

NOCTUELLES ET GÉOMÈTRES D'EUROPE, Volume II, by Jules Culot. Republication by Apollo Books, Lundbyvej 36, DK-5700-Svendborg, Denmark. 243 pp., 81 color plates. DKK 1,380.- for Vols. I-II, and also for Vols. II-IV. DKK 2,500.- for all four.

This book and its companion volumes are a complete facsimile of the original edition (1909-1920) of Culot's work without additional text. The language is French. This particular volume covers quadrifine noctuid subfamilies and a significant proportion of the trifines: Cuculliinae, Heliiothinae, some Hadeninae, and some Amphipyriinae. Vol. II completes Noctuidae, and the remaining two cover Geometridae.

For each species covered there are diagnoses and brief details of distribution, biology, and phenology. All are illustrated in color with Culot's skilled and accurate artwork.

At the time of publication, the series was intended to give a complete coverage of the two families for Europe. The author was in contact with notable lepidopterists of his time, particularly Charles Oberthür, and the work was well received by contemporary reviewers who commented both on the crying need for such a work and on the then unsurpassed quality of the illustrations (Entomol. 42:326-327). It is now presented unchanged to a new readership 70 years after its original publication.

I cannot comment on its value as a collector's item. The vagaries of book collectors are unfathomable; the practicing entomologist can only fulminate when useful but old and rare books are sold at prices inflated beyond the range of his pocket. But both will consider the quality of the color plates, the former on faithfulness to the original, the latter on faithfulness to life. The former is likely to be more disappointed because the reproductions lack some of the vivid quality of the originals, and some, but by no means all, have acquired an unfortunate fine speckling. The silvery white patches on some *Cucullia* species on Plate 62 have become clouded with pale ochreous brown, perhaps because the printer considered the accurate originals to look "washed out".

Even with this loss of quality, the practicing entomologist will find that the illustrations stand comparison with most similar modern artwork and reproduction. However, as a means to identification, skilled reproduction of sharp, accurate color photography must take precedence.

The nomenclature used in the work has, of course, become dated in many instances, particularly generic combinations. The book would thus have been much more valuable to practicing entomologists had the publishers commissioned a specialist on European Lepidoptera to write an introductory section including a modern checklist (with cross-reference to text and plates) of the species covered, and comments where advances in systematics have changed the picture (discovery of species complexes), or where further systematic work needs to be done.

Now, as then, there is great need for a modern, comprehensive, authoritative, well illustrated treatment of the European macrolepidoptera fauna, with full investigation of the plethora of scattered type material. Reproduction of a 70-year-old work is no substitute, but it may serve to concentrate the minds of European lepidopterists on the need for a coordinated continent-wide campaign rather than fragmentary regional skirmishes. The proposed *Faunistica Lepidopterorum Europaeorum* (Nota Lepid. 4:90-94) is a promising move in this direction.

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