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Book Review

Holloway, J. D., G. Kibby & D. Peggie 2001. The families of Malesian moths and butterflies. Fauna Malesiana Handbooks **3**, xi + 455 pp, 8 colour pls.: 8–174, 125 textfigs. – Brill Academic Publishers, Leiden. – ISBN: 90-04-11846-2. Price: € 118.00.

Though principally addressing Lepidoptera of the Oriental region, this new volume is also of great interest to readers concerned with other biogeographical realms. It is divided into four main sections. The introduction provides profound information about phylogeny, higher classification, biogeography and biology, but also informs about technical aspects of collecting, genitalia preparations, and important literature and reference collections relevant to the focal region, Malesia (i.e. SE Asia and Newguinea). The second section deals with external, and to a lesser degree internal, morphology of Lepidoptera, including early stages. In the third chapter a key to all major families is provided, supplemented with highly informative 'quick fixes' for sorting (tropical) Lepidoptera and their larvae to family level. Also some very thoughtful summary accounts of hostplant relationships are given. The fourth, and main, chapter (180 pp.) consists of brief accounts of all family level taxa (including those not occurring in Malesia) with many hints to diagnostic features as well as biological or biogeographical peculiarities. A selection of fine colour plates (by B. D'Abrera) gives a first glance of the family diversity of Malesian Lepidoptera. Appendices on species richness patterns, pest Lepidoptera, a very extensive and splendidly up-to-date list of references (close to 1000 entries), and indexes to morphological terms and names complete this volume.

This new book gives a succinct introduction into most aspects of the study of Lepidoptera and therefore will be of particular interest to those who are not (yet) experts on this insect order. In many respects it may replace the two treatments authored by I. F. B. Common (*Moths of Australia*, Brill, 1990) and M. J. Scoble (*The Lepidoptera*, Oxford University Press, 1992). In particular, due to its relatively moderate price it will be attractive for those just starting with the study of Lepidoptera or with a smaller budget. Treatments of systematics, biogeography, or diversity issues are of current-edge status. Though much of the information presented is also available elsewhere, this handy and most readable compilation, spiced with numerous new details from the first author's unrivalled field experience with Oriental Lepidoptera, makes this volume a most valuable addition to the book market. If I were asked by a student or colleague which book to choose to become acquainted with Lepidopteran diversity without going lost in detailed handbook length monographs, I would confidently recommend: take that new Holloway et al. volume.

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