

## Review

Ebert, Günter (ed.) 1997, 1997 & 1998: Die Schmetterlinge Baden-Württembergs. Bände 5-7. Sesiiidae, Arctiidae, Noctuidae. 575 + 622 + 582 pp., 400 + 512 + 483 colour photographs, 360 + 433 + 329 diagrams and drawings, and 133 + 187 + 170 distribution maps. Verlag Eugen Ulmer. Stuttgart. ISBN 3-8001-3481-0, 3-8001-3482-9, 3-8001-3500-0. Price: Ca. FIM 480,-/part.

The most monumental lepidopteran work published in Europe in the 1990s, the Macrolepidoptera (incl. Hepialidae, Cossidae, Zygaenidae, Psychidae and Sesiidae) of Baden-Württemberg, the southwesternmost county of Germany, currently comprising seven brick-size parts, now presents the Noctuidae and two smaller families. In the three last parts alone, to be reviewed here, there are almost 1800 pages and almost 1400 colour photographs! Günter Ebert and Axel Steiner have been the main authors, but part 5 had 15 additional authors (especially many for the Sesiidae). The number of cooperators exceeds 200.

As earlier, very detailed attention has been paid to the local observations on occurrence, phenology, ecology, including the larval food plants, behaviour and conservation. These are, naturally, the most valuable chapters of the book series. I feel that more and more international literature has been included toward the end of the series. In the beginning chapters of the books, conservation of the species has received a detailed treatment.

The reader is really coddled with the abundance of high-quality colour photographs of perfect specimens. In many cases even the polymorphic forms (e.g. *Brachylochia viminalis*, *Noctua fimbriata*, *pronuba*) or at least variable colourations (*Cybosia mesomella*, *Euxoa decora*) are shown separately. The flash-assisted photographs better suit, of course, the night-flying moths than the previously published butterflies. Many shots are great, for instance *Lamprotes c-aureum* and its larva. In general, there are photographs of larvae of surprisingly many species. Difficult species pairs or groups have received separate chapters on their distinctive characters.

In some cases the writers have been able to correct older erroneous data on holarctic distributions (e.g. *Xestia sincera*). However, *Schinia scutosa* is not holarctic as published herein, but is replaced by *S. nuchalis* in North America. It is correct that *Polychrysis moneta* does not occur in North America (the American *trabea* is a subspecies of *P. esmeralda* which is a holarctic species). Further, *Parastichtis suspecta* is a holarctic species, *Xanthia togata* not. Some data from the Eastern Palaearctic are erroneous: *Autographa jota* and *Heliothis viriplaca* do not reach the Pacific, the former extending to W Siberia only and the latter to the Baikal (it is *H. maritima* which occurs in the easternmost Palaearctic). As is well-known, Czechoslovakia does not exist anymore but is divided to two countries.

I enjoyed the fact that the authors take a critical position toward *Diarsia florida* and do not report it from SW Germa-

ny. Similarly, they hope to see reproductive isolation to be proved between *Diachrysis (chrysitis) chrysitis* and *D. (chrysitis) tutti* before the two taxa can be treated as two species.

The authors have not always been aware of the best distinguishing characters: *Apamea unanimitis* is easily separable from *Mesapamea secalis* on the basis of the large central lunule of the hindwing (very small in *M. secalis*). Especially in worn condition, *Eilema complanum* (note that the generic name is a neuter noun) should be confirmed from the presence of an all-yellow collar (medially grey in *E. lurideolum*). Similarly, *Mythinna straminea* can be separated from closely related species by the lilac lines of the collar.

It is interesting for Finnish lepidopterists to note that in the genera *Amphipoea* and *Hydraecia* we have three species which have not been found in SW Germany, *A. crinanensis*, *H. nordstroemi* and *H. ultima*. *Eremobina pabulatricula* is considered to belong to the rarest noctuids of Europe (usually, it is not rare at all in the south of Finland, although it has recently experienced a bottom phase). Of course, in SW Germany, several genera have many more species than in Finland.

These monuments have their long-lasting value. In lepidopterology, the real classics on faunistics and ecology seem to be written in German, although the British are not far behind and the more taxonomical books as those by M. Fibiger on the noctuids of Europe, the voluminous revisions by H. Hacker in Esperiana, the Microlepidoptera Palaearctica series, the MONA series in North America, the Moths of Nepal series and some others have their great values, too.

As I suggested in an earlier review, "Ebert" is going to replace "Bergmann" (*Die Schmetterlinge Mitteldeutschlands*, published in 1951-1955). In addition to being modernized, in many respects Ebert exceeds Bergmann in accuracy. It will be a standard reference book for decades to come, hopefully not only for those who read German, since lots of information can be extracted without mastering the language.

Now we readers eagerly await the book series' final two volumes on the geometrids. Unfortunately, the rumors tell that the officials of Baden-Württemberg have changed their earlier positive attitude toward conservation and that the funding of this project has been interrupted. Therefore the time schedule of the two missing parts is unclear. The Finnish lepidopterologists strongly appeal to the Baden-Württemberg administration to provide the economical conditions for finishing of this important project.

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