

Book Review

HACKER, H. H. (editor): *Esperiana*, Volume 8. 944 pp., 36 colour plates, Schwanfeld, July 31, 2001. ISBN 3-9802644-7-5. Price: € 165.00.

A new volume of *Esperiana*, a book-series edited by Hermann H. Hacker, has been issued two years after the publication of Volume 7. It is again mainly devoted to the fauna of the Middle East (Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Sinai, and Syria). Thirty-one scientific papers on insects are contained which mainly treat Lepidoptera, especially Noctuidae, but also Coleoptera (Elateridae) and Hymenoptera (Formicidae).

Almost all species treated, including many type specimens and habitats, are figured on 36 excellent colour plates, which have been considerably improved over past volumes. Figuring a series of specimens shows the full variability of some species.

The main part of the book is formed by the fauna of the Noctuidae (and Nolidae) of the Middle East (the Levant) (which is also available separately for € 92.00) where 585 species are dealt with. Many corrections to previous misidentifications are made, several new synonymies are recorded, and taxonomic changes are made, considerably improving the knowledge of the Noctuidae of this region. Not only new records to the fauna of the Middle East (79 species) are published, but also two genera, eight species, and 10 subspecies are described as new to science. The historical continuity in systematics is fully respected in the present volume which is in a clear positive contrast to some recent publications by H. Beck. The genus *Clytie* is revised in an appendix, where many lectotypes are selected which is necessary because of the mixed type-series for some species. This thorough revision of the difficult genus was vital for its inclusion in a review of the fauna of this region. A final analysis of the noctuid fauna of the Middle East shows that species with a general Palaearctic arboreal distribution are more numerous than eremic taxa. The careful documentation of the relationships between animal and habitat will hopefully help to highlight the importance of protection of the remaining natural landscapes in this region.

The second part of the volume is somewhat heterogeneous, containing papers on insects of some Levantine countries, and also from other parts of the world (e. g. Ghana, Greece, China, Madeira, Romania, Mongolia, Nepal, Central Asia, Iran, and Kazakhstan). These papers, though not directly addressing the fauna of the Middle East, are of no less importance. Interestingly, Weidlich describes a new noctuid species from Madeira. This is an absolutely unexpected discovery of a clearly recognizable moth in the western Palaearctic region, though its genitalia are figured without aedeagus and the female is still unknown.

This volume is highly recommended not only for every student of the insect fauna of the Middle East, but also to all entomologists interested in taxonomy. The price of € 165,- for the present volume is moderate, taking into account that it is hard-covered and contains excellent colour plates. It can be reduced by 20 % when subscribing to the whole series.

WOLFGANG SPEIDEL

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Zoologisch-Botanische Datenbank/Zoological-Botanical Database

Digitale Literatur/Digital Literature

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