

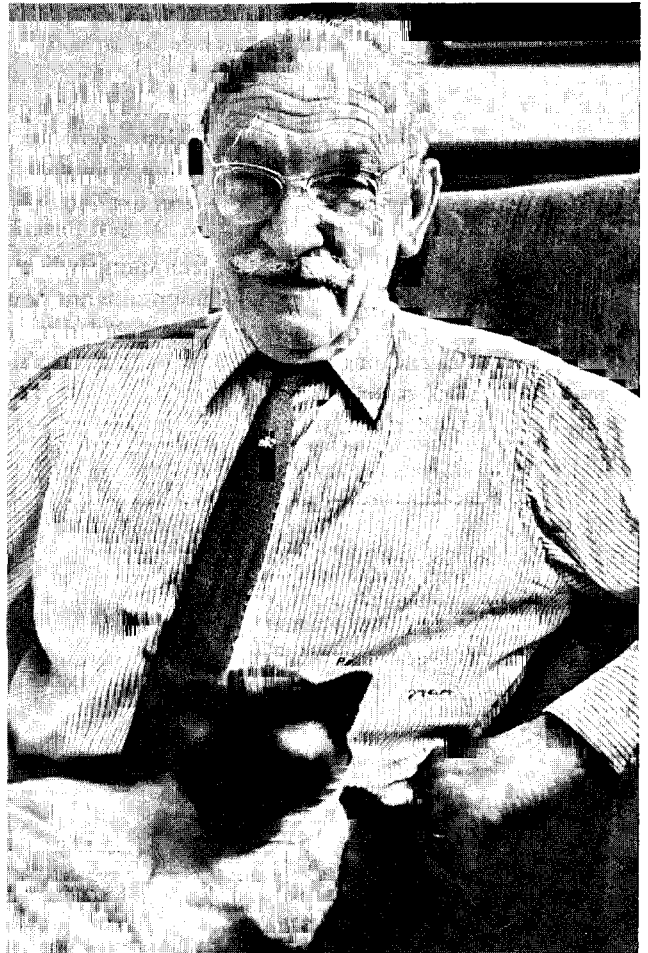
PIERRE BONNET, 1897–1990

Arachnology suffered a great loss with the death of Professor Pierre Bonnet on 16 August 1990, just over two weeks before his 93rd birthday. Best known by his monumental work, *Bibliographia Araneorum*, which has become almost synonymous with his name, he also published about a hundred papers on the biology and behaviour of spiders and on nomenclatural problems, and he will be remembered with great affection throughout the world by the many arachnologists who met him at international congresses.

Pierre Bonnet was born on 1 September 1897 at Villefranche-de-Rouergue (Aveyron) in south-western France, the son of Eugène Bonnet, college teacher, and Clotilde Bonnet, daughter of Count Jean-Baptiste de Villeneuve. After successfully completing his secondary studies at the college of Vic-Bigorre (Hautes-Pyrénées) from 1906–1915, he was called up for military service in January 1916. After three years of war, he was demobilised in April 1919 following a war wound, and was awarded the Croix de Guerre. Immediately afterwards he continued his studies in natural sciences at colleges in Montpellier and Toulouse, taking his first degree in 1921 and a diploma of higher studies in zoology in 1922. He was appointed as demonstrator in zoology at the University of Toulouse in 1922, and after spending his whole career in this department he retired as a senior lecturer in 1962 with an honorary position.

He obtained his doctorate from the University of Toulouse in 1930 for a thesis on development, moulting, autotomy and regeneration in spiders, with particular emphasis on the European species of *Dolomedes*. This is now regarded as a classic work on the subject, and it was a fine and detailed study for its time. He published about 50 other papers on spiders between 1924 and the appearance of Vol. I of *Bibliographia Araneorum* in 1945. Most of these early papers concerned some aspect of the biology of spiders, e.g. mating behaviour, egg-laying, fecundity, moulting, life-cycle and rearing in captivity.

The *Bibliographia* represented a total of almost 40 years' work, and reached completion with the publication of Vol. III in 1961; the entire work covered 6,481 pages. Perhaps the best tribute that can be paid to the work is that written by Bristowe in a letter to Bonnet in 1955, and quoted in Vol. III, p. 520: "It is a national triumph for France". It is far more than just an enormous catalogue of species, synonyms, and references; in Vol. I the photographs and short biographies of well-known arachnologists and the lists of references to different subjects are of considerable interest, and in Vol. III the list of approximately 45,000 species names is still the only easy way of checking the genera in which each name was used before 1940. Apart from the immense academic value of the work, the introductory matter in Vols. I and II and the concluding chapters in Vol. III also provide many amusing insights into Professor Bonnet's personality, especially the entertaining accounts of the difficulties encountered in achieving publication and subsequent problems in obtaining payment from some wayward subscribers. The whole of the *Bibliographia* was written by



hand on note cards, as Bonnet spurned typewriters and other 20th century devices such as telephones.

Most of his papers published after 1945 were on taxonomic or nomenclatural problems, many of which had arisen in connection with the compilation of the *Bibliographia*. One of the most important of these was his petition to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature in 1947 to establish the priority of Clerck's spider names over those of Linnaeus. The acceptance of this proposal by the ICZN in 1948 led him to publish in 1950 a detailed account of his correspondence on the subject, entitled "La fin d'une querelle en nomenclature". He was also inspired to write a long poem on the rules of zoological nomenclature, which in some respects is easier to follow and provides better examples than the official version! This was published in 1948, and is the best known of the many poems that he wrote. He also composed an "arachnologists' song" which was performed with gusto at the congresses in Jaca and Turku in 1986 and 1989.

He was an enthusiastic traveller with his wife Camille, a teacher of Spanish, who survives him, and in later years maintained his interest in arachnology by attending all the international congresses from 1961 to 1986; arachnological congresses will never be quite the same without him. The 1986 congress in Jaca opened coincidentally on his 89th birthday, and a short paper by Bonnet appears as the first contribution in the congress proceedings. He also participated in all the Colloques d'Arachnologie d'Expression Française, and in many other entomological and natural history society meetings both in France and

elsewhere. He was an Honorary Member of the British Arachnological Society, the American Arachnological Society, the Société d'Arachnologie, C.I.D.A., and the Entomological Society of the Netherlands, and was for many years President of the Société d'Histoire naturelle de Toulouse. He particularly valued being nominated a member of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature.

Apart from arachnology, he was a keen stamp collector and enjoyed excursions into the high mountains and touring by car. In later life he also became interested in trying to establish the true origins of Christopher Columbus, and wrote several papers on the evidence for Columbus being Spanish rather than Italian.

He was always forthright in expressing his opinions, as can be seen in many of his publications, but his views were expounded with a delightful touch of humour, and he was a charming character, extremely hospitable, and an avid correspondent. He also had a great affection for pets; it is said that much of the *Bibliographia Araneorum* was written with a cat draped over his shoulders. The accompanying photograph, taken by Frances Murphy while at the International meeting of the American Arachnological Society in Warrensburg in 1975, shows Pierre Bonnet with Bill Peck's cat "Virgil".

His death is a sad loss, but his name will live on amongst arachnologists, to whom "Bonnet" will remain indispensable for many years to come.

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***Meioneta exigua*, replacement name for *Meioneta parva* Locket & Russell-Smith, 1980 (Araneae: Linyphiidae)**

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The species *Bathyphantes parvus* Banks, 1896 was transferred to the genus *Meioneta* by Ivie in his revision of the North American *Bathyphantes* species (Ivie, 1969). *Meioneta parva* Locket & Russell-Smith, 1980 is thus a

junior homonym and must be rejected. The purpose of this note is to provide the replacement name *Meioneta exigua* for the latter species.

I am grateful to Dr N. I. Platnick for pointing out the priority of *M. parva* (Banks).

References

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