

BOOK REVIEW

Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society
60(2), 2006, 179–180

THE GEOMETRID MOTHS OF EUROPE (A. Hausmann, ed.), Volume 2. Sterrhinae. Axel Hausmann. 2004. Apollo Books, Stenstrup, Denmark. 600pp. Hardback ISBN 87-88757-37-4. Priced at 140 Euros on <http://www.pensoft.net/notes/12090.stm>.

This volume represents another significant contribution to a series on European Geometridae that will be seen in retrospect as perhaps the most significant milestone in our understanding of that fauna. Not only does it provide a comprehensive review of our knowledge to date, coupled to an immense amount of fresh research based on exhaustive examination of copious material, but it probably comes at a turning point in the way taxonomic information is presented, with the emphasis moving more towards the electronic media, away from print on paper. The editorial preface indicates the way the volume is embedded within the context of existing or imminent initiatives in electronic informatics for Geometridae. But, as someone who sometimes wonders whether the rush to embrace the electronic age may be more headlong than judicious, given our lack of experience of the security/vulnerability of the internet to all sorts of factors, I am reassured to know that there are hard-copy products such as this to fall back on under any worst case scenario.

The Sterrhinae, after the Larentiinae, are probably the most successful subfamily of the Geometridae in their proportional representation at temperate latitudes, though the Ennominae may have higher numerical representation. They also contain, after *Eupithecia* in the Larentiinae (covered in Vol 4 of this series), the two next most species-rich geometrid genera: *Scopula* and *Idaea*. All three genera pose significant difficulties in identification of their species, so publication of these two volumes has removed this impediment for the European fauna.

The preface notes the strong (particularly western) Mediterranean focus of the subfamily in a European context, relative to the more even distribution of the Larentiinae, but this aspect is not explored to any great extent in the main text, though all the data are there to enable interested readers to analyse it for themselves. For example, there is endemism at a generic level, albeit from genera that are monotypic such as *Anthometra* (eastern Mediterranean) and *Emmiltis* (central Mediterranean), or *Oar*, if regarded as distinct from *Scopula*, with just two species in the

Mediterranean. The five species of *Cleta* are also essentially Mediterranean, and also the genus *Glossostrophia*. *Brachyglossina* includes major N. African and Levantine species groups, with one species in Spain considered to be an outlier of the latter group.

Apart from these smaller genera, the Mediterranean focus is seen to an extreme in *Idaea*, where over two-thirds of the species are Mediterranean, 73% of these restricted to the western part. In *Scopula*, as in the larentiine *Eupithecia*, only one third are Mediterranean, and those are more evenly distributed across that region.

The book reviews extensively the recent taxonomic advances made for the subfamily, but there is still not a full consensus on the generic classification, as indicated by Sihvonen (2005, *Nota lepid.*, 28: 70-71) in his review. There is also discussion of relationships of the Sterrhinae within the family as a whole, where there is growing consensus that the Sterrhinae and Larentiinae are the most basal groups, though relationships between the two lineages of Sterrhinae and the Larentiinae still need further study.

All species are copiously illustrated by color plates showing the range of variation, often accompanied by diagnostic half-tone figures in the body of the text. There are clear line-drawings of male and female genitalia, and some stereoscans of critical features of antennae and legs. As with other volumes, the description of the adult is headed as a diagnosis, and the true diagnosis is found as an account of differences of similar species. The text for each species includes extensive reviews of available biological and ecological information, drawing on the breadth of literature and current expertise on the fauna. Most species have larvae that are herbaceous feeders, those of *Idaea* tending to prefer dried or withered foliage. However, the larvae of the genus *Cyclophora* are arboreal defoliators.

The systematic checklist at the end of the book also lists, with asterisks, species from neighboring areas, a particularly useful addition given the Mediterranean nature of the group, enabling the reader to appreciate how the diversity extends to N. Africa, Turkey or the Levant. Species from Madeira and the Canaries are also listed. The distributions of all species are illustrated by maps with shaded areas indicating the general range within which are placed black circles or other symbols indicating more precise localities from which material

has been examined.

The book brings together an immense and diverse amount of information in a clear and cohesive manner that will retain its value for many years to come. It is therefore an investment well worth making.

JEREMY HOLLOWAY *Entomology Department, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London, SW7 5BD, UK Email: j.holloway@nhm.ac.uk*

COVER PHOTOS SOLICITED

The Journal solicits high-quality color photographs for consideration as cover illustrations. The photographs may illustrate any aspect of Lepidopteran biology.

Digital image files saved to a CD are preferred. Submit digital files with a vertical orientation of approximately 1770 pixels by 2200 pixels at a resolution of at least 120 pixels/cm in *.tif format. If you wish to submit printed photographs, please ensure that they are vertical in orientation (approximately 5.5 inches wide X 6.75 inches long or 14 cm wide x 17 cm long;).