

L'entomologie autour de 1900: une science d'amateurs?

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Et, pour citer des noms d'un incomparable éclat,
est-ce que Darwin, Mendel, Fabre
ne furent pas des amateurs, ou presque?
Inquiétudes d'un biologiste, Jean Rostand, 1967, p.50

Summary

At the turn of the twentieth century, French entomology seemed divided between a multitude of fans and few official scholars. On the one hand, the network of the French Entomological Society, and on the other, a chair at the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle. To illustrate this duality between academic entomology and a more domestic entomology, we present a study based on two men: Charles Janet, a little-known province engineer who could be seen as a mere amateur among the professionals, Eugène-Louis Bouvier who was a scholar at the Muséum national d'histoire naturelle and the Academy of Sciences. The biographical approach developed here will allow us to meet close associates of these two men. Considering their own perceptions we will see how these actors situated themselves within their discipline. This approach will allow us to give a broader picture of French entomologists around 1900: their number, their institutions, their relationships and their means of communication. This text shows that the amateur/professional dichotomy is an unsuitable tool to describe entomology at that time.

Keywords: Entomology, Amateur, Professionals, Eugène-Louis Bouvier, Charles Janet