HAGGAI PODOLER
(1939–1988)

IN MEMORIAM

Haggai Podoler, Associate Professor of Agricultural Entomology at the Faculty of Agriculture of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, at Rehovot, passed away on October 31, 1988, at the age of 49, after a courageous struggle with a fatal illness.

Haggai Podoler was born in Haifa, Israel on May 20, 1939. He was brought up and graduated from high school in his hometown, in suburban Haifa. In those days he was a member of a youth movement that intended to join a kibbutz on the northern border of Israel, so when he joined the Israeli Defense Forces in 1957 he served in the 'Nahal' unit, which combines farming with active combat duty. He was also an avid naturalist and an enthusiastic hiker, who took numerous trips throughout the country. These early experiences had influenced his decision to study agriculture at the Hebrew University, which he began in 1960.

At the Faculty of Agriculture, Haggai was one of the best students in his class. He received his B.Sc. in 1963 and his M.Sc. (with distinction) in 1965, specializing in plant protection and field crops. Ever since the early stages of his academic studies he showed a keen interest in entomology.

Haggai was deeply involved in a variety of entomological aspects, and his scientific background was unusually broad. He began his academic career studying, for his Master's thesis, the life history of a parasitic wasp, *Metaphycus flavus*. For his doctoral studies he turned to insect physiology and biochemistry and investigated the carbohydrate metabolism of the adzuki bean beetle, *Callosobruchus chinensis*. One of his achievements at that period was the purification and characterization of the α–amylase of that beetle. Upon receipt of his Ph.D. degree in 1971, he was awarded a post-doctoral scholarship to study insect ecology with Dr. George Varley at one of the leading laboratories, in Oxford. In 1973 he returned to the Faculty of Agriculture, Rehovot, and was appointed Lecturer in Entomology; he was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 1979 and to Associate Professor in 1984.

Haggai used his ecological expertise to great advantage in addressing crucial quantitative aspects in the numerous biological studies that he carried out both in Israel and during his visits abroad. These included investigations of host-parasite interactions (*e.g.* the Indian meal moth, *Plodia interpunctella*, and its parasite *Nemeritis canescens*; the Mediterranean fruit fly, *Ceratitis capitata*, and its parasites *Muscidifurax raptor* and *Dirhinus giffardii*; or the Florida red scale, *Chrysomphalus aonidum*, and its parasites *Aphytis holoxanthus* and *Pteroptrix smithi*), studies of interspecific competition among primary parasites or hyperparasites, and life-table studies of pest and natural enemy populations. Among his main areas of interest in insect population dynamics were the searching strategies employed by parasites and predators, density-dependent processes taking place in pest-natural enemy systems, and effects of host size on the sex ratio of parasites.

Haggai was respected by colleagues in Israel and abroad as an outstanding researcher. His greatest research efforts were aimed at major pests of citrus such as the Mediterranean black scale, *Saissetia oleae*, the Florida wax scale, *Ceroplastes floridensis*, and the Florida red scale, *Chrysomphalus aonidum*. However, he also tackled important pests of other crops, including some that had been investigated in Israel for decades, such as the codling moth, *Cydia pomonella*, and the potato tuber moth, *Phthorimaea operculella*. Thus, as if completing a full circle, during the last five years or so his studies of apple pests brought him back to the northern part of Israel, where his interest in agriculture had been first aroused in 1957.

Other studies included the role of nitidulid beetles in the pollination of annona, effects of insect growth regulators on various pests, effects of pesticides on natural enemies, the pests of jojoba in Israel, analysis of the gut contents of coccinellid predators, etc.

Above all, he was a gifted teacher and lecturer. He served as supervisor for numerous M.Sc. and Ph.D. students, many of whom are found today in research institutions, in various governmental agencies including the extension service, and as field practitioners. He always directed his students to deal with pests of economic importance, but at the same time insisted on a high scientific level and encouraged imagination, creativity and innovative analytical approaches. His great interest in academic teaching was especially well expressed during his three-year tenure as Chairman of the Plant Protection Teaching Program at the Faculty of Agriculture.

In his interactions with classmates and teachers, and later with his colleagues and students, Haggai always showed consideration and fairness, but never compromised his firm principles. For these rare qualities he was admired by almost everyone who was fortunate to make his acquaintance.

Haggai Podoler was a member of the Editorial Board of PHYTOPARASITICA, the Israel Journal of Plant Protection Sciences, since 1986. His keen mind and thorough approach to the work contributed greatly to the success of the journal.

Haggai is survived by his wife Ruth, who shared his life since 1966 and bravely supported him in his last difficult months, and by his children Guy, Hilla and Itai.

Haggai Podoler was a dear friend to many of us, in Israel and abroad. His untimely death has left the entomological community of Israel, the Faculty of Agriculture and his many associates and students in a painful state of loss and grief.

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