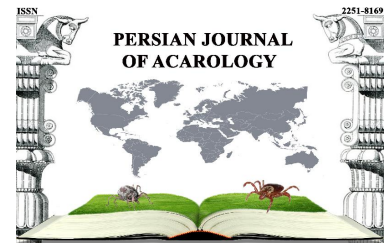




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Obituary



Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Gerd Alberti
(1943–2016)

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When Gerd Alberti died on November 9th 2016, after a short but serious illness, science lost an outstanding zoologist and one of its leading acarologists. His influential work is documented in more than 200 publications in peer reviewed journals and congress proceedings, 20 books and book chapters and several popular science contributions. Major interest was on ultrastructure and microanatomy of invertebrates with a special focus on chelicerates, and mites in particular. The scientific enthusiasm of Gerd Alberti combined with his extraordinary competence to permanently optimize and adapt methods of electron microscopy led to new insights into the microanatomy and functional relations of various organ systems of arthropods. Special emphasis was on sperm fine structure and spermatogenesis of mites and other chelicerates. In his detailed and exceptionally well documented contributions Gerd Alberti advocated a diphyletic origin of mites, a hypothesis which received support in recent molecular analysis. The most comprehensive summary of his contributions to ultrastructure and microanatomy is published in the two volumes of Harrison's 'Microscopic Anatomy of Invertebrates' dedicated to Acari (1999, together with L.B. Coons),

which are standard work and ‘must read’ for everybody interested in mite morphology. In the late nineties, soil ecology became a second scientific topic in Gerd Alberti’s research, and in particular during his active time at Greifswald several investigations e.g. on the influence of heavy metal loads in soils or the alteration of pine to deciduous forests on the microarthropod community were published by him and his students .

Gerd Alberti started his scientific career in 1964 as student of biology at the Christian-Albrechts-University in Kiel, Germany and finished his Ph.D. about the anatomy of Bdellidae in 1972, under the supervision of Prof. Reinhard Schuster. His habilitation, also performed at Kiel, focused on the ultrastructure of sperm in arachnids with special emphasis on mites. In 1980 he continued his research as assistant of Prof. Volker Storch at the Heidelberg University, before he became full professor at the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-University (Greifswald, Germany) in 1996. For most of the time there, he kept the position of director of the zoological institute and museum. After his retirement in 2008 he continued his scientific work with limited resources but unburdened from administrative duties. Gerd Alberti was member of the editorial board of several zoological and ecological journals e.g. *Persian Journal of Acarology*, and often invited speaker at national and international congresses. Of the many awards which dignified his scientific work, the honorary doctorate from the Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań in 2009 was surely a late highlight in his scientific career.

Gerd Alberti was a humble and honest man, who we will be missed and remembered by acarologists. Hopefully his scientific heritage will stimulate further research on acarine ultrastructure even at times when everything seems to focus on molecular studies.

A detailed curriculum vitae and a complete list of publications are accessible at <http://www.gerdalberti.de>

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