

GENETICS

LAMARCK AND FIXATION OF EPIGENETIC MARKS

29.12.2009

How did epigenetic research start? Thanks to KP I learned about the biography of Paul Kammerer “Der Krötenküsser” by [Arthur Köstler](#). Wikipedia summarizes the rather long (and sad) story

Paul Kammerer (1880-1926) was an Austrian biologist who studied and advocated the discredited Lamarckian theory of inheritance ... Dr. G. K. Noble, Curator of Reptiles at the American Museum of Natural History, ... claimed that the black pads actually had a far more mundane explanation: it had simply been injected there with Indian ink. Six weeks later, Kammerer shot himself in the forest of Schneeberg.

But there are now some more [accounts on Kammerer](#)

Modification of the extracellular matrix of the egg as described by Kammerer provides a plausible cause for altered gene methylation patterns. Traits such as altered egg and adult body size in Kammerer’s “treated” toads are inherited epigenetically in other tetrapods.

When will Kammerer be rehabilitated?