

## TO DR. FELICE CAPRA ON HIS 80th BIRTHDAY

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A short biography and appreciation of entomological work of F. CAPRA, one of the best known Italian entomologists, who has devoted a considerable part of his work to the Odonata, are followed by a list of his publications related to this order (1934-1975).

*Dr. FELICE CAPRA was born in Vercelli (Piedmont, Italy) on July 14, 1896. He studied at the University of Turin, where he was acquainted with some famous zoologists such as E. ZAVATTARI, A. BORELLI and G. COLOSI, and took his degree in Natural Sciences in 1923. He soon obtained an appointment at the Genoa Natural History Museum, where he remained as Conservator until 1958, when he voluntarily retired. While at Genoa, he had contacts with some of the major Italian entomologists of that time, e.g. A. DODERO, R. GESTRO and E.*



*GRIDELLI. He was very active in various fields of museum work, and rearranged the entomological and herpetological collections.*

*From 1929 through 1955 Dr. Capra was, first, Editor, and then Editor-in-Chief of the periodicals, "Bollettino" and "Memorie", of the Italian Entomological Society, and, since 1934, also of the "Annali" of the Genoa Natural History Museum, a very ancient and reputed journal. In order to promote rapid publica-*

tion of short research communications, he founded, in 1949, a new periodical of the Museum, "Doriana". The editorial work of Dr. Capra has always been a critical one, and the workers who published in these periodicals at that time do remember very well his minute handwriting at the edges of the proof sheets, and his competent remarks. The latter often concerned problems of nomenclature, a field in which Dr. Capra is a great authority, but which, unfortunately, is often neglected by Italian entomologists.

Notwithstanding his great culture and his numerous technical papers, Dr. Capra has never tried to obtain higher academic positions. Nevertheless, he is an authority always listened to with regard and attention in scientific congresses and gatherings, and to whose judgement many students and established workers alike are eager to submit their draft manuscripts and controversies. As an acknowledgement of his authority and competence, when the National Academy of Entomology was founded in 1953, Dr. Capra was called to take part in it as an Ordinary Member.



Fig. 2. Dr. Felice Capra in the Genoa Museum, November 1953.

In 1966, following the death of his sister, to whom he was very attached, Professor B. BACCETTI invited him to the Institute of Zoology of the Siena University, where he is now still active in the field of entomology.

The greater part of the scientific work of Dr. Capra concerns the Orthoptera and the Coleoptera (especially Coccinellidae, to which family his thesis was devoted), and also biospeleology. He became interested in the Odonata in 1930 and made larger collections from various regions of Italy. Among the numerous valuable results of Dr. Capra's odonatological work one may quote his discovery of *Ichnura genei* Ramb. in the Capraia Island, Tuscan Archipelago (1937), the recognition of the Italian infraspecific forms of *Calopteryx*, with description of *C. haemorrhoidalis occasi* (1945a), and the discovery of a breeding population of *Selysiothemis nigra* (Vand. L.) at the Trasimeno Lake (1963b). He also stimulated odonatological work of various Italian entomologists both by his valuable advice and by supplying them with material. Among these one may quote C. NIELSEN, C. CONCI, O. CASTELLANI, A. MINELLI, I. BUCCIARELLI and myself.

The list of scientific publications of Dr. Capra (over 100 titles) would be larger, if he had not been, as he is, a generous man who always preferred to help others rather than to obtain successes himself. This is why it is rather difficult to evaluate his scientific work, since one should take into account also many papers by other workers, which are in part founded on opinions and material furnished by him.

Men as learned and generous as Dr. Capra are more and more difficult to find in the modern academic world. This is the reason for which we are all so much indebted to him, and we hope and wish that he can continue his work for many years to come.

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