

Emilio Berio
(1905–1993)



Our distinguished Italian colleague, Dr. Emilio Berio, deceased on October 28th 1993 in Genua, aged 88.

Thanks to the excellent Obituary (in Italian), recently published by Roberto Poggi (Museo Civico di Storia Naturale “Giacomo Doria”, Genova) in *Mem.Soc.ent.ital.* (73: 3–22, 30.06.1995), we can at last present Berio to the numerous colleagues of our SEL and readers of our *Nota lepidopterologica*, who have no access to the Italian review and/or cannot read Italian texts.

Berio started to study Lepidoptera when he was still very young, and he had a real passion for the moths. He could then work on

material stored in the Museo Civico di Storia Naturale “Giacomo Doria” in Genova, especially of different “Heterocera” families, collected mainly in Africa: Arctiidae, Lasiocampidae, Geometridae, Noctuidae, etc.

Later on, he set up a private collection of Noctuidae and spent all his sparetime left from his profession as lawyer to study that family. Thus he described numerous taxa new for science, in total 1,152, including 133 genus and 836 species names.

Beside more than 200 publications between 1932 and 1993, he wrote the two first volumes on Noctuidae of the series “*Fauna d’Italia*”: I. Generalità, Hadeninae, Cuculliinae; II. Quadrifinae.

For his merits, he was promoted Honorary Curator for entomology at the Museo Civico di Storia Naturale “Giacomo Doria” in Genova in 1935, and later (in 1983), Accademico ordinario (i.e. member) of the Accademia Nazionale Italiana di Entomologia. He was moreover Vice-President of the Società Entomologica Italiana, as well as Executive director of the *Boll.Soc.ent.ital.* (1960–1993) and of the *Mem.Soc.ent.ital.* Moreover, from 1982 on, he was Honorary Member of the Sociedad Hispano-Luso-Americana de Lepidopterología (SHILAP).

His world collection of Noctuidae — ca. 1,000 drawers with 70,000 moths and ca. 1,000 slides — is now property of his son.

The death of Dr. Berio came quite unexpectedly (coronary thrombosis), as he was still working actively on the Acontiinae of Sumatra for a publication in the series “*Heterocera Sumatrana*” — most unfortunately for the editors, our SEL members Dr. E. Diehl and Prof. Dr. L. W. R. Kobes.

For me too — and thus for the Naturhistorisches Museum, Basel — he identified all the Noctuidae I collected in Kenya and Tanzania in 1977. From that material, he described one new genus and three new species to science in *Tropical Lepidoptera*, in what became his last publication just before his death in October 1993. I was totally unaware of his age and enjoyed his fast and charming way of corresponding, always with much skill and precision.

With all our SEL Italian colleagues, I will always remember our Nestor and Noctuidae-Mentor from Genova, not only as a prominent Italian lepidopterist, but also as a really helpful and friendly colleague.

† *Emmanuel DE BROS*