

Mihai I. CONSTANTINEANU
(1894 - 1993)

GH. MUSTAȚĂ, I. ANDRIESCU

On March 29, 1993, professor Dr. MIHAI I. CONSTANTINEANU passed away. Professor MIHAI CONSTANTINEANU, traveller over two centuries, dedicated his whole life to persevering work, which he carried out without respite until the venerable age of 99, being considered as one of the greatest Romanian entomologists.

Disciple and successor of professor IOAN BORCEA at the Invertebrate Zoology discipline, he honoured this scientific branch of science and thanks to his competence, his pedagogic talent and qualities of serious researcher he modelled tens generations of biologists.

He was born on October 11(25), 1894, in Dorobanți village, Botoșani county, as the fifth child in the peasant family of ION and AGLAIA CONSTANTINEANU. After graduation from the primary school in his native village, he went to continue his studies at the "LAURIAN" High School in Botoșani, and after one year he was transferred to the "VENIAMIN COSTACHI" Seminary in Iași. At this seminary he had as teachers, among others, the greatest entomologist GEORGE FINȚESCU as well as IORGU IORDAN. In order to be able to attend academic courses, he privately passed the exams at the "National" High School in Iași.

He attended the courses of the Faculty of Sciences of the "A.I.I. CUZA" University, the Department of Natural History, which he graduated in 1923. He was the student of our great naturalists such as: IOAN BORCEA, ION SIMIONESCU, PAUL BUJOR, ION SCRIBAN, a.s.o. While still a student, he attracted professor IOAN BORCEA's attention through his qualities and in 1921, the latter retained him as university assistant at Descriptive Zoology. For 43 years he served the Romanian biological education, passing rapidly through the whole university hierarchy, at the same time dedicating his long life energy to scientific work.

His research activity was oriented towards knowing of the entomophagous insects, more precisely the Ichneumonidae family, which have a major significance in biological control of injurious insects. This domain had been foreseen by his magister, professor IOAN BORCEA. On this line, in 1924 he undertook a specialization on Ichneumonidae study, in Vienna, at the Museum of Natural History and at the Plant Protection Station, under the leadership of BRUNO WAHL. He continued his specialization in Berlin between 1927-1929 in several institutes of Zoology and Plant Protection. Besides the study of Ichneumonidae, he was interested in certain aspects regarding injurious insects. He trained himself as a specialist in problems regarding the structure of ocelli in insects by working in the laboratory of the great histologist R. HESSE, in Berlin. He graduated the courses of "FRIEDRICH WILHELM" University in Berlin, in 1929. Between 1929-1930 he continued his specialization in prestigious institutions in France, Italy, a.s.o. It is no wonder that he used easily French, English, German, Russian, Spanish, besides Greek and Latin, which he learned in the seminary.

All this specializations had a great resonance upon his later activity as a professor, and a researcher, proving a remarkable biological culture.

Professor MIHAI CONSTANTINEANU's scientific activity is really impressive. It was carried out on more directions. The work on Ichneumonidae is monumental, this cover over 6,000 pp., in which over 5,000 species are presented, of these are new in science, while over 500 species, 15 genera and two subfamilies are new for the fauna of our country. Out of the nearly 200 published works, more than 150 are assigned to the study of this group. The four monographic volumes, published in the "Romanian Fauna" series by the Romanian Academy Publishing House are by outstanding importance. Other three monographs, covering over 1,200 typed pages, had been handed for more years, for being published in the same "Romanian Fauna" series. For the first two volumes, he was awarded the "EMIL RACOVITĂ" Academy Prize.

The high appreciations of specialists throughout the world attest the quality and importance of professor MIHAI CONSTANTINEANU's scientific work. The greatest ichneumonologist in the world, HENRY TOWNES from U.S.A., wrote to professor MIHAI CONSTANTINEANU "Your work - The monograph on Ichneumonidae of Romania - is a splendid work, which will serve as a model for a long time in the future", these remarks referred to his first volume. Regarding the second one he wrote: "It is a magnificent work which will make easier the identification of European species".

Professor MIHAI CONSTANTINEANU carried further the entomological researches initiated by his magister, professor IOAN BORCEA, and he has created the strongest entomological school in our country, having the largest collective of ichneumonologists in the world, and with remarkable results.

As lepidopterologist ARISTIDE CARADJA did, professor MIHAI CONSTANTINEANU collected passionately Hymenoptera, from all provinces of our country and succeeded in achieving one of the largest and greatest collections of Ichneumonidae in Europe, of over 300,000 specimens, belonging to over 5,000 taxons.

He also brought his contribution to the solving of the difficult problems of taxonomy of Ichneumonidae. His conception was revealed in a work published in Berlin in 1961. Regarding this work, H. TOWNES remarked "with such work as yours I think that we shall greatly improve the classification system...and it is pleasant to see that you made a revision of the old classification system and I congratulate you on this very useful work". We can not go here into all appreciations made by other great entomologists in Germany, France, Spain, Canada, Hungary, a.s.o.

A special place of his researches was occupied by the histological study on ocelli of Diptera, achieved as mentioned earlier, in R. HESSE's laboratory. His work "Der Aufbau der Sehorgane bei den in Süßwasser lebenden Dipterenlarven und bei Puppen und Imagines von *Culex*" was meant to be his doctoral thesis and was published as such in Germany. Since professor IOAN BORCEA, at any price wished that his discipline to submit his doctoral thesis on Ichneumonidae in Romania, under his scientific guidance, MIHAI CONSTANTINEANU came to our country and presented it in 1929. The results regarding the structure of ocelli of Diptera had a great echo on the specialists all around the world and they were quoted in all great treaties of zoology and entomology. This work alone would have been enough for him to enter in the world science history and to orientate such researches.

Professor MIHAI CONSTANTINEANU was not only an exceptional researcher in the field of entomology, but also a founder of a school. Under his leadership, 20 doctoral thesis were elaborated, which confirmed the qualities of researchers who were formed

under his guidance. They are today university professors or researchers in different prestigious institutes in Romania and another countries.

The didactic work of the professor recomends him as an outstanding personality. He has created a highly appreciated school of zoology. His lectures throughly prepared, were based on a very rich scietific information, creatively used. Rich in data, his lectures were delivered in a logical succesion, and were abundantly illustrated and modulated in a truly charming, authentic Moldavian dialect. His invertebrate zoology course, in three volumes, still serves as a model of a truly academic scientific approach.

Like CONSTANTIN NOICA, who would speak about necessity of the existence of real trainers for the great culture, professor MIHAI CONSTANTINEANU used to speak about necessity of "trainers" for scientific research. Such trainers can't be others than university professors, and professor MIHAI CONSTANTINEANU was really an accomplished scientific research trainer.

Being traveller through two centuries, professor M.CONSTANTINEANU pendulated between agony and ecstasy. The ecstasy was due to his magnificent achievements he succeeded in, thanks to his titanic scientific research work, on the one side, and in his didactic activity on the other side, and the agony was caused by his living conditions, an extremely small pension and non-recognition of his real scientific merits in Romania, especially by the Romanian Academy.

Now, after professor MIHAI CONSTANTINEANU left this world, on the occasion of a hundred years since he was born, and of a year since he went into the world of shadows, we, his disciples, carry in our hearts the living image of the professor and researcher of high academic standards, of the true, great man that he was.

References

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