

Professor Lars-König KÖNIGSSON



Tallinn is the closest capital to the capital of Sweden, but up to the beginning of the seventies practically no contacts existed between Estonian and Swedish Quaternary geologists. Prof. Königsson was the first to visit Estonia in June 1971 and give a lecture at the Institute of Geology of the Estonian Academy of Sciences. On the Pärnu beach he wrote into our guestbook: "Across the sea there are two islands where I belong. The water connects us, has always done and will do in the future." And this came true. Since then Prof. Königsson has visited Estonia for many times and close co-operation between the Quaternary Department of Uppsala University and the Institute of Geology was initiated by him. The following twinning projects seem most

important: 1. The history of vegetation, climate, human impact, and landscapes in Estonia. 2. Comparative study of shells in littoral deposits of Öland-Gotland and Hiiu-maa-Saaremaa by stable isotopes, AMS dating, and photoluminescence. 3. Holocene palaeoecology and palaeoclimatology of the West-Estonian archipelago and of Öland and Gotland.

With many thanks we dedicate this issue to our good friend and teacher, Prof. Lars-König Königsson, Head of the Department of the Quaternary Geology of Uppsala University, who will retire in the spring of this year.

Lars-König Königsson was born in Borgholm, Kalmar County, on 24 February 1933. In 1956 he graduated from Kalmar High School and continued as student at Uppsala University. He attended lectures in historical geology and palaeontology, Quaternary geology, zoology, botany, geography, and anthropology, which shows the wide range of interests of the future professor. In 1963 Königsson got a scholarship to develop his knowledge at the National Museum in Copenhagen under supervision of Prof. J. Troels-Smidt. A year later Königsson defended a licentiate thesis and in 1968 the doctoral thesis "The Holocene History of the Great Alvar of Öland" at Uppsala University. Already the topic of the doctoral thesis indicates that his main interest lay in palaeoecology of the alvar areas, development of islands, and the Baltic Sea history.

A good command of languages (Swedish, German, English, Danish, and French) and his friendly nature helped Prof. Königsson keep contacts with colleagues all over the world. He has been to almost all continents, except Antarctica, visiting very exotic places like

Serengeti, Olduvai in Tanzania, floodplains in Senegal, Mississippi Bird Foot Delta and coastal formation in Texas, Fairbanks, Denali National Park, and Glacier Bay in the USA, Hudson Bay and Richmond Island in Canada, Santos Bahia in Brazil, Great Barrier Reef in Australia, coastal formations in New Zealand, Greenland, Iceland, Ireland, steppes and deserts of Usbekistan and Tajikistan, Siberia, etc. He was invited to read lectures at numerous universities in Germany, Russia, Armenia, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, and the USA. As a scientist he participated in field work in Estonia, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Germany, Mozambique, Greenland, Armenia, Hungary, and 11 localities of Russia, collecting comprehensive material. Together with archaeologists he worked in Greenland to study the Thule-culture, in Russia to trace the Viking Age trade routes and early human impact near old towns of Smolensk and Novgorod.

Prof. Königsson has been awarded 11 prizes and medals for his versatility and knowledge, and he was elected an honorary member of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences and Finnish Academy of Sciences.

Prof. Königsson is the author of seven books and booklets, the author or co-author of more than 350 papers in the field of Quaternary geology, archaeology, cultural history, and environmental ecology. He has great experience as editor of journals (*Geologiska Föreningens i Stockholm Förhandlingar*, GFF 1969–1978, *Grana*

1976–1977, *STRIAE*) and collections (*Current Argument on Early Man*, Pergamon Press, London, 1980; *Climate, History, Periodicity, and Predictability*, Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, New York, 1987). Prof. Königsson has acted as opponent of tens of doctoral theses, referee of papers and reports.

Especially we should stress the international collaboration and leading role of Prof. Königsson in high rank international organizations: Secretary of the INQUA NW European Shorelines (1968–1977), Vice-President of the INQUA Holocene Euro-siberian Stratigraphy Commission (1969–1977), President of the INQUA Holocene Commission (1977–1982), member of the UNESCO Working Group "Geology and Land Use Planning". At the same time he actively participated in international congresses and meetings: the Geological Congresses in Copenhagen and Moscow, INQUA Congresses in the USA, France, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Russia, and Canada.

However, during his long career Prof. Königsson devoted much effort to the education of scientists of the younger generation, among them two Estonians – Siim Veski and Anneli Poska. He guided them to the secrets of modern pollen analyses, the interpretation of results in terms of vegetational history, palaeoecology, and human impact. We are greatly indebted to him for all he has done. Colleagues and friends in Estonia wish Prof. Königsson healthy and happy retirement.

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