



## Claude Herbulot

19 February 1908 – 19 January 2006

In the afternoon of 25 January 2006, a ceremony was organized in St. Bruno's church, Issy-les-Moulineaux (Hauts-de-Seine) in the memory of Claude Herbulot, the well-known French lepidopterist, who passed away a few days earlier in a Parisian hospital (after a rather short stay for heart troubles). The ceremony was attended by his nearest and dearest – in particular his daughters Christiane and H el ene, and his second wife Colette –, also by a number of close colleagues (Claude's first wife, Th er ese, had alas died several years ago). Among the notable absentees were those Geometridae enthusiasts who, at that time, were in Tasmania on the occasion of the 4<sup>th</sup> "Forum Herbulot"... hence also paying homage to Claude Herbulot, though in a different, entomology-oriented, way (see the obituary notice written by Axel Hausmann & Manfred Sommerer, 2006, *Spixiana* 29 (2): 97–98).

Claude Herbulot was indeed among the best specialists in the world for the family Geometridae. In this short note, I will not insist on this obvious aspect, already emphasized in other obituary notices, namely the above-mentioned one and those written, in French, by Georges Orhant (2006, *Lambillionea* 106 (1): 125; *Bull. Soc. ent. Mulhouse* 62 (1): 12–15) and Philippe Darge (2006, *Bull. Soc. ent. Fr.* 111 (3)). This last notice enumerates the ca. 290 publications of Claude Herbulot and, thanks to Axel Hausmann, a similar list is also available on the Web ([www.herbulot.de](http://www.herbulot.de)). For his impressive achievement Claude was honoured with the Spix Medal (1999) of the Friends of the ZSM (Zoologische Staatssammlung M unchen) and with the Jacob H ubner Award (2002) of the Association for Tropical Lepidoptera (Gainesville, Florida).

In fact Claude Herbulot had shown an interest in various groups of Lepidoptera, not only in geometrid moths. He was born in Charleville-Mézières (Ardennes), on 19 February 1908, and several of his early papers dealt with the lepidopteran fauna of the Ardennes. Two of his first notes were even devoted to the taxonomy of a micromoth genus, namely *Agdistis* Hübner, 1825 (Pterophoridae). His most general works are the volumes 2 and 3 (moths) of an excellent popular guide to the Lepidoptera of France, Belgium and Switzerland (1948 and 1949, respectively. *Nouvel Atlas d'Entomologie*, n° 6. Editions N. Boubée & Cie, Paris). With a judicious selection of species and nice aquarelles made by three artists (R. Métaye, A. Moreau & R. Préchac), these two volumes were rewarded, in 1950 (for year 1949), with a prize – Prix Constant – of the SEF (Société Entomologique de France). I remember having often used these books in my young days, even in Madagascar when I tried to identify, with Herbulot's key (vol. 2, pp. 7–10), the families of the macromoths I caught in that country. Usually I did this exercise successfully, even though a few strictly tropical families were, of course, not included in this dichotomous key. The second work of Herbulot that I managed to get early in my life was a paper headed “Nouveaux Geometridae malgaches” (1954, *Mém. Inst. scient. Madagascar* (E) 5: 81–123, 2 pls): thanks to its black-and-white plates, I was able to identify to species certain of my Malagasy Geometridae. Actually, Claude Herbulot took a strong interest in the study of the fauna of Madagascar. He described, during his life, about one-third of the geometrid species currently recorded from this island.

In search of his favourite insects, Claude Herbulot has explored, besides Madagascar, many exotic countries, often in the oriental and afrotropical regions (see Darge's above-mentioned article). In addition to the material collected in these missions, he got thousands of specimens from various colleagues and/or insect dealers, and also bought a number of historical types of Geometridae. He has thus constituted one of the best worldwide collections of geometrid moths (more or less comparable to that of Prof. Hiroshi Inoue), as well as a very rich entomological library. The former was sold to the ZSM and is now under the well advised cure of Axel Hausmann. Claude Herbulot used to visit the MNHN (Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, in relation to which he was “Attaché”), often to see his colleagues and friends (e.g. H. de Toulgoët and P. Viette), sometimes to see the collections or to discuss with me the possible systematic position of any enigmatic geometrid-like moth: thanks to his generosity, the MNHN has got many interesting non-geometrid moths, especially among the Hedyloidea, Drepanoidea and Geometroidea. Like many colleagues, I have very pleasant memories of Claude Herbulot, a nice, clever, cultured person and an active, highly competent lepidopterist.

For various reasons I am indebted to Philippe Darge, Hélène Decaux (CH's daughter), Axel Hausmann (who gave me the photo of CH – see also *Spixiana* 29: 98), Colette Herbulot, Gilbert Hodebert (who made so many line drawings for CH), Matthias Nuss, Christiane O'Keefe (CH's daughter), Georges Orhant, Gertraud and Manfred Sommerer, Paul Thiaucourt, Hervé de Toulgoët, and Pierre Viette.

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Artikel/Article: [Claude Herbulot 19 February 1908 - 19 January 2006 3-4](#)