



**In memoriam**  
**Heinrich Kutter**  
**(1896–1990)**

From left to right, Heinrich Kutter, Robert Stumper, and Karl Gösswald in 1950 at Flawil, at Kutter's "Ameisenapotheke" (The ants' pharmacy), where cooperative research on the most extraordinary social parasitic insect was carried out

With the death of Heinrich ("Heini") Kutter the "classical" period of myrmecology has come to an end. His first paper on temporary social parasitism appeared in 1913, when he was 17 years old. Kutter continued publishing until 1986. He was the last scientist who was personally acquainted with Forel and Santschi, and exchanged correspondence, reprints, and specimens with Borgmeier, Donisthorpe, Emery, Kempf, Kuznezov, Mann, Menozzi, Stitz, Wasmann, W.M. Wheeler and many other scientists famous and active in the first half of this century, together with the great majority of those still alive and active today.

His life has been largely devoted to the study of ants, as demonstrated by his publications record of over 100 titles, two of which are books. The first of his books ("Gehe hin zur Ameise!") appeared when Kutter was only 24 years. His second book, the monograph of the ants of Switzerland, is now in its second edition, a rare event for a book addressed to such a narrow audience. A complete list of his publications is given by Cherix (1988).

Nonetheless Kutter was an amateur: after obtaining a doctoral degree in pharmacy in Zurich, he worked as a pharmacist for most of his life.

Looking at his scientific achievements in retrospect, one notices that much of science has changed since the years of Kutter's greatest activity. However, this hardly diminishes the impact of his work. His meticulous precision in describing and verifying every detail of the phenomena he was investigating can still be taken as an example for several professionals.

Kutter took active part, as General Secretary, in the organization of the Third International Congress of Entomology which assembled 240 scientists in Zurich in 1925. He received a few honours, two degrees *honoris causa* from the universities of Lausanne and Bern and a honour medal from the Plenum of the 10th Symposium on Faunal Entomological Studies in Central Europe. In 1987 he was elected honorary member of the French section of the I. U. S. S. I. Kutter was naturally proud but deeply skeptic of them: he was only partly joking when suggesting that somebody had made a mistake in proposing his name.

The most prestigious of his achievements is, of course, the discovery in 1949 of the most specialized social parasite ever encountered. *Teleutomyrmex schneideri* from Zermatt, is an ant which survives only as a true ectoparasite on its host species. Kutter was immediately aware of the importance of his discovery but realized that his professional demands as a pharmacist would preclude the commitment necessary to adequately elucidate the taxonomic position, behaviour, and internal anatomy of this extraordinary insect. Therefore he associated with three other scientists, Rudolf Brun, Karl Gösswald, and Robert Stumper. Since 1949 this ant has been encountered a few more times, but all that we know on its biology is still contained in the tetralogy of papers by Kutter (1950), Stumper (1951), Brun (1952), and Gösswald (1953). This species deserves mention in every textbook of entomology. If its existence is still poorly known, this results from Kutter's refraining to publish it in a prestigious journal. He did this in order to have the four papers, his one and the three by his friends, together in the same journal and in the shape he wished. If Kutter ever considered the possibility of being world famous, he carefully avoided every form of self-advertisement and thought his contribution to science had to speak alone.

We think we echo the feelings of all the scientists who had contacts with Kutter by mentioning, last, another of his qualities: his entire availability to anyone asking for his help or his advice. A great proportion of the thousands of hours he spent observing the ants was devoted to helping or to improving the work of somebody else instead of concentrating on his own multiple research interests. But this was by no means exceptional for Kutter's generosity.

We are grateful, Heini, for the example you gave all of us and we are not prepared to forget it.

## References

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