

CHRONICLE AND INFORMATION

**ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF ILKHAM KHAYAM OGLY ALEKPEROV,  
D. SC., PROFESSOR,  
CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE AZERBAIJAN NAS**

On 20 November, 2023, a famous protistologist Ilkham Khayam ogly Alekperov, the head of the laboratory of protozoology at the Institute of Zoology of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, celebrated his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Ilkham Khayam ogly Alekperov was born in Baku into a family of biologists. His father, PhD Khayam Mukhtar ogly Alekperov, was a famous mammalogist and author of many scientific articles and monographs. He worked at the Institute of Zoology of the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences (hereinafter AAS). His mother, PhD Khalida Huseyn qizi Kulieva, worked at the Institute of Botany of AAS for many years. The specialty of Ilkham Alekperov's parents determined his choice, and after graduating from high school, he entered the biological faculty of the Azerbaijan State University (graduated in 1971).



While still a student, I. Kh. Alekperov was very interested in the study of freshwater ciliates and mastered modern cytological methods of silver impregnation of ciliate infraciliature and staining of their nuclear apparatus and other cellular structures. Even then, Ilkham Khayam ogly Alekperov published his first scientific articles and successfully made presentations at authoritative scientific meetings, which was rare in those days.

Right after graduating from the university, he entered the PhD graduate school at the Institute of Zoology of AAS. He was carrying out his PhD thesis in the laboratory of hydrobiology.

In 1977, I. Kh. Alekperov successfully defended his PhD thesis “Planktonic ciliates of the Mingachevir, Varvara, and Jeyranbatan reservoirs.” In plankton of these three reservoirs, he found 120 ciliate taxa, *inter alia* 1 new genus and 20 new species.

In 1975, Ilkham Khayam ogly Alekperov, along with several other junior researchers, was transferred by order of the Presidium of AAS to the laboratory of environmental physiology at the Institute of Physiology of AAS. He worked there until 1986. All these years, along with studying the use of certain ciliate species as test organisms and the development of methods for determining toxicity of heavy metals, oil products, insecticides, and other toxicants based on cellular physiological parameters (division rate, as well as disturbances in phagocytosis and osmoregulation), I. Kh. Alekperov continued analyzing species diversity and ecology of free-living ciliates in fresh waters of Azerbaijan.

His publications of that period, especially those containing descriptions of numerous new ciliate taxa, were actively cited by leading ciliatologists. Ilkham Khayam ogly Alekperov became a recognized authority in his field.

In 1986, he was transferred to the Institute of Zoology of AAS, to the laboratory of protozoology, as a senior researcher. In 1989, he headed this laboratory.

In 1987, I. Kh. Alekperov successfully defended his D. Sc. dissertation “Freshwater ciliates of artificial reservoirs in Azerbaijan” at the Leningrad State University. This defense was a real event, especially since the official opponents were recognized leaders in Soviet and world protozoology: corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union, Professor Yu. I. Polyansky, Professor L. N. Seravin, and Professor Ya. I. Starobogatov.

In addition to providing a detailed morphological description of 100 rare ciliate taxa, including 2 new genera and 40 new species, the dissertation was the first to provide data on the microzonal distribution of ciliates, as well as their daily migrations both in plankton and benthos. New patterns were established for colonization of sterile substrates by ciliates, sanitary characteristics were given for all the studied reservoirs, and the sources of their pollution were indicated. Moreover, an original method of obtaining live ciliate food for feeding larvae of commercially important fish was proposed, which was introduced at fish hatcheries in the Leningrad region.

In the late 1990s, Ilkham Khayam ogly Alekperov headed several biomonitoring projects aimed at assessing the effect on biodiversity of geological exploration in offshore oil field areas. In 2001–2007, he was a representative of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences in the scientific research and biomonitoring group of British Petroleum Azerbaijan. In 2002–2010, I. Kh. Alekperov was a member and then chairman of the expert council of the department of biology and agriculture of the Higher Attestation Commission of Azerbaijan.

In 2007, he was elected a corresponding member of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences. In 2009, by decision of the Higher Attestation Commission of Azerbaijan, he was awarded the academic rank of Professor. In 2009, Ilkham Khayam ogly Alekperov was appointed deputy director of the Institute of Zoology of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences. He was elected director of this institute in 2011 and headed it until 2016.

Ilkham Khayam ogly Alekperov is the author and co-author of 4 monographs and more than 190 scientific articles. He developed several original methods for studying protozoans and biotesting techniques for assessing oil pollution. He described 5 families, about 20 genera, and about 200 new species



At the V European Congress of Protistology (Saint Petersburg, 2007). Professor Wilhelm Foissner (Salzburg, Austria) is pictured in the center



Sampling on Lake Baikal (2007). Professor Norbert Wilbert (University of Bonn) is pictured on the right

of ciliates and testate amoebae. Under his leadership, ten PhD theses and two D. Sc. dissertations were prepared and successfully defended. He participated in several major international projects and in numerous international scientific conferences. I. Kh. Alekperov serves on editorial boards of seven scientific journals, with one of them being “Biodiversity and Sustainable Development” published by IBSS. He is a reviewer for several top-rated international journals.

We congratulate dear Ilkham Khayam ogly Alekperov on his anniversary and wish him further fruitful work and success!

*I. Dovgal, N. Gavrilova, and A. Abibulaeva,  
IBSS*

**К ЮБИЛЕЮ ДОКТОРА БИОЛОГИЧЕСКИХ НАУК, ПРОФЕССОРА,  
ЧЛЕНА-КОРРЕСПОНДЕНТА НАН АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНА  
ИЛЬХАМА ХАЙЯМ ОГЛЫ АЛЕКПЕРОВА**

20 ноября 2023 г. свой 75-летний юбилей отметил известный протистолог Ильхам Хайям оглы Алекперов — д. б. н., проф., член-корреспондент Национальной академии наук Азербайджана. И. Х. Алекперов, заведующий лабораторией протозоологии Института зоологии НАН Азербайджана, является автором и соавтором 4 монографий и более чем 190 научных статей, а также членом редколлегии 7 научных журналов.