

**Günter Ebert 2010. Auf Expedition in Afghanistan. Ein Insektenforscher erzählt von seinen Reisen (1957–1971).** – Naturwissenschaftlicher Verein Karlsruhe. 342 pp. (in German) – ISBN 978-3-937783-45-1. Price 39.90 €. \*

To most lepidopterists, Günter Ebert is known as the editor and author of the book series “Die Schmetterlinge Baden-Württembergs”, published in German between 1991 and 2005 (see book review *Nota lepidopterologica* 31 (2008): 24). He travelled to Afghanistan several times between 1957 and 1971 studying butterflies and moths. In his new book “Auf Expedition in Afghanistan”, based on his diary of these travels, Günter Ebert describes his experiences in 22 chapters with 250 original photographs in black and white or colour.

At that time, the world was very different from today. In the 1950s, a flight ticket was much too expensive, and thus, the young enthusiast Günter Ebert travelled by train to Italy, changed to a ship for Karachi, continuing by bus to Afghanistan. A one way journey took him one month (today, we can easily manage an entire trip using air plane and a four wheel drive vehicle within one month). Inside Afghanistan, Günter Ebert met the inevitable time consuming difficulties with bureaucratic officials and slow transportation by corroded buses or going by yak and horse. We are told about the Afghan people he met during his journey, from nature, cities and villages in a poor country, at that time still in peace. The narrations are fascinating and strongly inspirational.

As Günter Ebert received financial support for his travel via Hans Georg Amsel (Karlsruhe) and Walter Forster (München), two men who were interested in the afghan Micro- and Macro-lepidoptera respectively, he collected Lepidoptera, deposited at the zoological collections in Karlsruhe and München today. This material served as a base for many publications on afghan Lepidoptera, including the descriptions of many new species, e.g. of Pyraloidea, by Hans Georg Amsel und Rolf-Ulrich Roesler. In this context, the book also is very interesting as it serves as a rich source of information on the physical geography and vegetation zones of Afghanistan, illustrated by maps. Many afghan localities which are familiar to us from type localities and labels pinned on dried moths are mentioned in the book, along with descriptions on their position and local conditions at that time. An index at the end of the book helps to find these localities in the book, giving different spellings which are in use for the geographic names. The book also contains an index to names of plants and animals and a short list of references.

Beside its value for entomologists, Günter Ebert’s book makes fascinating reading for anyone. It reports from a time before Afghanistan became a country of wars (since 1979!) and thus is a strong contrast to the everyday news in the media. Reading the book makes us dream of a peaceful Afghanistan, with happy people and butterflies on the wings...

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\* To be obtained from: Naturwissenschaftlicher Verein Karlsruhe, c/o Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde Karlsruhe, Erbprinzenstr. 13, 76133 Karlsruhe, Germany; [schmetterlinge-bw@smnk.de](mailto:schmetterlinge-bw@smnk.de)

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