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Hausmann, A. 2004: Sterrhinae. – *In*: A. Hausmann (ed.), The Geometrid Moths of Europe 2: 600 pp. – Apollo Books, Stenstrup (ISBN 8788757374). DKK 960.

The latest volume of *The Geometrid Moths of Europe* treats the geometrid subfamily Sterrhinae that includes several taxonomically challenging genera, such as *Idaea* and *Scopula*. Although the Sterrhinae fauna of northern Europe is well-known the opposite is true for southern Europe. The taxonomical information of that fauna has been scattered through the literature, which has often not only been inaccessible both to scientists and amateurs, but also dubious because many of the authors have not been aware of work of others. Therefore an identification book that brings together all that knowledge has been long awaited.

The book treats 196 species of Europe and its adjoining countries, including those of North Africa. It proposes 102 taxonomic changes including descriptions of three new species. The book opens with a short introduction to methodological notes, which is followed by a systematic account of taxa. Diagnoses are given for the subfamily, and for the six tribes and 18 genera to which the species are classified. Species' descriptions contain list of synonyms, available and unavailable names. Diagnoses of imagos and genitalia are short, but this is justifiable because descriptions are accompanied with numerous text-figures and photos, which quite easily guide the reader to look into appropriate characters. For each species a distribution map is presented, accompanied with a written description of distribution area. There are separate sections for phenology, biology, habitat, parasitoids, similar species, and if necessary, for remarks. These are followed by high-quality colour plates, depicting a large number of specimens and showing the variation of external features. The plates that contain small species have been enlarged. For each species a drawn picture of male and female genitalia is shown. The book ends with a systematic check-list of European and its adjoining regions' fauna.

The book is designed for species identification and for this purpose it is excellent. The author has examined an impressive number of 300 000 specimens during the preparation of this volume which certainly gives reliability for the taxonomic judgment. Generally, adequate species identification information is easily accessible and problematic taxonomical cases, which need further study, are clearly mentioned. However, there are a few, admittedly minor things, which deserve a note here. The author has decided not to evert vesicae, even though it is a standard procedure in Lepidoptera systematics nowadays, and these structures have already been shown to be of additional diagnostic value in Sterrhinae systematics. The exclusion of this possible source of information *a priori* is unfortunate. Perhaps it could have given more solid evidence for taxonomic decisions in the difficult species groups, such as the Mediterranean *Rhodostrophia calabra*-group, where other diagnostic features are vague. In this genus the vesica characters have already been shown to offer further taxonomical information by others. Regarding genitalia plates, certain female genital structures have systematically been omitted in figures. Taxonomically important structures around the ostium bursae are omitted or weakly shown and position of the ductus bursae in the abdominal sternite

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is unknown because the latter has been removed from it. Further, the ductus seminalis is not shown in a number of species and in several instances only parts of the genitalia are shown, perhaps as a result of unsuccessful dissection. Also, it would have been useful to reader if the diagnostic features were pointed out in the plates. Another issue is that immature stages are dealt with rather superficially. For a majority of species these are unknown, but descriptions like 'Pupa short, abdomen slender.', as for *Oar*, to cite one example, can barely be considered an improvement when compared with 'Immature stages unknown.' Finally, the book contains several citations to internet pages that offer additional information on taxonomy and biology of the dealt taxa, but when writing this the data were not available. No doubt, when the pages are functional they will offer wealth of further information.

The other part of book, i.e. systematic treatment of taxa, is variable in quality. The taxa are mostly classified according to recent findings, or in the lack recent research, after the traditionally held views. In other instances the author has chosen to favour his own taxonomical expertise. To cite an example, for the generic classification of the Scopulini the author explains well what the recent findings made by other researchers suggest, yet he has chosen not to follow them. The adopted, traditional approach is justified from the point of view of nomenclatoric stability. However, elsewhere, as in the case of *Apostates*, the author proposes novel taxonomic changes with little written justification. In another example the author has failed to make the presented taxonomical decisions easily accessible. Several new species combinations or synonyms are mentioned in the abstract, e.g. synonymy of *Rhodostrophia oxyntis* Prout with *R. xesta* Prout. These non-European taxa are not found in the index because they are not treated in this monograph. By browsing through the book I found the relevant part but there was no additional evidence that could be used to evaluate the conclusion drawn. If the presented taxonomical decisions are not based on transparent evidence, it unfortunately makes results appear suspect even if they are correct.

Despite the comments made above, I wish to emphasise that overall impression of the book is very positive and the author has produced an excellent monograph that is likely to become a standard reference in the field. The book contains a huge amount of taxonomic and biological data and I consider it a must for anyone who is interested in the European Sterrhinae fauna.

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