

Preface



On July 13, 2003 we celebrate ninety years of the outstanding Russian theriologist Professor Igor Mikhailovich Gromov. His contribution to study of systematics and phylogeny of the largest and most taxonomically complicated mammal order, the Rodentia, is difficult to overestimate. In the investigations of I. M. Gromov and his progeny the thorough comprehensive study of the phylogenetic relationships of extinct and extant rodent taxa harmonize with the study of biostratigraphy of continental deposits. In our country these investigations gave rise to a new discipline — the micropaleotheriology. Under supervision of I. M. Gromov a seminar devoted to the issues of evolution and paleontology of small mammals was functioning for many years. The seminar was assembled usually biennially and attracted both already noted scientists and young specialists from all parts of the former Soviet Union. Participants of these meetings discussed topical issues of rodent systematics, new methods of investigation, moot points of stratigraphy and taphonomy. I. M. Gromov always carefully treated any new methods in systematics and insisted on as maximal as possible equal treatment of fossil and recent materi-

als. Everyone, who works in the rodent paleontology and systematics knows well and quotes the works of I. M. Gromov. His influence on forming of scientific ideology of people, who worked alongside with him, or were his students, was tremendous. His books in the series “Fauna of the USSR” and “Guidebooks on the Fauna of the USSR” become handbooks for several generations of our theriologists. Scholars of I. M. Gromov are successfully working and continue his traditions in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Kiev, Ufa, Almaty, Minsk, Ekaterinburg, Ulan-Ude and other scientific centers. Some Gromov’s students are now themselves founders of their own scientific schools (A. K. Agadjanian in Moscow, A. G. Maleeva in Ekaterinburg, M. A. Erbaeva in Ulan-Ude). This issue of the “Russian Journal of Theriology” contains papers written by the students of I. M. Gromov, and students of these students. It is our homage to I. M. Gromov for his enormous contribution and influence in the field of rodent systematics and phylogeny in our country.

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