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Obituary

RNDr IVAN HRŠEL, CSc. (1926—1965)

RNDr. Ivan Hršel, CSc., one of the few Czechoslovak cytologists of the post-war generation, died on March 23, 1965, victim of an inborn heart disease.

Dr. Hršel was born on May 11, 1926, at Horní Počernice near Praha. During his chool years which he spent at Kolín he had two hobbies, science and music. Why he did not take up music as a profession and preferred science in the end I do not know — perhaps it was one of the unpredictable moments that made Ivan the man we knew. At the Faculty of Science of the Charles University in Praha he studied under Academician Jírovec and Professor Komárek. His dissertation deals withanimal cytology, specifically with the effect of X-irradiation on spermatogenesis in the fish *Lebistes reticulatus*. He graduated in December 1950. In January 1951, he entered the Department of Plant Physiology of the then Central Biological Institute and in July 1951, as one of the first, began with his postgraduate research course. He defended his thesis on the cytochemical investigation of proteins in rice germs, his opponents being Academicians Němec and Prát. Having been awarded the degree of Candidate of Biological Sciences he headed a cytological team at the Department of Plant Physiology and Genetics (Sosnová, Pánková-Klášterská, Juráková-Štichová, Uhlík, Beneš), the main research topic being the investigation of cytoplasmic components of the plant cell. In addition to methods of classical cytology, cytochemical methods were employed and actually emphasized. Within this workteam a well-considered division of labour was carried out in 1957—1959. Classical cytology remained the common denominator and basis for further exploits. Dr. Hršel then devoted his time to electron microscopy. In this technique he perfected his skill during a study at Dr. Lacy at the St. Bartholomew's Medical College in London. But the first, most difficult steps were his own, even before leaving for England. A training in electron microscopy usually takes several months. Dr. Hršel could spend only three weeks in England and it is difficult to appreciate the great effortsh e had to make in order to launch the acquired techniques at his own laboratory. He studied again cytoplasmic components, especially the elements of the Golgi complex and cytoplasmic inclusions, now at the level of electron microscopy, applying consistently a dynamic and functional point of view. In cooperation with Dr. Brčák of the Department of Plant Pathology he studied virus-infected plant cells. Since no electron microscope was then available at the Institute of Experimental Botany to study sections, Dr. Hršel had to use suitable microscopes at other institutes. The kind cooperation of Dr. Mohelská from the Research Institute of Tuberculosis and Ing. Drahoš from the Institute of Apparatus Technology, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, should be remembered here. Dr. Hršel's technical assistant Mrs. B. Wolfová was his real right hand. Since electron microscopy cannot be conducted permanently without an electron microscope, Dr. Hršel left in

1963 to enter the Institute of Experimental Biology and Genetics where he worked as head of the electron-microscope laboratory. He died at a time when he had just finished his work on plant objects and was beginning to take up the study of animal tumour cells. In his time, he was a worthy follower of the work in experimental cytology carried out by Academician Němec who remained his fatherly friend up to the last days of his life. His work was recognized by membership of the American Histochemical Society and of the German Histochemical Society. In 1956 he received an award of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences for cytological studies on germinating rice and wheat. He was member of the Czechoslovak Society for Electron Microscopy, Czechoslovak Cyto -and Histochemical Society, the Czechoslovak Biochemical Society and of the editorial board of Biologia Plantarum. Up to March 1965 he had published a total of 21 papers. He worked up to the last moment. He left several finished manuscripts which will be published. They bring an informed view on the ultrastructure of the plant cell.

All who knew him and those of us who worked with him will remember Ivan Hršel as a colleague and friend for whom his work was one of the few pleasures that life accorded him.

Dr.K.Beneš

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(Compiled by Dr. K. Beneš)

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