

In Memoriam of Professor Kurt Mothes

We regret to record the death on 12th January 1983, of Professor Kurt Mothes, Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor honoris causa (mult), Emeritus Professor of Botanics, Pharmacognosis and Biochemistry at the Martin Luther University at Halle-Wittenberg, founder and Director of the Institute for the Physiology of Plants of the Academy of Sciences of the German Democratic Republic, former President of the German Academy of Natural Historians Leopoldina, a many years' member of the Editorial Board of the Biologia Plantarum.

His doctor's thesis, submitted to the Leipzig plant physiologist, Professor Ruhland, in 1923, and concerning the study of nitrogen metabolism in plants, determined the orientation of his future work. The very fertile career of Professor Kurt Mothes abounded in scientific discoveries and in organizational activities of international significance. He was author or co-author of 334 papers. His most important and original works appeared in the years spent in Gatersleben and Halle, from 1950 until 1968. Professor Mothes' unceasing activity, however, continued even afterwards and is reflected in his voluminous publishing efforts until his death. His expert and critical share in numerous world monographs is characteristic. He was also the editor of many world symposia, to which he applied his universal scope of knowledge. His greatest and lasting organizational successes occurred after the Second World War. In the period between 1949 and 1957, he set up a physiological-chemical department of the Institute for the Research of Cultural Plants at Gatersleben, which enjoyed a world reputation. His greatest achievement in this respect was the organization of the Institute of Plant Biochemistry at the Academy of Sciences of the G.D.R. in Halle. As the first Director of this Institute he endowed it with a high scientific character. Professor Mothes founded the international journal "Biochemie und Physiologie der Pflanzen" by separating this particular theme from the original journal "Flora".

All these fruitful efforts of Professor Mothes issued from his genuine interest in scientific knowledge and work, combined with the phantasy of a physiologist and the exactness of an analytical mind.

The valuable lifetime work of Professor Mothes has been closed by his sudden and unexpected death.

MILAN KUTÁČEK and MILOSLAV SOSNA