

“Enemy animals of human industry” and “the scourge of southern Russia”: the *Tettigopsis*

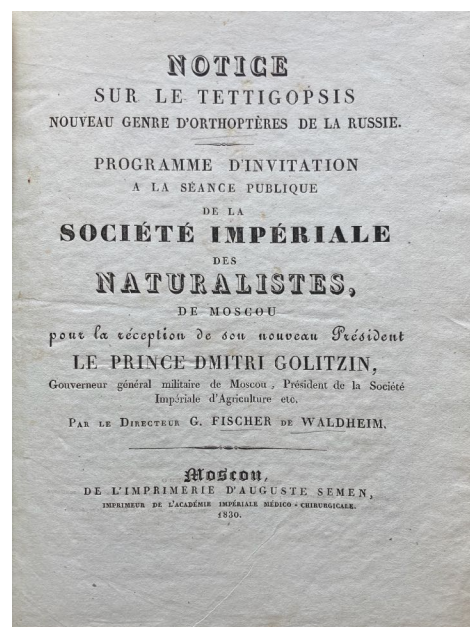


FISCHER VON WALDHEIM (Johann Gotthelf). *Notice sur le Tettigopsis nouveau genre d'Orthoptères de la Russie. Programme d'invitation à la séance publique de la Société Impériale des Naturalistes, de Moscou pour la réception de son nouveau Président le Prince Dmitri Golitzin, Gouverneur général militaire de Moscou, Président de la Société Impériale d'Agriculture etc.*

Moscou, Auguste Semen, 1830.

(26 x 21 cm). 4°: [1]⁴ 2⁴ [\$2 signed]; [1-9] 10-16 pp. One hand-colored engraving. Contemporary cartonnage, turquoise paper spine with handwritten title, and marbled paper, lightly rubbed. Internally a fine copy. The work is known to entomologists but nonetheless rare and listed in less than 10 libraries worldwide (OCLC)—**none in North America.**

\$2300



This rare program, which is also an entomological treatise, was issued for a public event at the Société Impériale des Naturalistes (Moscow, May 25, 1830) at which Fischer von Waldheim, the director of the Society, announced the discovery of a new genre of orthoptera, the *Tettigopsis*, providing a description and thorough taxonomy of the new discovery, but of orthoptera in general, including a bibliography of sources.

The scourge of southern Russia: and the naturalist's mission

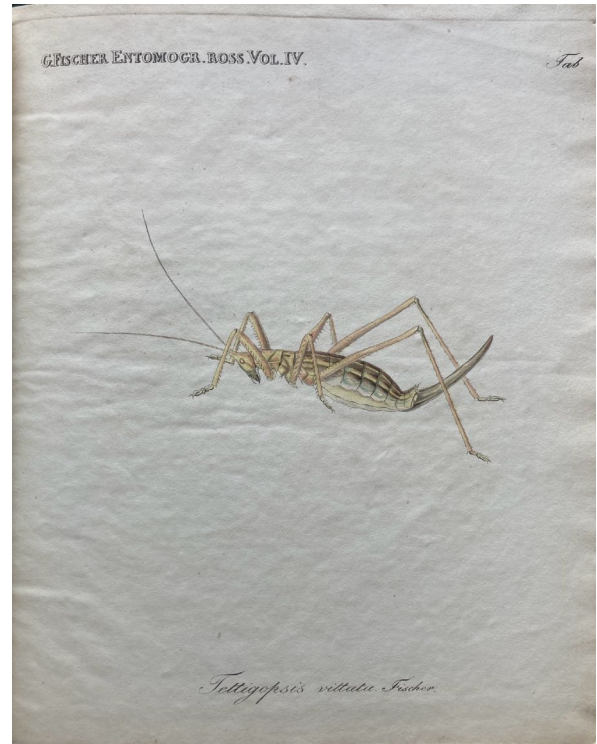
Fischer von Waldheim makes his scientific purpose and responsibilities clear at the outset of his presentation: “To write about insect-orthoptera is to talk about the enemy animal of human industry, because I only have to name the grasshoppers and especially the migratory locusts (Саранча), of this scourge of southern Russia, which are part of this order, and any reader will put aside my writing. But it is nevertheless necessary that the

naturalist also study the customs of pests to try to finally discover the ways to destroy them; it is in this intention that I wanted to describe the orthoptera of Russia..."¹ p. [9].

The program is wonderfully preserved, housed in simple contemporary cartonnage. The full-page hand-colored engraving bears the plate mark, visible at the upper edge of the image at right, and its color remains bright.

A valuable scientific report from the early 19th century.

Grigori Ivanovitch Fischer von Waldheim (1771-1853) was born in Mainz, a friend of Alexander von Humboldt and pupil of Cuvier, and a leading entomologist. He was professor of natural history at the Moscow Academy and director of its museum, and in 1805 he founded the Imperial Society of Russian Naturalists.



¹ Ecrire sur les insectes-orthoptères, c'est parler des animaux ennemis de l'industrie humaine, car je n'ai qu'à nommer les sauterelles et surtout les criquets migatoires (Саранча), de ce fléau de la Russie méridionale, qui font partie de cet ordre, et tout lecteur mettra de côté mon écrit. Mais il est cependant nécessaire que le naturaliste étudie aussi les mœurs des animaux nuisibles pour tâcher de découvrir enfin les moyens de les détruire; c'est dans cette intention que j'ai voulu décrire les orthoptères de la Russie.