

In Memoriam

Christiane Amédégnato-Loisele (21 January 1945 - 20 June 2010)

The Orthopterists' Society lost one of its prominent members recently. Christiane Amédégnato passed away on June 20, 2010, leaving behind a lifetime of dedication to Orthoptera research.

Christiane was born in Morocco and spent her childhood in the Dordogne region, France, where she had her family roots. In 1968, she graduated in Natural Sciences-Animal Biology at the Faculty of Sciences, University of Toulouse/Paul Sabatier, and in 1977 she obtained her Ph.D. at the University Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris VI.

Since 1979 she was a researcher with CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique) and since 1982 responsible for the Caelifera collection at the Département Systématique et évolution, Entomologie, at the Museum national d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, France. Her thesis partially published in *Acrida*, "Etude des Acridoidea centre et Sud Américains (Catanopinae sensu lato): anatomie des genitalia, classification, repartition, phylogénie" laid the foundations for the classification of Neotropical grasshoppers (Acridomorpha). She conducted numerous long-lasting field trips and field observations in South America, mainly in Amazonia and in the forest regions of Brazil, Peru and Ecuador, as well as in dry regions in Northeastern Brazil, Nicaragua and México and highlands of Ecuador. She described numerous genera and species of acridids (mostly Romaleidae and Acrididae: Copiocerinae, Leptysminae, Ommatolampinae, Proctolabinae, Rhytidocrotinae) many in collaboration with Marius Descamps and Simon Poulain, and documented the lifestyle and evolution of their com-

munities especially related to diversity in canopy grasshopper assemblages in Amazonia in relation to resource partitioning and phylogeny. The scientific work she made on the acridid fauna of the Americas is certainly notable.

The reference collection on Neotropical grasshoppers that she left is outstanding in its diversity and species richness wonderfully curated and preserved thanks also to Simon Poulain.

Many Society members are undoubtedly familiar with Christiane's scientific works and with the priceless collection of Caelifera that she left so rather than writing about these, we thought we would share with the Society members some of our personal memories of Christiane.

Carlos Carbonell remembers her:

I met Christiane in 1970, in one of my visits to the Natural History Museum of Paris. She was then working in the preparation of her Ph.D. thesis. Marius Descamps introduced us and said to me that he had given her as subject for her thesis the study and classification of the acridoid fauna of Central and South America. Our knowledge of that fauna was at that time limited to a great number of species names classified to the family level. Sometimes not even to that level. I remember that on hearing about that subject, I thought that Marius might



dislike her. Otherwise he would not have given a student, such a difficult subject for her thesis.

During the following days, I did a lot of talking with her. She asked me many questions on the subject of her thesis that I was unable to answer for the most part. But because of her questions I saw that Descamps had found the right person to study that subject. Christiane's questions were about the most important points of the subject. Many of them I had made to myself at a time when I had thought of working myself on that subject, which I had finally decided was out of my possibilities. So, my collaboration to her work, after I went back to Uruguay, was limited to sending her specimens of some species which were not in the collection of the Paris Museum. In 1974 it appeared in the journal '*Acrida*' an extract

of her thesis work "***Les genres d'acridiens néotropicaux, leur classification par familles, sous-familles et tribus***". That publication had many misprints, because Christiane was at that moment very ill, and unable to correct the proof. As a consequence of that illness Christiane had for life certain limitations of her motility. Fortunately her mind was not damaged, and her intelligence remained as brilliant as ever. A long time afterwards I was able to obtain a copy of her thesis (that was never published in its entirety) that I have used ever since to find answers to doubts in my own work.

Her physical limitations never kept her for leading a normal life. She was even capable of activities that many persons with the whole use of their natural capabilities are unable to do. She had a knob put on the steering wheel of her car, so she was able to drive it with one hand. She drove me to places in Paris, and in the intense transit of that city she drove notably well. I remember one instance when she noticed that she had driven past a corner where she should have made a turn. In the middle of a block of one of these wide Parisian avenues, after looking to the car mirrors to see what was behind her, rapidly made an utterly forbidden u-turn to go back to the place where she should have left the avenue. But, as a difficult performance for a person with her physical limitations, much more notable were her missions of study and collection in the Americas. Travels to the regions that had particular interests for her research projects in Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Ecuador and Brazil, and certainly not in tourist circuits but most of them hard-to-reach places. The help and protection of Simon Poulain during these trips was instrumental for obtaining good results. I had the chance of going along with them in part of one of their trips in

Brazil. Then I saw that Christiane's activities were not limited to the study and collecting of insects. Her observations and her very acute comments on the country and its people were always worth hearing. Like in her scientific work, she was able to notice in her surroundings many things that others could not see or understand.

María Marta Cigliano remembers her:

The first time I met her was during a brief visit to the Museum in 1999. My first impression about her was of somebody extremely helpful and open to share her knowledge to anybody who had her same scientific interests or love for grasshoppers.

For the last four years we had a collaborative project and I was fortunate to spend long stays at the Museum working closely with her. She had an incredible knowledge on Neotropical grasshoppers, and was able to switch from one group to another and had a complete picture of them all, including anatomy, behavior, life styles and biogeography. She had an extraordinary memory, and would know the exact place of each specimen in the collection, as well as the exact site where she had collected every single grasshopper. She could give specific details on the vegetation and community of every collecting site. We had wonderful conversations on field observations and she could spend hours talking about the Andes and its fauna, a place she missed so much and wanted to go back. She had interesting stories of the time she was working on canopy grasshoppers and stayed with the natives sharing their huts. One of the stories I liked best, was the one when she was sleeping in one of these huts. She picked a spot far from the center of the hut, close to one of the openings, beside a bunch of bananas. While she was in her sleeping bag

she was feeling something crawling on her body. But she was so tired that she snuggled inside of her bag, and went back to sleep. When she woke up she realized that the "crawlers" were bats lying on her body!! She also realized that the bunch of bananas was left on purpose in an attempt to keep the bats out of the hut!

She was a very warm and kind person, always willing to help, and aware of the peoples' necessities. Unfortunately, she left us too soon and she took with her a great amount of knowledge on the Neotropical grasshopper fauna.

Her death has left us desolated. As a scientific worker we would have liked for her a much longer life. As a human person, we know that somebody who cannot be replaced is no longer with us. We are going to miss her for the rest of our lives.

She was buried in Daglan, near Sarlat, Dordogne, France.

**Carlos S. Carbonell
& María Marta Cigliano**

List of Publications by Amedegnato

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Miguel Antonio Ríos Guevara (1990–2010)

It is with great sadness that I report the death of Miguel Antonio Ríos Guevara, who was killed in a tragic road accident on the morning of Saturday 14 August 2010.

Miguel - a student at the Universidad Incca in Bogotá, Colombia - was on his way to visit family in Ibagué, Tolima when the bus on which he was travelling left the road and rolled into a ravine.

Miguel was born 24 February 1990 in Ibagué, a town in the Andean department of Tolima, Colombia. Following the death of his parents in 2001, Miguel moved to Bogotá where he lived with his uncle and attended school, eventually enrolling as an undergraduate in the Department of Biology at the Universidad Incca. It was here that he developed his passion for insects

and, having formed close friendships with entomology students at the nearby Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, decided to focus his studies on this subject. Miguel soon became interested in Orthoptera and in particular, New World Tridactyloidea and Tetrigidae. Ever the dedicated student, he spent most of his spare time in the field or exploring the university insect collection, most often accompanied by his close friend Oscar Cadena. During the course of his most recent investigations, he discovered a new species of the genus *Neotridactylus* and had started compiling notes for a paper in which he would describe it. At the time of his death, Miguel was also working closely with Oscar on a large collection of Colombian grouse locusts.

My first contact with Miguel came



Photograph courtesy of Oscar Cadena

a year before the accident that claimed his life. He had written to me outlining his interests in Neotropical tridactyloids and requesting copies of Kurt K. Günther's many important papers which he had been unable to locate in his university library. His enthusiasm