

BUPRESTIS

A semi-annual newsletter devoted to the dissemination of information about buprestids and students of this group

Editor: Hans Mühle
Hofangerstr.22a
D-81735 München

Germany

Dear friends,

Here's another issue of BUPRESTIS. I hope all things are going well with you and your family.

I want to draw your attention to the proposal concerning a first buprestologists' meeting in HUNGARY.

For our next BUPRESTIS I expect your news until 15 december, 1994.

Best wishes

Hans Mühle
Editor

A. RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

Svata **BÍLÝ** is still working on North American *Melanthaxia* which work slowly progresses. He started with the world catalogue of *Anthaxiini* (computer catalogue) and then he is gathering all material for the revision of the *Anthaxia* of Thailand.

Brian **LEVEY** has not had much time in the recent years to do much systematic work on *Buprestidae* although he has several papers in various states of completion. He is working now for the Joint Nature Conservation Committee on a three year project to develop a computer database to record habitat information about British insects and other invertebrates, which will be used to help nature reserve managers and other plan their management with insects in mind and not just birds, mammals and plants.

B. SPECIES WANTED FOR RESEARCH OR EXCHANGE

Chuck **Bellamy** writes: I have determined that the Neotropical genus *Isophaenus* is only represented by female specimens that belong to *Xenorhipis*. The four species of *Isophaenus* are represented by only their holotypes and all are females. I would like to borrow any and all material of *Xenorhipis* and *Isophanus* with the exception of *Xenorhipis brendeli*. To complete revisionary projects he also needs material of the following genera: *Sambomorpha*, *Cyphothorax*, *Omochyseus*, *Munduaria* and *Belgaumia*, *Tyndaris* (with Gayle **NELSON**, send to his address), *Alissoderus*, and any Madagascan *Coroebini* for examination in preparation for broad study of tribe from this island.

C. REQUESTS FOR LITERATURE

D. FORUM

Chuck **BELLAMY** comes back to our discussion, what should happen with type specimen.

Despite the debate and the understood arguments on both sides regarding the retention of type specimens in private or personal collections, we continue to see this practice happening. Actually it seems to be happening with an increasing frequency! While I can understand the situation as some of you have written about in some European museums, I can't help but think that you could make this better for all of us by working through some Research Associate status with at least one collection, perhaps in or near the city in which you reside. By retaining the material in your own collections, you will leave open the possibility of another situation such as that with the Georg **FREY** collection, where nothing is available for scientists for many years.

Now we have a new situation: the collection of Antonio **COBOS**! This large and obviously very important resource is currently closed to all of us. Dr. **COBOS** has his collection stored in his home in Almeria, but he is currently living in Malaga and being cared for by his sister. The collection is provisionally destined for ultimate storage in the Madrid museum, but it is not even accessible to them to send out loans.

I completely agree with Dr. **BÍLÝ** when he wrote last year (Sept. 1993, No. 26) that private collectors should make provisions for the transfer of their collections to public institutions upon their death or decline of health, so that other researchers won't have to wait through all of the

subsequent battles and legal disputes before being able to borrow type specimens for their research.

Because of this situation with the COBOS collection, my studies of *Sambomorpha* and *Cyphothorax* are stopped.

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Then he writes: The current proposals for meetings are 1) that by Roman HOLYNSKI for Hungary in 1995, 2) the next Int'l Congress of Entomolgy in Florence in 1996, and 3) my suggestion regarding the possibility of a meeting in Pretoria, where we could combine a day or two of presentations and then adjourn for some time collecting in the bush! I must tell you all frankly that nothing yet has happened from this end, so we must decide if we would rather visit Budapest or Florence. Certainly the arguments in favor of Budapest (a year earlier, topics restricted to buprestids, less expensive) make this idea seem a better one, but how many of us that are dependent on funding will be able to sell the funding institutions on a specialized meeting when they might rather support our attendance at a meeting such as the Int'l Congress. I am very interested in HOLYNSKI's proposal and am prepared to petition to funds to attend, provided there is the promise to meet with a number of you and discuss many different propblems. I believe that we should use the next issue (Jan.'95) to discuss these proposals so that we will have time to seek financial support to travel to Hungary.

Members should write to tell me if they are interested in attending a meeting in South Africa in spring or early summer 1995. Please advice what form the meeting should take place, e.g.symposium, roundtable discussions of current problems, collecting trip.

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Finally Chuck writes: I have found a publisher for my plans to write the next Buprestidae du Monde catalogue and now I wish to offer sections of the family to those who wish to take part of this effort together with me. We may well be able to make some money as well as provide a service by completing a catalogue of this most important beetle family. The publisher wants to produce both printed, hard copy as well as offer this in CD-ROM; such a version would be produced to order and would always be able to be appended. I will design a format and again suggest that those who want to help to plan to do entire taxa rather than just geographical areas.

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Svata **Bílý** spent this spring (February 26 -April 4) some time in Sarawak (Borneo). He gives us the following report:

It was the most exciting trip I have ever had, but this time is really not good for collecting buprestids. I have collected only 17 - 18 species (*Belionota*, *Chrysobothris*, *Endelus*, *Aphanisticus*, *Trachys*)! The best time is October - November I guess (beginning of monsoon). We spent five weeks in water and mud, covered by moulds and nearly sucked by mosquitoes and leeches. Everyday heavy rainfalls, 90 % humidity and temperature about 40 ° C and pure rice diet - you can imagine that the trip was rather exhaustive. We spent some weeks in Central Sarawak living in the Iban's longhouses collecting mainly in the secondary jungle. At the end of our trip we collected in the Gunung Serap National Park (25 km W of Kuching) and at the Mt.Penrissen (1329 m) at the Kalimantan border. At both localities there is a beautiful primary mountain rainforest. There are only a few spots with primary rainforest outside of National Parks in Sarwak and these spots will be destroyed by logging companies within several years. You cannot imagine the deforestation in Sarawak. I have

never seen (incl. the Himalayas) such barbarous and ruthless deforestation. The larger animals (e.g. orangutans, gibbons, etc.) have no chance to survive outside the National Parks. If you wish to see the rest of Bornean primary rainforests you must hurry up!



Roman **HOLYNSKI** has to the questions, touched in BUPRESTIS 26 some minor remarks:

Svata BÍLÝ would "ask private authors for one more sentence in a description of a new taxon (after my death the type material will be deposited in the Museum ...)". I think such a declaration would be perfectly futile (the fate of my species after my death will in no wise depend upon what I write now in a specialistic publication) and unwarranted (I will surely leave my collection either to a person working on Buprestidae or to some museum, but I cannot know today, which one will seem most appropriate after 30 or 40 years - I wish to live long ... - maybe the museum I think of now will no more exist at that time?!).

Shelley BARKER asserts, that if somebody writes "good papers, they will be accepted in good journals" - oh! how nice would it be, if it is true! Unfortunately, it is very far from true! Of course I agree that "if the work is poor it won't be published", the difference between us lies evidently in the question, w h a t is "poor"? In my opinion the quality of a scientific work should be assessed (in the context of acceptance or refusal) e x c l u s i v e l y according to its s c i e n t i f i c merits; in other words, as long as some basic "technical" conditions (general profile of the journal or series, volume, language) are met, the o n l y question to be answered by the editor before making the decision is whether the submitted paper increases (or through interesting hypotheses helps to increase) our knowledge or not? If it does, it should be accepted, because its refusal would be harmful to the development of science; if not, it should be refused, because its publication would superfluously increase the costs (in money, time, effort) of scientific research (as can be easily observed, the risk of wrong decision is strongly "unsymmetrical": refusal of a valuable work is much more dangerous than acceptance of a worthless one, therefore a negative opinion demands extremely solid substantiation!). Unfortunately for most editors (and reviewers) "poor" means "presenting views different from mine" or "not written according to my personal preferences or arbitrarily created standards" and t h i s explains why, indeed, "very few people submit papers that are not returned for major or minor rewriting before they are [considered by the editor as - RBH] acceptable for publication" - if the work is r e a l l y poor (i.e. if it does not contribute scientifically valuable results), no "rewriting" will help! The demand for reviews issues, in my opinion, from the absolutely false assumption that a referee - usually a well-known specialist in his field of research - is automatically better qualified to make judgements in the author's speciality than the author himself; and from the editors' inclination to "self-insurance": it is so convinient to devolve the responsibility for an unjust decision to "anonymous referees" (who are also comfortably "safe" behind the double shield of anonymity and privacy, and easily can - and frequently do! - set forth "arguments" which they would certainly hesitate to publish and sign!). But even if the editors' reason to require reviewing are more or less intelligible, I am perfectly unable to understand why Shelley BARKER - as the author - "would not submit his own papers to a unrefereed journal"! Does he not venture to assume the responsibility for his own works unless the master has corrected mistakes and given a good mark? Maybe I "have an overinflated opinion of my own work", but I really do think that my expertise in the problems discussed in my papers is at least as good as that of anybody else - if I do not

think so, I am not qualified to publish anything! My opinions certainly may be wrong, but the opposite view of a referee is not a proof that they are wrong! Indeed I dare to assume that in the case of such disagreement my views, based on special study of the particular problem are less likely to be wrong than those of a referee, who devoted perhaps ten whole minutes to think the question over ... Of course, this principle "works" in both directions, so - as editor or referee - I would not feel myself qualified to dictate Svata Bílý, Rick WESTCOTT, or ... Shelley BARKER, what and how they must or must not write about "their" Taiwanese *Anthaxia*, North American *Chrysobothris* or Australian *Astraeus*!

This, I think, is all for the moment. Waiting for your comments as to the symposium, for your papers for *Crystal* (Zool.) and of course for any other news from you, I send you my best wishes for professional success and personal happiness.



In our last issue the e-mail adress of Rick WESTCOTT was not correct. It should be changed to: **westcott@mh.odag.or.gov** (please do not put a period after "gov").

Furtheron Rick want's to let you know that there is a mistake in a reference too: **Bellamy**, C.L. & **Westcott**, R.L. (1992) A new species of *Euplectalecia* Obenberger from Guyana (Col.:Bup.).Giorn.it.Ent.6:175-178. It should be clarified that the species actually is from **Colombia**, not Guyana!



BOOK REVIEW

CURLETTI, G. 1994 **I Buprestidi d'Italia**. Monografie di "Natura Bresciana" N.19, 318pp. Available from Museo Civico di Storia Naturali di Brescia, Via Ozanam 4, **I 25128 Brescia**, Italia. Softbound.

This is one book of a series, completing our knowledge of the Italian Coleoptera. The last one, dealing with buprestids, had been published by PORTA 1929. But the present publication is not simply a further supplement to the former *Fauna Coleopterorum Italica*, its of a modern standard, bringing beside the reports of localities all biological and zoogeographical datas of the treated species. The work is completed by distribution maps and additional lists to find out very easy which species can be found in the different regions of Italy, which species lives on what kind of hostplant and what hostplant is attacked by which species. This is a desirable book not only for those interested in buprestids. Some will perhaps miss that there are no keys which allow to determinate the species. But this had not been the aim of the book and - in my opinion - keys should better be done on geographical instead on political borders' level. I wish to express my pleasure about this book and all I hope is that the revision of the African *Agrilus* will be of the same quality.



Do you remember that I asked you to send me photos of you? Some of our colleagues followed this call and here is the first part of our gallery of BUPRESTOLOGISTS:

Brian LEVEY and his daughter Jenny

Above: Vit KUBÁN and Anatoly ALEXEEV

Right side: Jerzy M.GUTOWSKI

From left to right: Ladislav BOČÁK (no buprestologist), Vit KUBÁN, Anatoly ALEXEEV, Jevgeny ZYKOV

From right to left: Kathy, Derek and Rick WESTCOTT



Adresses of yet unknown authors and adress changes:

Michael STUDER
Fürfelderstr.6
1
CH-4125 RIEHEN
SWITZERLAND

Dr.G.HARTMANN
Niedersächsische Forstliche
Versuchsanstalt
D-37073 GÖTTINGEN
GERMANY

Dr.Michael DREES
Im Alten Holz 4a
D-58093 HAGEN
GERMANY

Sonja WEDMANN
Zoologisches Institut und Museum
der Universität
Berlinerstr.28
D-37073 GÖTTINGEN
Germany

Thomas HÖRNSCHEMEYER
Zoologisches Institut und Museum
der Universität
Berlinerstr.28
D-37073 GÖTTINGEN
Germany

Jim R.TURNER
117 Deby Street
PENRITH NSW 2750
AUSTRALIA

Brian LEVEY
28 Princes Street
PETERBOROUGH
Cambridgeshire PE1 2QS
United Kingdom

Gordon C.SNELLING
436 W.Gladstone #153
GLENORA, CA 91740
U.S.A

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