

OBITUARY

OMERO CASTELLANI

A short biography of O. CASTELLANI (born: Sept. 11, 1903, Tarquinia nr. Rome; deceased: Dec. 2, 1974, Rome; schoolteacher and founder of the Associazione Romana di Entomologia) is followed by a list of his odonatological publications (1936-1954), all of which are devoted to the Italian fauna.



On December 2, 1974 the death occurred in Rome of OMERO CASTELLANI – one of the best known non-professional Italian odonatologists of the older generation. Although, due to his ill health, in the last years of his life he was unable to work in entomology, his contribution to this field in Italy is certainly worth noting.

Omero Castellani was born in Tarquinia (Lazio, Rome prov., Italy), on September 11, 1903. Nearly the whole of his active life he spent in the village of Acilia near Rome, where he was appointed as a schoolmaster in 1927. His

red house in the centre of the village was for many years a well-known spot for local and foreign entomologists to call on while on collecting trips in that part of Italy.

His first steps into the field of entomology were made under the influence of the Roman entomologist, Paolo LUIGIONI. One of the first of Castellani's all-round entomological activities was his participation in the anti-malaria campaign, organized in the surroundings of Rome by the Italian Government in the 1930's. Throughout his life he was interested in most insect orders, though the asilid flies attracted him most.

As an amateur, Castellani was, in the first place, an enthusiastic and accurate collector. His early collecting activities were centred in Lazio, while in later years he expanded his interests to various other regions of Italy. In this way he brought together a huge material, part of which he worked out himself, while the rest was a subject of studies by various specialists. Cesare CONCI, Carlo

CONSIGLIO, Cesare NIELSEN and J.E.H. ROBERTS among others, published on his odonate material. On the basis of Castellani's collections, Roberts described a new dragonfly taxon, *Coenagrion mercuriale castellani* (1948, Proc. R. ent. Soc. Lond., B, 17: 63-66). After his retirement, in 1968, Castellani's collections were sold. The odonate material is at present kept in the Istituto Nazionale di Entomologia in Rome (Via Catone 34, I-00192 Roma).

With his great enthusiasm for entomology, Omero Castellani exercised a considerable influence on youth, acting as an entomological mentor to young people whenever possible.

It was only natural that Omero Castellani took the initiative for the foundation, in 1945, of the Associazione Romana di Entomologia, in which society he served for many years as President and on the Editorial Board of its Bollettino.

Castellani published numerous popular and technical papers in the field of entomology, including a short textbook of entomology. Next to Odonata, his technical papers are devoted mostly to Diptera (*Asilidae*), Neuroptera, Hemiptera and Hymenoptera.

The loss of Omero Castellani will for long be felt among his many dragonfly friends and correspondents both in Italy and abroad.

ODONATOLOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF O. CASTELLANI

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¹ The paper contains some identification errors, which were subsequently corrected in the 1951 Lazio publication.