

TRAIAN ORGHIDAN (1917–1985) –
A DISTINGUISHED ROMANIAN HYDROBIOLOGIST
AND BIOSPELEOLOGIST

Traian Orghidan was born on the 27th of February 1917 in the locality of Onești–Plugari, Iași county. He attended the high school in Brașov and Bucharest. After he finished the Science Faculty at the University of Bucharest (1941), he functioned for two years as a geologist at the Columbia–Petrol Society under the direction of Prof. I. Atanasiu. Noted by Professor Constantin Motaș, he worked at the Zoological Station from Cumpătu–Sinaia, first as an assistant (1943–1948), then as a laboratory chief (1948–1950). During these years, he elaborated his doctoral thesis named “Contributions to the knowledge of the Anostracan Phylopoda from the P. R. Romania”. Presenting in 1949 his thesis at the Faculty of Biology in Bucharest, T. Orghidan obtained the qualificative “very good with distinction”.

In 1950, Traian Orghidan was named a lecturer at the Iași University, the Faculty of Natural Sciences, the Chair of Zoology. In 1951, he was transferred to the Faculty of Biology at the University of Bucharest where he took over the course and the laboratory works of Hydrobiology until 1956. During the years 1952–1954, the author of this paper organized the first Hydrobiology Scientific Circle of the Students under the competent guidance of the young lecturer. Starting the hydrobiologic study of the Snagov Lake, our Circle presented some communications on the basis of the material collected from this lake and gained the first place at the Sesion of the Scientific Circles from Bucharest, then at the Circles from the entire country. Also in the period 1951–1956, Traian Orghidan coordinated, with remarkable results, the Speologic Team from Bucharest, founded by him under the care of the Geologic Committee, formed by four researchers. Beside him, the team counted Margareta Dumitrescu, Professor of Vertebrate Zoology and a specialist in bats, Jana Tanasache, assistant of Professor Dumitrescu and specialist in Hydracarina, and Valeriu Pușcariu, ex-assistant of Professor Emil Racoviță from Cluj and then of Professor Radu Codreanu in Bucharest, an old speleologist and strong contender for the protection of nature.

After prolonged interventions at the officials of the time responsible for science and culture, T. Orghidan and Margareta Dumitrescu succeeded to obtain, on 21 June 1956, a Decision of the Minister Council no. 1189 for the founding of an **Institute of Speleology** with its center in Bucharest and a subsidiary in Cluj. As a director was named Professor Constantin Motaș, a zoologist of world repute, just released from the communist prisons on 25 April 1956 after seven years of political detention. As deputy director was named the main initiator, lecturer Traian Orghidan; the **Biospeleology Division** had a chief in the person of Professor Margareta Dumitrescu, Jana Tanasachi