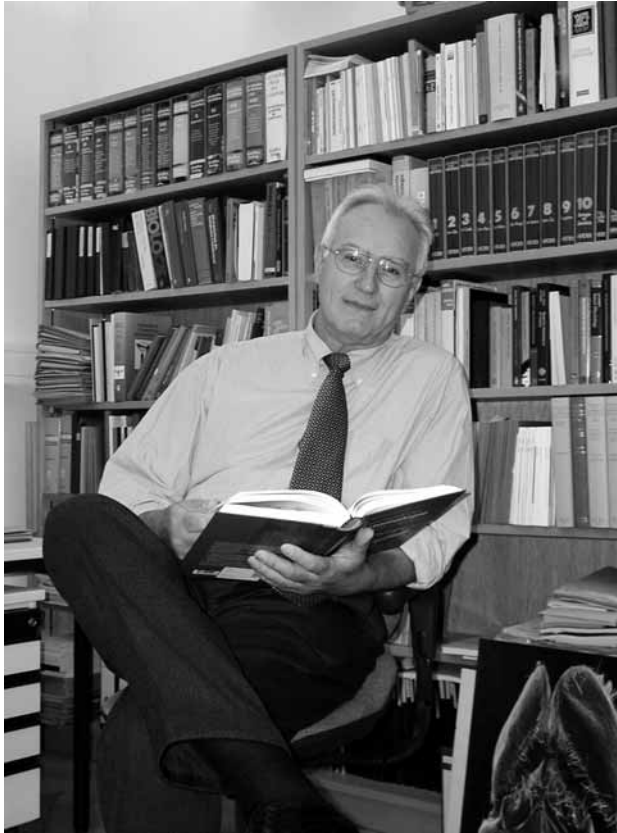


Obituary Clas M. Naumann



Prof Dr Clas Michael Naumann zu Königsbrück died on 15 February, 2004, at the age of 64, after a long and painful illness. He was director of the Zoological Research Institute and Museum Alexander Koenig in Bonn, and contributed much to the further development of zoological research in the Middle East; he served as advisory board member for our journal, and he was guest editor of the special issue on Iran published in 2002.

Clas Naumann studied biology, chemistry and palaeontology at the University of Tübingen, and moved in 1967 to Bonn University where he began his doctoral thesis on the evolution of butterflies under the supervision of the celebrated professor of zoology and ornithology, Günther Niethammer. In 1969, he became Scientific Research Assistant at Bonn University, and in 1970–1972 he was a visiting lecturer at the University of Kabul in Afghanistan, and this period had a deep and sustained influence on his life; he remained closely connected to this university and to Afghanistan for the rest of his life. Between 1973 and 1989, he worked

at the universities of Munich, Bielefeld and Bonn, and became professor. In 1989, he was appointed director of the renowned Zoologisches Forschungsinstitut und Museum Alexander Koenig in Bonn, and became at the same time Chair of Zoology at Bonn University.

Under his direction the Bonn museum underwent a remarkable development. He not only made the museum a first-class attraction for the public, but he also enhanced the international competitiveness of the museum as an institute for modern biodiversity research. Museum Koenig today pursues modern, future-oriented research, and at the same time occupies an important place in international efforts towards the conservation of the diversity of species within the framework of multi-lateral cooperative programmes. The changes in the museum initiated by Clas Naumann included a comprehensive programme of re-building during which the museum remained closed to the public for over three and a half years, reopening again in 2003. A new building is still under construction: it will house the entomological collections and laboratories, the central library and a lecture hall, and will be named the "Clas M. Naumann Building".

Clas Naumann's link with Afghanistan had a broad basis: it was also his wife's native country. After his lectureship in the early 1970s, he returned to Afghanistan in spring 2002 as a member of a German delegation whose task was to revive Afghan-German scientific cooperation after the end of the Taliban Regime, and his influence was considerable in shaping the course of future cooperation. Shortly after the mission, he himself conducted a summer course for Afghani biologists at Bonn, and he was also very closely involved in launching the campaign "A chair for Kabul", and in making it a success: funds collected through this campaign are dedicated to supporting the rebuilding of the devastated University of Kabul.

Even in recent years Clas Naumann was still carrying out fieldwork in Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Iran, and other Central Asian and Middle East countries; this was usually done in close cooperation with colleagues from these countries. At the same time, he also made it possible for many Middle East researchers to work in his museum and laboratories at Bonn. He has contributed greatly to the development of scientific research in the Middle East.

To all who knew or met Clas Naumann, it was his enormous, infectious enthusiasm and passionate interest in living organisms that will remain as an abiding memory. He will be greatly missed by friends and colleagues around the world, but most of all by his own family. Clas has left us richly endowed with his writings. His friends miss him greatly, and his family must miss him even more.

Max Kasparek, Heidelberg
Bahram Kiabi, Tehran