



OBITUARY

Guy Vannier

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Guy Vannier passed away on May 16, 2022 in Quincy-sous-Sénart (Essonne, France).

He was born on May 3, 1936 in Étain (Meuse, France). He did his graduate studies at the University of Nancy (1957-1960), and then began his scientific career at the Institute of Zoology in Nancy (1959-1960), then at the Laboratory of General Ecology of the National Museum of Natural History in Brunoy, near Paris (1960-1961), where he carried out his scientific career up to 2001, directing a research group devoted to soil biology.

He defended his State Doctoral Thesis in Paris on March 29, 1969, on the subject “Reactions of microarthropods to

variations in the water state of the soil”, published in 1970 by the CNRS.

He was a member of the French Zoological Society of France, a founding member of the French Society of Ecology (1968) and the Society of Ecophysiology (1974). He carried out several scientific visits in Belgium, Great Britain, in Moulis (Ariège, France) and participated to numerous international congresses and colloquia. He gave several lectures on his research topics and on ecology in general.

Guy Vannier created a rational methodology in soil ecology and biology, working especially on methods for the study of soil microarthropods (springtails, mites). He invented a soil fauna extractor based on the behaviour of soil animals in a humidity gradient. Thermodynamics and mathematics seemed to him the only possible way to understand the various states of water affecting microarthropods in soil. By combining the thermodynamic approach with the study of effects of varying soil moisture on animal behaviour, he defined the concept of “water availability”. He defined the concept of porosphere in 1973, as the fourth fundamental environment, after lithosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere, where biotic or abiotic processes interact. According to Guy Vannier, the porosphere favoured the evolutionary jump from aquatic to aerial life. He published this contribution to evolutionary ecology in a special issue of “Biology and Fertility of Soils” dedicated to Pr Ghilarov.

His research group studied springtails (Massoud, Thibaud, Betsch, Poinot, Ponge), mites (Cancela da Fonseca), nematodes (Arpin) and protozoa (Coûteaux, Palka), with the collaboration of engineers Alpern, Verdier, and Botalla.

Once retired in 2001, he donated all his precision instruments and publications to the University of Rennes (France). However, he still remained in science and revised the concept of “porosphere” in his last publication in 2020.

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Guy Vannier had a complex and endearing personality, often provocative, of great culture. He liked saying that we should never forget our origin. He spoke with great gratitude and tenderness of his native Meuse and parents. He passed this love to his wife, children and grandchildren, of whom he was so proud.

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