

CONSTANTIN MOTAȘ (1891–1980) –
25 YEARS FROM THE DEATH OF A GREAT BIOLOGIST
AND MAN OF CULTURE

Constantin Motaș was born on the 8/20 July 1891, in Vaslui. He attended here the primary school and two grades at the “Mihail Kogălniceanu” high school. He shifted to the national high-school in Iași (today “Mihail Sadoveanu” high-school), he had among his colleagues the future writer Cezar Petrescu and actor Ion Manu. Even since these years he manifested his love for the nature, the penchant for the study of the fauna and the talent for animal paintings. Graduating in 1911 with the mark “very good”, he joined the Science Faculty of the University in Iași. Here, he had a pleiad of brilliant professors, among whom Paul Bujor, Ion Simionescu and Ion Borcea. After taking his degree in 1915, C. Motaș was named deputy assistant at the Laboratory of Zoology led by Ion Borcea. During the First World War, he participated as an aviation officer (1916–1918). In 1921, he was promoted as chief at the laboratory of Zoology and, in 1925, as deputy lecturer at the Applied Zoology and Pisciculture chair. In parallel with his didactic activity, C. Motaș published in 1923 the first paper about the Hydracarina from Romania. The papers published in the following years asserted him as a worldwide authority in this domain.

In 1920, C. Motaș obtained through contest a scholarship abroad. Firstly, he worked in the Zoological Institute of the Basel University (Switzerland) under the guidance of Professors F. Zschokke and C. Walter. Then, he undertook a longer stage at the Pisciculture and Applied Hydrobiology Institute of the Grenoble University (France) under the direction of Professor Louis Léger. In 1926, he obtained the title of diplomat of the Pisciculture and Hydrobiology High Education and, in 1928, he obtained the title of doctor in Natural Sciences with a State Diploma and the mention “très honorable, avec les félicitations du jury”. His doctoral thesis, named “Contributions à la connaissance des hydracariens français, particulièrement du Sud-Est de la France” (372 pages) consecrated him as a zoologist with a worldwide reputation.

Returning in his country, Constantin Motaș resumed his didactic and scientific activity at the Science Faculty in Iași. In 1930, he obtained the title of docent in zoology and that of definitive lecturer at this faculty. In 1932, he was named aggregate professor of Applied Zoology and Entomology at the Faculty of Agriculture Sciences from Chișinău and in 1936 he was named full professor at the same chair. In the period 1936–1940, he functioned as a stagiary professor of Descriptive