

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910460703203321
Titolo	"Naturalisme pas mort" : lettres inedites de Paul Alexis a Emile Zola, 1871-1900 / presentees et annotees avec de nombreux documents par B. H. Bakker
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Toronto, [Ontario] ; ; Buffalo, [New York] : , : University of Toronto Press, , 1971 ©1971
ISBN	1-4426-5650-6 1-4426-3319-0
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (625 p.)
Collana	University of Toronto Romance Series ; ; 18
Disciplina	843.7
Soggetti	LITERARY COLLECTIONS / Letters Electronic books.
Lingua di pubblicazione	Francese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Preface -- Introduction -- Lettres 1-7, février-septembre 1871 -- Lettre 8, décembre 1872 -- Lettres 9-29, avril-octobre 1875 -- Lettres 30-4, avril-août 1876 -- Lettres 35-40, mars-août 1877 -- Lettres 41-5, août-décembre 1878 -- Lettres 46-63, mai-décembre 1879 -- Lettres 64-70, mars-novembre 1880 -- Lettres 71-100, avril-décembre 1881 -- Lettres 101-15, février-décembre 1882 -- Lettres 116-25, janvier-novembre ^83 -- Lettres 126-36, janvier-décembre 1884 -- Lettres 137-49, janvier-décembre 1885 -- Lettres 150-65, février-décembre 1886 -- Lettres 166-76, février-novembre 1887 -- Lettres 177-93, janvier-septembre J888 -- Lettres 194-203, mai-novembre 1889 -- Lettres 204-6, mai-décembre 1890 -- Lettres 207-9, février-décembre 1891 -- Lettres 210-13, janvier-juin 1892 -- Lettres 214-15, août-novembre 1893 -- Lettres 216-17, août-septembre 1894 -- Lettres 218-19, novembre-décembre 1898 -- Lettres 220-7, janvier-mai 1899 -- Lettres 228-9, juin 1900 -- APPENDICE A. Articles de Paul Alexis -- APPENDICES B-G. Lettres inédites -- APPENDICE H. Articles sur "l'affaire Henri IV" (suivis d'une chronologie) -- APPENDICE J. Articles sur Alexis et les Naturalistes -- APPENDICE K. Repères chronologiques -- BIBLIOGRAPHIE -- INDEX --

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Sommario/riassunto

Paul Alexis was a novelist, journalist, and dramatist, one of the naturalistes, and a friend of Emile Zola. This volume brings together for the first time the 229 letters still in existence from him to Zola. Written over a period of thirty years, from the beginning of Rougon-Macquart to the Dreyfus affair, they are a rich source of information on a particularly fertile period in French literature. The letters are intimate, lacking all pretensions to elegance and stylistic constraints; taken together they describe vividly the private life and thoughts of this fervent naturaliste. Alexis was the first to write a biography of Emile Zola, and his letters will be of interest to literary historians and critics for the fresh light they shed on Zola and on the history of naturalisme. Throughout the correspondence Alexis writes of his activities as a freelance journalist, and provides a first-hand account of the press in France during the nineteenth century. The introduction and numerous biographical notes throughout the volume paint an accurate portrait of Alexis the man and writer, and place him and the letters in context of naturalisme. The letters, all previously unpublished, have been carefully annotated and documented. Included in the appendix are several unpublished documents as well as excerpts of articles from periodicals mentioned in the correspondence; most are signed by Alexis and are concerned with the history of naturalisme. A bibliography includes the works of Alexis and other books of interest to those studying the period.