

Book Review

Koster, S. & S. Y. Sinev 2003. Momphidae, Batrachedridae, Stathmopodidae, Agonoxenidae, Cosmopterigidae, Chrysopeleidae. – In: P. Huemer, O. Karsholt & L. Lyneborg (eds.), *Microlepidoptera of Europe 5*. – 387 pp. – Apollo Books, Stenstrup. – ISBN 87 88757 66 8. – Available from the publisher for DKK 720.00 (excl. postage).

The recently published volume five of 'Microlepidoptera of Europe' treats six families of the Gelechioidea, the Momphidae, Batrachedridae, Stathmopodidae, Agonoxenidae, Cosmopterigidae, and Chrysopeleidae. 163 species of 37 genera from Europe, northern Africa and the Near East are included. The book starts with an introduction, which includes, among others (e.g. collecting methods, genitalia preparation), a survey of the history of the systematics of the six families. Because the phylogenetic relationships of these taxa have remained insufficiently resolved, the authors still follow 'old traditions in taxonomy of narrow-winged moths'. An overview of all names and synonyms is given in a checklist, completing the introductory part. The systematic part follows, arranged by family. Each family chapter starts with a general part, giving a description of the morphology and life history, information about the distribution and systematics as well as illustrations of typical morphological features of the head, wing venation, and male and female genitalia. The systematic treatment of the genera, subgenera and species of each family gives for each taxon full nomenclatural information and pithy descriptions of the morphology, distribution, and life history. The latter is supported by text-figures illustrating the infested leaves of the mining larvae. The systematic treatment is followed by a distribution catalogue, which lists the occurrence of each species by country. The 15 plates of watercolours showing the adults were produced by Sjaak Koster. These figures are an eye-catcher of the book, with each moth a painted masterpiece. The watercolours are so detailed to allow identification of most of the species just by looking at the wing pattern elements. Nevertheless, looking at the genitalia remains essential if in doubt, especially among very similar species, and in case of worn specimens. Male and female genitalia are illustrated on 123 black & white plates with line drawings, arrows indicating characteristic structures for distinction of very similar species. The book is closed with a list of references, indices to generic names, species names and host-plant names. The interpretations of phylogenetic relationships at gelechioid family level need some comments, because these are sometimes dubious. As an example, two autapomorphies are mentioned for Batrachedridae (p. 51): "wings extremely narrow with reduced venation, and resting position very peculiar." However, it is not specified which reduction is regarded as derived and the resting position is neither described nor illustrated. Moreover, "scanty of species and absence of evident geographic centres of diversity" are no circumstances providing phylogenetic evidence and cannot (!) "speak in favour of the viewpoint that the family represents a small advanced group of gelechioid moths with some very peculiar characters" (p. 51–52). Descriptions like an "archaic larval life style" (for Stathmopodidae, p. 60) rather implicate that the authors reflect intuitive thoughts. Since phylogenetic interpretations are not an urgent need for a field guide, it is unfortunate that such wordings have been included in this otherwise very good book. *Microlepidoptera of Europe 5* is easy to use, full of information for those who want to identify species, study their life history or even find information for a cladistic analysis. It is made for collectors, students and scientists, and those who just love nature. This is a book which shouldn't be missing in any library about European Lepidoptera.

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