

## Michel Luc (1927-2010)

Michel Luc died on January 18, 2010 from the sudden progression of an old cancer. His wife, Mariette, had died just a few days before and they were buried together in Neuilly-sur-Seine, near Paris. Michel was one of the last of the founding fathers of modern nematology who, after the war, made this field what it has become today.

Michel Luc was born on February 7, 1927 in Tunis (Tunisia). From 1945, he studied biology in Paris at the Sorbonne, where he attended classes delivered by world-renowned biologists such as Georges Mangenot in botany and Pierre-Paul Grassé in zoology. After earning a *Licence de sciences naturelles* in 1948, he was hired as a trainee ('élève') at ORSTOM (*Office de la Recherche Scientifique et Technique Outre-Mer*, now called IRD – *Institut de Recherche pour le Développement*) in 1950.

He began his career as a phytopathologist, specialising in parasitic fungi of tropical plants. He was soon posted to the IDERT (*Institut d'Enseignement et de Recherches Tropicales*) Centre of Adiopodoumé, near Abidjan (Ivory Coast), in the phytopathology laboratory directed by Prof. Jean Chevaugnon. He worked there for several years, publishing a dozen articles on tropical parasitic fungi between 1951 and 1954. Interestingly, his very first publication, a 1950 report on ill-defined diseases of the cacao tree, was a 12 page list of all kinds of pests that did not include a single nematode!

In 1954, he was sent to be trained as a nematologist with Prof. Nigon in Lyon, then with Prof. De Coninck in Ghent, Belgium, and with Dr Seinhorst and Prof. Oostenbrink in The Netherlands.

In 1955, he returned to IDERT in the Ivory Coast where he set up the first French tropical nematology laboratory. He served as Director *pro temp* of the whole IDERT Centre in 1960, then as full time Director of this Centre from 1966 to 1969. After a short stay from September 1969 to June 1970 at the INRA (*Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique*) nematology laboratory of Maurice Ritter in Antibes, he was sent to Dakar, Senegal, where he created a second nematology laboratory at Bel-Air. He left Africa in 1975 and continued working in Paris until his retirement in 1992.

He was one of a handful of biologists who developed the then little known field of plant nematology after WWII, and gave this group of devastating parasites the recognition they deserve. As a scientist, he gained a worldwide reputation with his work on the taxonomy of plant nematodes, particularly those in the genus



Fig. 1. Michel Luc (1927-2010).

*Xiphinema* in which he described 40 new species. He also worked extensively on the criconematids (23 n. spp.), pratylenchids (five n. spp.) and heteroderids (four n. spp.) and also described several species in other groups, a total of 86 new species. In addition, he described three new genera: *Hirschmanniella* Luc & Goodey, 1964, which includes some of the most destructive pests of rice; *Hylonema* Luc, Taylor & Cadet, 1978; and *Senegalonema* Germani, Luc & Baldwin, 1983. In spite of this large number of new taxa, he considered himself to be a 'lumper' and spent considerable time and energy fighting against the 'taxonomic inflation' created by excessive splitting of taxa. In 1987, he led a team (including Armand Maggenti, Renaud Fortuner, Dewey Raski and Etienne Geraert) for a complete reorganisation of the taxonomy of the order Tylenchida, a work that is still accepted as valid today.

Michel was a member of the editorial boards of *Nematologia Mediterranea* from 1973 until 1995 and *Nematologica* from 1973. In 1978, he launched *Revue de Nématologie*, a journal that soon became a very successful and widely read publication in the field. He saw this journal through its transformation in 1992 into

*Fundamental and Applied Nematology*. He served as editor for both journals. Michel continued as editor until 1994 when he handed over to Pierre Baujard. *Fundamental and Applied Nematology*, or FAN, as it was known, rapidly became the foremost nematology journal. When the title was purchased in 1999 by E.J. Brill, it was amalgamated with *Nematologica* to form the current journal *Nematology*, with Michel listed as Honorary Editor. Michel continued his involvement as an ardent member of the editorial board of the new title and was critically reviewing papers and checking proofs up to a few weeks before his death.

As Head of the Nematology laboratory within the Biology Department of ORSTOM, from its creation until his retirement in 1992, Michel supervised the scientific beginnings of many French tropical nematologists. He would not hesitate extensively to edit the articles written by budding scientists and help them change an unreadable mess into a clear and concise scientific paper that would be accepted for publication on sight. He considered this to be part of his job and he always refused to add his name to work whose success was due for the most part to his ministrations.

After the death of S.A. (Skip) Sher in 1975, Michel was invited, under a UCR-funded 6-month fellowship, to the University of California, Riverside, to teach the annual advanced nematology classes. He returned several times to UCR on 'study leave' and developed collaborations with Seymour Van Gundy, Diana Freckman-Wall and Jim Baldwin. Part of Michel's legacy was many years of collaboration between UCR and scientists from Senegal and the Côte d'Ivoire, with Yves Demeure, Jean-Claude Prot and Gaetano Germani (work on *Scutellonema*) making extended working visits to UCR. During Michel's initial visit, his wife Mariette put onto a database all the holdings of the UCR nematology library, including a large collection of reprints, books and journals. Michel was also a visiting professor for 4 months at the University of California, Davis, in 1977.

After leaving Africa in 1975, he was posted to Paris where Prof. A.G. Chabaud welcomed him to his *Laboratoire des Vers*, which specialised in parasitic nematodes, helminths and protozoa, at the *Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle*. Michel worked there until his retirement in 1992, handling the editing of *Revue de Nématologie*, continuing his taxonomic work, and supervising the ORSTOM Nematology laboratories. In addition, he was invited by Prof. Aeschlimann to the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, where he gave nematology classes al-

most every year. The quality of his teaching impressed Prof. Aeschlimann, and in 1987, he asked the *Faculté des Sciences* of his university to grant Michel Luc the title of *Docteur honoris causa*, a request that was unanimously accepted. Michel also spent 6 months in Ghent (Belgium) where he worked with Prof. Coomans.

Michel Luc published widely in books, monographs and journals. After an early contribution to the knowledge of tropical fungi in 1951-1954, he published over 150 nematological articles, mostly in *Revue de Nématologie* (later *Fundamental and Applied Nematology*, then *Nematology*) with 59 papers, in *Nematologica* with 28 papers, and in many other journals such as *Proceedings of the Helminthological Society of Washington*, *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Sciences, Agronomie Tropicale*, *Bulletin du Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle*, *Systematic Parasitology*, *Nematologia Mediterranea*, etc. He contributed to various books and was one of the scientific editors of the highly successful *Plant-parasitic nematodes in subtropical and tropical agriculture*, published by CAB International, Wallingford, in 1990 and reprinted as a revised and updated second edition in 2005.

In addition to the title of Honorary Doctor from the University of Neuchâtel (Switzerland) awarded in 1987, Michel received a number of honours and awards, including nominations as a Fellow of both the Society of Nematologists (SON) in 1986 and the European Society of Nematologists (ESN) in 1992 and as a member (*Correspondant national honoraire*) of the *Académie d'agriculture de France* in 1989. The French government made him a *Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite* and an *Officier de l'Ordre du Mérite Agricole* and he received the *Médaille du mérite ivoirien* from the hands of President Houphouët-Boigny himself in 1969. He was also made an honorary citizen of the town of Daytona Beach (Florida) in 1966.

Michel's human qualities were every bit as developed as his scientific abilities. He put his exceptional abilities as organiser and administration-handler to the service of the members of his team. As head of laboratory, he always followed closely the works of the other team members and ensured their scientific progress in a strict but benevolent manner.

Michel was never reticent in participating in the celebrations of 'Saint Théodore' days, held at the ORSTOM nematology laboratories and named after this saint, whose full name was 'Théodore Lascaris' and who the nematologists at Adiopodoumé made their patron saint. He loved elaborate practical jokes. For example, he noticed,

while revising the genus *Xiphinema*, that among the 25 species proposed in the genus that were later shown to be junior synonyms, a significantly greater number had been originally described during an even year. He immediately published a tongue-in-cheek note (*Nematology Newsletter* 35(3), 10) on “Influence of parity of the year of publication on the validity of the species in the genus *Xiphinema*”, with a detailed statistical analysis of this curious observation.

All those with whom he was able to establish true friendships already miss his strong personality and his imposing stature.

He will be sorely missed by his daughters – Françoise Luc-Johns and Béatrice Weinmann – his three granddaughters – Vanessa, Jennifer and Leslie Johns – and his two great grand-children – Marie and Amaury Menard-Durand, the children of Vanessa.

Renaud FORTUNER, Gaetano GERMANI,  
Georges DE GUIRAN, Georges MERNY  
and Georges REVERSAT

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## Michel Luc Chronological list of publications

### PLANT-PARASITIC FUNGI

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### MARINE NEMATODES

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## Michel Luc

### List of proposed new genera and species

## NEW GENERA

*Hirschmanniella* Luc & Goodey, 1964  
*Hylonema* Luc, Taylor & Cadet, 1978  
*Senegalonema* Germani, Luc & Baldwin, 1984

## NEW SPECIES

*Aphasmatylenchus variabilis* Germani & Luc, 1984  
*Criconema limitaneum* Luc, 1959  
*Criconemoides colbrani* Luc, 1970  
*Criconemoides ferniae* Luc, 1959  
*Criconemoides lamottei* Luc, 1970  
*Criconemoides onoensis* Luc, 1959  
*Criconemoides palustris* Luc, 1970  
*Criconemoides parakouensis* Germani & Luc, 1976  
*Criconemoides tafoensis* Luc, 1970  
*Criconemoides yapoensis* Luc, 1970  
*Dolichodorus cassati* Luc & Dalmaso, 1971  
*Dolichodorus nigriensis* Luc & Caveness, 1963  
*Dolichodorus profundus* Luc, 1960  
*Dolichorhynchus elegans* Germani & Luc, 1984  
*Hemicriconemoides affinis* Germani & Luc, 1970  
*Hemicycliophora belemnii* Germani & Luc, 1973  
*Hemicycliophora diolaensis* Germani & Luc, 1973  
*Hemicycliophora madagascariensis* Germani & Luc, 1973  
*Hemicycliophora nigriensis* Germani & Luc, 1973  
*Hemicycliophora straturata* Germani & Luc, 1973  
*Hemicycliophora dahomensis* Germani & Luc, 1976  
*Hemicycliophora oostenbrinki* Luc, 1958  
*Hemicycliophora paradoxa* Luc, 1958  
*Hemicycliophora pauciannulata* Luc, 1958  
*Hemicycliophora straturata* Germani & Luc, 1973  
*Heterodera oryzae* Luc & Brizuela, 1961  
*Heterodera sacchari* Luc & Merny, 1963  
*Hoplolaimus seinhorsti* Luc, 1958  
*Hylonema ivorense* Luc, Taylor & Cadet, 1978  
*Longidorus pawneensis* Luc & Coomans, 1988  
*Nagelus alpinus* Doucet & Luc, 1981  
*Paratylenchus ivorensis* Luc & de Guiran, 1962  
*Paratylenchus arculatus* Luc & de Guiran, 1962  
*Pratylenchoides heathi* Baldwin, Luc & Bell, 1983  
*Pratylenchoides utahensis* Baldwin, Luc & Bell, 1983  
*Pratylenchus delattrei* Luc, 1958  
*Pratylenchus morettoii* Luc, Baldwin & Bell, 1986  
*Radopholus lavabri* Luc, 1957

*Rotylenchoides affinis* Luc, 1960  
*Rotylenchoides intermedius* Luc, 1960  
*Rotylenchoides variocaudatus* Luc, 1960  
*Sarisodera africana* Luc, Germani & Netscher, 1973  
*Senegalonema sorghi* Germani, Luc & Baldwin, 1984  
*Tylenchulus mangeloti* Luc, 1957  
*Xiphidorus achalae* Luc & Doucet, 1984  
*Xiphinema abeokutae* Luc & Coomans, 1993  
*Xiphinema algeriense* Luc & Kostadinov, 1982  
*Xiphinema arenarium* Luc & Dalmaso, 1964  
*Xiphinema attorodorum* Luc, 1961  
*Xiphinema bergeri* Luc, 1973  
*Xiphinema cavenessi* Luc, 1973  
*Xiphinema douceti* Luc, 1973  
*Xiphinema ebriense* Luc, 1958  
*Xiphinema fatikae eburnense* Coomans, Rashid & Luc, 1990  
*Xiphinema flagellicaudatum* Luc, 1961  
*Xiphinema guirani* Luc & Williams, 1978  
*Xiphinema hallei* Luc, 1958  
*Xiphinema hygrophilum* Southey & Luc, 1974  
*Xiphinema ifacolum* Luc, 1961  
*Xiphinema ingens* Luc & Dalmaso, 1964  
*Xiphinema israeliae* Luc, Brown & Cohn, 1982  
*Xiphinema limbeense* Brown, Luc & Saka, 1983  
*Xiphinema longicaudatum* Luc, 1961  
*Xiphinema longidoroides* Luc, 1961  
*Xiphinema loosi* Southey & Luc, 1974  
*Xiphinema malagasi* Luc, 1973  
*Xiphinema malawiense* Brown, Luc & Saka, 1983  
*Xiphinema manubriatum* Luc, 1975  
*Xiphinema marsupilami* Luc, 1973  
*Xiphinema nigriense* Luc, 1961  
*Xiphinema parasetariae* Luc, 1958  
*Xiphinema savanicola* Luc & Southey, 1980  
*Xiphinema seredouense* Luc, 1975  
*Xiphinema setariae* Luc, 1958  
*Xiphinema sharmai* Luc, Loof & Brown, 1985  
*Xiphinema silvaticum* Luc & Williams, 1978  
*Xiphinema smoliki* Luc & Coomans, 1988  
*Xiphinema souchaudi* Baujard, Luc & Reversat, 1998  
*Xiphinema spinuterus* Luc, 1973  
*Xiphinema stenocephalum* Luc & Baujard, 1983  
*Xiphinema tarjani* Luc, 1975  
*Xiphinema thorneanum* Luc, Loof & Coomans, 1986  
*Xiphinema turcicum* Luc & Dalmaso, 1964  
*Xiphinema vuittenezi* Luc, Lima, Weischer & Flegg, 1964  
*Xiphinema yapoense* Luc, 1958  
*Xiphinemella fitulae* Luc, 1977