

Georg Haas on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday.

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PROFESSOR GEORG HAAS

ON THE OCCASION OF HIS SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY

Each of the twenty-one authors represented in this volume made his contribution as an expression of his friendship and respect for Georg Haas. It is due only to the editors' shortcoming that the volume is not more voluminous and its contents not more diversified; for in almost forty years of scientific activity Georg Haas has acquired friends and admirers in many branches of zoology.

Georg Haas was born in Vienna on 19.1.1905. After his education at the humanistic *gymnasium*, he studied zoology and paleontology at Vienna University, under the famous Professors Abel, Grobben, Joseph, Versluys, Wettstein and F. Werner. He obtained his Doctor's degree in 1928, then published in rapid succession seven

weighty studies on the functional anatomy of the head of various venomous and primitive snakes. In 1931–32 he studied protozoans in Professor M. Hartmann's department at the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut, Berlin; there ensued his often-cited paper on the cytology of *Ichthyophthirius*.

In October 1932, Georg Haas joined the staff of the budding Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he was appointed Professor in 1954. His persisting interest in the functional and comparative anatomy of the head of reptiles (including fossil forms), and its bearing upon their evolution, is shown by the continual series of his publications on these subjects. He is keenly interested in the fauna of the Levant, and has become a recognized authority on the reptiles of the Near East on which he has been publishing regularly since 1943. The molluscs of Israel are the subject of another series of papers (1937–1955). Since 1951, an increasing part of his time and of his publications are devoted to the mesozoic reptiles and the pleistocene mammals of this country.

As a passionate though discriminating collector, Georg Haas has amassed for the Hebrew University important collections of molluscs, reptiles and vertebrate fossils. Many specimens have been, and are being, collected by himself on field trips in Israel and abroad. His study travels have been carrying him to many countries in four continents. Georg Haas, however, strives to bring his department, too, in touch with the wide world of science. To this end he has so far persuaded over fifteen of his distinguished foreign friends to visit the Hebrew University, some of them for repeated visits.

As a dedicated, if occasionally stern, teacher, Georg Haas has lectured at one time or another on almost every subject of zoology, and has been dragging his students on field trips with objects ranging from mediterranean sponges to pleistocene rhinoceroses. At present he teaches mainly comparative vertebrate anatomy and paleontology. Of his past pupils, many are holding responsible positions at the Hebrew University and other institutions. One of the very few things Georg Haas prides himself upon, is his having encouraged several of his students in their steps along diverging paths of science. The now flourishing Laboratory of Genetics, for instance, had its origins, fourteen years ago, on a bench in his own office.

The interests of Georg Haas are not restricted to zoology, nor to science. He is a lover and *connoisseur* of art in general, though he uses his own gift for drawing only to illustrate his publications and to illuminate his lectures. He has a taste for philology, and reads much, including history. He relishes music, and occasionally invites groups of students to share his enjoyment. A lucky guest may meet with the *cordon bleu* vein of Georg Haas. The cactuses and other plants that crowd his apartment reveal the host's chief hobby. Naturally, however, it was his contribution to zoology that earned Georg Haas, in 1964, the Rothschild prize.

Georg Haas abhors publicity. His friends would never have inflicted upon him the issuance of a volume in his honour, had they not been compelled by their feelings; feelings which may be summed up as — *ad 120* !

YEHUDAH L. WERNER