

Book Review

Ronkay, L., J. L. Yela & M. Hreblay (†) 2001: Noctuidae Europaeae. Volume 5. Hadeninae II. 22.2 x 29.2 cm, 452 pp., hardback. Entomological Press, Sorø. ISBN 87-89430-06-9. To be ordered from: Apollo Books, Kirkeby Sand 19, DK-5771 Stenstrup, Denmark. Price DKK 1190 (excl. postage; 10% discount to subscribers to the whole series, Vol. 1-12).

The present volume is the first of two devoted to the noctuid subfamily Hadeninae in the series and also includes substantial addenda to the Cuculliinae treated in the previously published volume 7. It begins with a preface (in English and French) by the Editor-in-chief, followed (henceforth only in English) by a preface and introduction. As usual in the series, a very useful taxonomic and nomenclatural summary follows, with these results: one lectotype designation, one newly described subgenus, one newly described species, four newly described subspecies, four existing names elevated to subspecies level, ten to species level, five to subgenus level and one to genus level, 34 new synonyms, and eight new combinations. The authors tried to arrange the species under already existing subgenera within each genus when applicable. I personally welcome such a decision, which will favour taxonomic stability.

Next comes the systematic part. A novelty, triggered by the turmoil that has swept noctuid systematics during the last decade, is that the subfamilial system originally used for the whole series had to be changed. Now a more tribal rather than subfamilial arrangement has been implemented, since in contrast to many of the 'subfamilies' perpetuated in the literature, noctuid tribes are frequently better supported as monophyletic units. I firmly believe this step to be a significant one in the right direction. As here interpreted, the subfamily Hadeninae includes the classic Hadeninae (sensu Hampson), plus the tribes Xylenini, Episemini, Apameini, Eriopini, Glottulini, and the caradrinoid complex (e.g. *Hoplodrina*, *Caradrina*, *Spodoptera*, *Elaphria*, *Athetis*). The present volume deals with the Orthosiini (with 21 species in six genera), the Xylenini (with 131 species in 31 genera) and the Episemini (with 16 species in five genera).

For the subfamily Hadeninae and for the five tribes dealt with in the book, the authors give very useful up-to-date phylogenetic and taxonomic comments, defending the classification adopted in their work, although mentioning different points of view raised by authors like Beck (1996, 1999), Poole (1995), Kitching & Rawlins (1998) and Yela & Kitching (1999). The reader will certainly be impressed by the amount of very up-to-date and verified data incorporated into the texts of the taxa studied.

For each genus, there are four sections: Taxonomic notes, diagnosis, bionomics and distribution. The first section includes numerous and useful, formerly unpublished taxonomic statements. The most important novelty is the inclusion of an extremely welcome checklist of the Palaearctic species of each genus known to occur in Europe. This places each genus into a proper perspective. Concerning the diagnosis section one happily notices that the description of the external characters as well as those of the genitalia (male and female) are, in general terms, more complete and detailed than those of the previous volumes. Another very welcome novelty is the inclusion, at the end of this section, of a brief description of the larval features thoroughly prepared by Matti Ahola.

Finally, the European species are dealt with one by one, keeping the same four sections as for the genera. A distribution map is given for each species. References to male armature, showing separately the aedeagus with everted vesica, and female genitalia point to 584 (!) superb photographic plates for all 185 European species (and some subspecies) of the tribes, of which a considerable part had never been illustrated before. Likewise, 21 colour plates by David Wilson figure, in life size, those species and subspecies. The book ends with a references list and a useful index.

This book is a must for researchers working on noctuid moths. No doubt it will be indispensable far into the future. The effort devoted into it by the team of authors, editors and photographers is admirable. Only very minor mistakes have slipped through. I also missed the inclusion of colour photographs figuring the final larval stages. The inclusion of such photographs would have enhanced even more the value of the book, as was the case in the previous volume 6. I would urge the editors to consider such a possibility in the forthcoming issues of Noctuidae Europaeae.