

OBITUARY

JÓZEF MOTYKA 1900–1984

Professor Józef Motyka, the distinguished Polish botanist and lichenologist, died on 6 July 1984. He was born on 23 March 1900 at Kacłowa, a small village near Grybów in southern Poland. Even as a secondary school pupil he displayed a lively interest in natural history, which became the great passion of his life.

Whilst studying at the famous Jagiellonian University in Kraków, he met some of the great personalities of Polish science, one of the greatest being Professor Władysław Szafer, who greatly influenced Józef Motyka's botanical career. Although still a student, he was included as a member of a scientific team of academics taking part in the exploration of the flora of the Tatra Mountains. He concentrated on the study of montane lichens, which resulted in the publication of two scientific dissertations in 1924, the most detailed treatments of saxicolous lichen communities prepared in Europe up to that time. The following year, he obtained the degree of Doctor of Philosophy for these ecological investigations.

During the next few years, he dealt with the taxonomy of the large, and poorly understood, genus *Usnea*; besides studying lichens from Poland he also visited some botanical centres abroad: in 1926 he travelled to Vienna, Geneva, Paris and London, and in 1929 went to Sweden, Norway and Finland. The crowning achievement of his 10 years' hard work was the publication during 1936–38 of a two-part monograph on *Usnea*, which contains 451 diagnoses of lichen species, in addition to extensive data on lower taxa. This work was published in Latin at his personal expense, otherwise it would have been issued in Polish.

The war found him in Lwów, where he worked in the Botanical Garden until 1944; at the end of the war he returned to his native village, to work as a teacher at the Gymnasium at Grybów. In 1945 he was appointed to the post of Director of the Plant Geography and Systematics Department at the newly established University of Maria Curie-Skłodowska in Lublin. In the same year, he became Associate Professor of this University. During the period 1946–56 he dealt mainly with ecological problems, publishing work on such topics as the aims and methods of geobotanical investigations, and the distribution and ecology of vascular plants on the northern edge of the western Podole region, as well as manuals on *Geobotanika* and *Fitogeografia* in 1953 and 1962 respectively.

After 1956 Professor Motyka returned to lichenology, concentrating on detailed studies of his country's lichen flora, which resulted in the publication of numerous papers and four volumes of *Porosty* in *Flora polska* (1960–64), covering the families Parmeliaceae, Usneaceae, Cladoniaceae, Acarosporaceae, Umbilicariaceae and Thelocarpaceae. In 1960 he was awarded the title



A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J. Motyka'.

of full Professor. During the years 1948–50 he held the post of Dean of the Mathematics and Natural Sciences Faculty, in which he was always active, one of his initiatives being the establishment of a Botanical Garden within the University campus.

Professor Motyka's lecturing abilities were well-known, and his lectures always attracted great interest and were widely appreciated. His scientific output consists of four textbooks, six monographs, 54 scientific papers and articles, and two books designed to appeal to the general public. Detailed lists of his lichenological publications are to be found in *Annls Univ. Mariae Curie-Skłodowska*, C 34: i–viii (Bystrek 1979) and *Polska Bibliografia Lichenologiczna* (W. Fałtynowicz 1983).

In recognition of his academic achievements, Józef Motyka was honoured by the award of several Polish medals, including the illustrious Polonia Restituta and Golden Cross of Merit. To the end of his life he continued to be active as a scientist. He will be remembered by his colleagues and students for his devotion to duty, both as a researcher and as an educator.

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