Contributor to Systematic Microbiology

FRITZ KAUFFMANN

1899-1978

The passing of one of the world's eminent microbiologists should not go unnoticed in the western hemisphere. Fritz Kauffmann died of heart disease in Copenhagen on 27 September 1978, just short of his 80th birthday, which would have been 15 January 1979.

Professor Kauffmann is best known, perhaps, for his work on the serological classification of *Salmonella*. Antigenic analysis of salmonellae was his primary interest during his entire adult life. Although the development of the antigenic schema for salmonellae had its roots in the early work of Schuetze, Andrewes, and Bruce White, it was Kauffmann who reorganized, further systematized, and greatly extended the work and the schema. This made possible the rapid, accurate serological characterization that is essential to epidemiological, genetic, and immunochemical studies on salmonellae. Kauffmann also made important contributions to the knowledge of other *Enterobacteriaceae*: biochemical characterization of *Salmonella*, *Escherichia*, and other genera within the family; and serological delineation of strains of *Escherichia coli* and *klebsiellae*, for example. Moreover, he made valuable contributions in his analysis of the somatic antigens of *Vibrio cholerae* and in serotyping of pneumococci. Professor Kauffmann was author of about 300 publications, including several books and monographs.

Professor Kauffmann was born in 1899 in that part of Germany then known as western Prussia.

He described his early life in this way: "Ich hatte eine glückliche und freie Jugend." Following World War I he studied medicine and then went to the Robert Koch Institute in Berlin where he began his work with salmonellae. He was a member of the original Committee of *Salmonella*, an international committee which later became the International Subcommittee on *Enterobacteriaceae*. Kauffmann published the first antigenic schema for salmonellae in 1930. This schema was adopted by the Committee on *Salmonella* and published in 1934, at which time the schema listed 44 serotypes and bioserotypes.

Professor Kauffmann emigrated to Switzerland in the early 1930s when the Nazis came into power. He had offers of employment in the United States and at the State Serum Institute in Copenhagen, among others. He elected to accept the invitation of T. Madsen, the Director of the State Serum Institute. (However, he did spend considerable time in the United States at the end of World War II.) After the Nazis occupied Denmark, Kauffmann had to flee to Sweden in a small boat at night. As those who knew him would expect, his pockets were full of cultures and antisera! Thus Kauffmann himself escaped the Holocaust. However, he was anguished by it, especially since close relatives did not escape. He is survived by Madame H. Kauffmann. Friends and colleagues will miss him.

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