - Snegovaya NY & – 2011 Harvestmen (Arachnida, Opiliones) from Talysh, with description of a new genus and other taxonomical changes. – *Fragmenta Faunistica* 54(1): 47-58
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 - Rozwałka R & – 2012 Distribution of *Leiobunum limbatum* L. Koch, 1861 (Opiliones: Sclerosomatidae) in Poland. – *Fragmenta Faunistica* 55: 177-183
 - Rozwałka R & – 2012 Distribution of harvestmen of the genus *Paranemastoma* Redikorzev, 1936 (Opiliones: Nemastomatidae) in Poland. – *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska, Biologia* 67(2): 7-20 – doi: [10.2478/V10067-012-0015-Y](https://doi.org/10.2478/V10067-012-0015-Y)
- Spiders/Araneae**
- 1971 Pająki (Aranei) Bieszczadów. – *Fragmenta Faunistica* 17: 53-126
 - Prószyński J & – 1971 Pająki–Aranei. – *Katalog Fauny Polski* 33: 1-382
 - 1974 Baldachinspinnen (Aranei: Linyphiidae) aus der Mongolei. – *Annales Zoologici* 32: 19-26
 - 1974 Materiały do znajomości rozmieszczenia pająków (Aranei) w Polsce. – *Fragmenta Faunistica* 19: 395-420
 - 1976 Pająki (Aranei) Pienin. – *Fragmenta Faunistica* 21: 233-330
 - Krzyżanowska E, Dziabaszeński A, Jackowska B & – 1981 Spiders (Arachnoidea, Aranei) of Warsaw and Mazovia. – *Memorabilia zoologica* 34: 87-110
 - 1983 Wykaz krytyczny pająków (Aranei) Polski. – *Fragmenta Faunistica* 27: 149-268
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 - 1996 Spinnen (Araneae) aus der Borkenheide und anderen Lokalitäten der Masurischen Seenplatte. – *Fragmenta Faunistica* 39: 287-311
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