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L'héritage de Buffon (Éditions Universitaires de Dijon, 2009) : introduction

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Marie-Odile Bernez

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Introduction

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- 1 The papers *Resisting System: Britain, Buffon, and the Avoidance of Linnaeus*, *The Collaboration 'manqué: Petrus Camper's Son at Montbard, 1785-1787*, and *Fire and Life: The Chemical Thought of Buffon* were presented at the conference held at the University of Burgundy in September 2007 in celebration of the tercentenary of Buffon's birth. The conference was concerned with Buffon's cultural and intellectual legacy: the survival and evolution of his scientific ideas and how these have been challenged by later research; the influence of the illustrations and iconography of the *Histoire naturelle* on artists both contemporary and modern; as well as the trajectory of the naturalist's reputation over the last 200 years. Buffon specialists from all over the world gathered in Dijon and Montbard to celebrate the naturalist and discuss his legacy, almost all reading their papers in French. Three contributions however were presented in English. These were subsequently translated into French for inclusion in *L'Héritage de Buffon* (Editions Universitaires de Dijon, 2009). It was decided to make the original English texts available by publishing

them in the online review *Textes&Contextes* – an appropriate choice as all three focus on the interplay between Buffon's writing and its historical context. In *Fire and Life: The Chemical Thought of Buffon*, Violeta Aréchiga studies the sources Buffon drew on in his theoretical chemistry. The article *The Collaboration 'manqué:' Petrus Camper's Son at Montbard, 1785-1787* by Miriam Meijer details his collaboration – or lack of it – with the Dutch naturalist Camper, while in *Resisting System: Britain, Buffon, and the Avoidance of Linnaeus*, Dr Harriet Ritvo looks at the part played by Buffon's ideas in the battles over names and classification that raged in nineteenth-century Britain.

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