

On Guérin's *Iconographie*: particularly the insects

By CHARLES F. COWAN, F.R.E.S.

Little Gaddesden House,
Berkhamsted, Herts.,
England.

"The dating of the *Iconographie* was discussed by Sherborn¹ (1922: lxiii), where he noted that the text was issued in one block in September 1844 and that without doubt proof sheets were circulated, as the text is often quoted between 1836 and 1842. . . . It would be most helpful if the dating of the *Iconographie* were examined . . ." Hemming.²

SUMMARY

Guérin-Méneville's *Inconographie du règne animal de G. Cuvier* appears to be quite undocumented. Tentative dates for the Insects sections are here given, together with notes on the whole, in the hope that others may discover gatherings of the plates in their original livraisons, and so disclose the full data. The full citation, collation, and dates of livraisons are given at the conclusion. The text is no problem.

HISTORICAL

Baron George Cuvier's *Règne animal* [1816] gained such acclaim that a second edition (1829-30) was prepared. One criticism of the former still applicable to the latter was lack of illustrations. Anticipating this, in 1828 Édouard Guérin offered to publish an Atlas in matching format, and the suggestion was warmly accepted by Cuvier. The plan was to illustrate at least one species of every genus mentioned by Cuvier and Latreille; the species being as far as possible ones new to science or not widely known. The plates were to be issued ten at a time, in 25 monthly livraisons, followed by an explanatory text. At an early stage it must have become clear that the animal kingdom could not be covered this way, even in Guérin's exquisite hand, by 250 plates, and very soon the advertised number of livraisons was changed to 50. This figure proved more accurate, there having been 45 × 10 plates, followed by livraisons 46-50, simultaneously, of about 900 pages of text. Originally six "editions" were advertised (octavo plain or coloured or both, quarto the same) but these were immediately reduced to four (octavo or quarto; plain or coloured), and soon afterwards to three (omitting the quarto plain).

GENERAL, PLATES

This paper considers the insects primarily, but it is necessary to study the overall plan. From the start, "monthly" publication was never achieved, the 45 lots of plates having extended from 1829 to 1837, with a further seven-year lapse before the so-called text appeared.

The ten plates in each livraison consisted of a varying number (0 to at least 7) from each of the ten different animal Classes. Thus on 6 February 1832, three months before he died, Cuvier could proudly announce that, despite the revolution and other difficulties