

Dupré, Athanase Louis Victoire | Encyclopedia.com

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(*b.* Cerisiers, France, 28 December 1808; *d.* Rennes, France, 10 August 1869)

physics, mathematics.

After early education at the Collège of Auxerre, Dupré entered the École Normale Supérieure in Paris in 1826, gained first place in science in the *agrégation* of 1829, and immediately took a post at the Collège Royal in Rennes. There he taught mathematics and physical science until, in 1847, he was appointed to the chair of mathematics in the Faculty of Science to Rennes. His last post, from 1866, was as dean of the faculty there. He received the Legion of Honor in 1863 but won no other major honor and was never a member of the Académie des Sciences. He was an ardent Catholic throughout his life.

Dupré's scientific career fell into two parts. In the first, which lasted from his years at the École Normale until about 1859, he contributed to several branches of mathematics and physics. The most important of his papers from this period was his entry of 1858 for the competition in mathematics set by the Académie des Sciences. The paper, a study of an outstanding problem in Legendre's theory of numbers, earned Dupré an honorable mention but only half the prize of 3,000 francs.

During the second period, which covered the remaining ten years of his life, Dupré concerned himself exclusively with the mechanical theory of heat, his main interest being the implications of the theory for matter on the molecular scale. He made an important contribution to the dissemination in France of the newly discovered principles of thermodynamics in nearly forty communications to the Academy, in an entry for the Academy's Prix Bordin in 1866 (which again won him only an honorable mention and half the prize money), and in a successful advanced textbook, *Théorie mécanique de la chaleur* (1869).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Original Works. The most important of Dupré's papers were published in the *Annales de chimie et de physique*; those on the mechanical theory of heat were summarized in the *Théorie mécanique de la chaleur* (Paris, 1869). His entry for the 1858 competition was published as *Examen d'une proposition de Legendre relative à la théorie des nombres* (Paris, 1859).

II. Secondary Literature. The only full biographical sketch, by Simon Sirodot, Dupré's successor as dean of the Faculty of Science in Rennes, appeared in the annual publication *Université de France. Académie de Rennes. Rentrée solennelle des facultés des écoles préparatoires de médecine et de pharmacie et des écoles préparatoires à l'enseignement supérieur des sciences et des lettres de l'Académie de Rennes* (Rennes, 1869), pp. 52–57.

Robert Fox