

Amateur Astronomy in France, 1789–1830: Two Examples

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Abstract

Historical events affected astronomy in France at this period. Large instruments were also rare so amateurs were on equal terms with professionals. Two significant amateurs are described:

Honoré Flaugerges (1755–1830), justice of the peace at Viviers (Ardèche), observed from 1782 until his death, in particular discovering two comets and recording sunspots.

Anne-Jean P.C. Duc-Lachappelle (1765–1814), studied astronomy in Paris, and set up an observatory in Montauban in 1789, mainly observing planets and Mercury in particular. He had one pupil, Bernier, and set up a local society for arts and sciences in 1796.

Both of these astronomers had numerous contacts with professional astronomers throughout Europe.