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Book reviews — Buchbesprechungen — Analyses

FIBIGER, Michael, 1990. *Noctuidae Europaeae.* Volume I. Noctuinae I. Edited by W.G.TREMEWAN and L.LYNEBORG. English and French text, 208 pp., 16 col. pls, 28 x 21 cm, hard bound with dust jacket. Entomological Press, Sorø, Denmark. Obtainable from Apollo Books, Kirkeby Sand 19, DK-5771 Stenstrup, Denmark. Price DKK 680,- plus postage (subscribers for vols. 1-12 have a 10% discount).

This is the first part of the long-awaited series *Noctuidae Europaeae*. The series was initiated by the author of the present volume, the Danish lepidopterist Michael FIBIGER, with the help and advice of the most qualified specialists in European Noctuidae. The whole family will be covered in 12 volumes, the first three covering the subfamily Noctuinae.

In Europe, the Noctuinae comprise 242 species, approximately half of which (133) are dealt with in this book. The systematic sequence of the genera, subgenera and species follows the list of European Noctuidae published by HARTIG & HEINICKE (1973) with some deviations which are explained in the text. The book covers 16 genera, from *Euxoa* to *Standfussiana*, thereby including several of the most difficult genera of the whole of the Noctuidae. A large number of taxonomic and nomenclatural changes are found throughout the volume, which undoubtedly constitutes one of its assets. There are four lectotype designations, two new species, nine subspecies, various changes of status (i.e. raised to species or subspecies, reduced to subspecies), 43 new synonyms and nine new combinations. The two new species are *Agrotis yelai* FIBIGER from central Spain and *Euxoa mobergi* FIBIGER, so far known only from central Anatolia, Asian Turkey, which was included only because the taxon was inadvertently included in the plates. The author includes the species belonging to the genera *Actinotia* and *Axylia*, while other authors have placed them in the Amphipyrinae and Heliothinae, respectively. The reasons are explained by the author, though admitting that further study is required to ascertain the correct systematic position of these species. Another debatable point is, for example, the status of *arenoflavida* (SCHAWERDA, 1934). This taxon is considered bona species by YELA & SARTO I MONTEYS (1990), clearly distinct from *Eugnorisma depuncta* (LINNAEUS, 1761), whereas FIBIGER considers it just a southern subspecies of the latter.

For each species, the type locality is given and all synonyms are listed chronologically. The main treatment of the species comprises three sections : "Diagnosis", "Bionomics" and "Distribution". "Taxonomic notes" and "Remarks" are included where necessary. The text is in two columns, in English and French. Distribution maps are given for all species and all of the taxa are illustrated on 16 superb colour plates by David WILSON.

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The diagnosis section contains only a basic description of the wing pattern while concentrating on other characters necessary to distinguish closely allied species and subspecies. Unfortunately this volume includes only a few genitalia figures. However, the author points out that a complete set of both male and female genitalia of all the Noctuinae species treated in volumes 1 and 2 will be published as volume 3 of the series, while in the other subfamilies such figures will be included within the text as far as possible). Reference is always made to genitalia figures if they exist, very often to those published by KOZHANCHIKOV (1937).

The bionomics section contains information on the biotopes, habits and flight periods of the adults. The foodplants of the larva are also mentioned, such information being compiled from various sources.

The zoogeographical distribution type is given, using the terminology of DE LATTIN (1967) . 'Europe' is taken as the area bound by the Ural Mountains in the east to Iceland and the Azores in the west, from Spitzbergen in the north, to the Mediterranean Sea in the south ; the south-eastern boundary follows the coast of Asiatic Turkey, through the Black Sea and the Sea of Asof, then along the Don-Kuma-Manytj depression through the Caspian Sea and along the River Ural to the Ural Mountains. The distributions of each species are only roughly outlined on the maps (the author points out that UTM distribution maps will be published in a separate volume within the "Faunistica Lepidopterorum Europaeorum" project). This however has in some cases resulted in serious inaccuracies, e.g. the map for *Yigoga signifera* does not show the species occurring in the Pyrenees, whereas it has been recorded there a number of times since 1985.

I personally would have preferred a single language (a translation might have been undertaken soon after the first volume appeared), although I understand the practical reasons why the bilingual text was finally chosen.

This work represents an enormous effort of compilation as the last comprehensive treatments of the European Noctuidae were those of SPULER (1910) and CULOT (1909-1917), although SEITZ (1914, 1938) includes them in his third volume of the well-known series 'Macrolepidoptera of the World (Palaearctic Region)'. As the author points out, the book would never have been possible without the help of a large team of specialists from all over Europe who provided valuable information, critical advice and loan of material. It is also certainly true that, if it had not been for the faith, patience, perseverance and stubbornness of Michael FIBIGER, this project, which was conceived as long ago as 1976, would have failed as others have done.

This volume will be indispensible to European lepidopterists and noctuid researchers everywhere, particularly in eastern Asia and North America where many species and a large proportion of the genera are shared with the European fauna. The series as a whole will certainly be a must for all students of European Noctuidae, whether professional or amateur, as well as for museums and libraries.

Victor SARTO I MONTEYS

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