

urniidae for the beginner. It is a well-organized work, apparently free of misspellings and typographical errors. The value of the book to readers in Africa is indisputable. However, I expect that many copies will be sold outside of Africa, because this group is unquestionably the most widely collected and reared of any moth family.

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Journal of the Lepidopterists' Society
50(4), 1996, 355–356

SATURNIIDAE MUNDI: SATURNIID MOTHS OF THE WORLD, PART 1, by Bernard D'Abrera. 1995. Published by Automeris Press, Sportplatzweg 5, D-75210 Keltern, Germany, in association with Hill House, Melbourne & London. 177 pages, 76 color plates. Hard cover, 26 × 35 cm, dustjacket, ISBN-3-931374-01-7, £195 (about \$300 US).

This is the first of three volumes proposed to cover the Saturniidae of the world. It includes all of the Arsenurinae, Ceratocampinae, most of the Hemileucinae (including *Automeris* and *Hemileuca*) i.e., groups all confined to the New World, plus the Palaearctic Agliinae. The stunning color photographs show all species life-size. Looking at one of the color plates is exactly like looking into a case with real specimens—there is absolutely no room for improvement on the illustrations. Upon receiving this book, I felt as if I had acquired a huge collection of hundreds of real specimens for me to use and show. It is books such as these that stimulate young people to become lepidopterists. If someone wants to become familiar quickly with the diversity of this moth family, *Saturniidae Mundi* will serve that purpose better than anything else.

The introductory text is largely a philosophical discussion, which is interesting and held my attention. To some scientific-minded readers who rarely or never expose themselves to writings by philosophers, it may be boring or even threatening, but it does not detract from the utility of the book. D'Abrera points out that his book is intended as a pictorial catalog to the Saturniidae collection at the Natural History Museum (BMNH) in London, not as a complete treatment of the family. Of course, using that particular collection ensures that the coverage will be close to complete. The author is also accepting loans from lepidopterists in other countries of specimens or photographs of species missing from the BMNH collection, some of which appear in the last two plates of Part 1.

D'Abrera has a nice historical appreciation of early literature and workers on Saturniidae. Photographic portraits of several Saturniidae specialists are shown at the beginning. He reproduces for us two of Jacob Hübner's color plates from two centuries ago. As a taxonomist, I find the citations to original descriptions of all species covered to be a very useful aspect of the book. Although the Cercophaninae and Oxyteninae are now considered by most to be in the Saturniidae, unfortunately I do not expect that they will be included in *Saturniidae Mundi*.

Since I do not work with butterflies, I have been largely unaware of the monumental works that D'Abrera has given us in the last quarter century and of the criticisms of those books. So I did some checking, both on the telephone and by reading reviews in journals, including this one. Although many do appreciate and value D'Abrera's work, I am frankly disturbed that the invalid, irrelevant, and even malicious criticisms outweigh the valid and constructive criticisms. Some examples follow.

1. "There are some species missing." I addressed this above.
2. "Edges of wings of some specimens run into the binding of the book." At least D'Abrera shows us the whole insect. Many works show us a lepidopteran body with only the right or left wings; we can only assume such specimens fly in tight circles. Incidentally, this problem has been corrected in his recent books, including this one.
3. "There are no range maps." This borders on the ridiculous. If I cannot even draw the distributional limits of the "well-known" saturniid *Antheraea polyphemus* in Canada,

Mexico, and the Great Basin, then how can D'Abrera be expected to do it for hundreds of tropical insects? I believe that a map showing a range that is greater or lesser than the real one is worse than no map at all, as it often will be misleading.

4. "The books are too expensive." Given the limited sales and high production costs for books of this type, can we expect to pay much less for a book with a large number of top-quality color plates and high-quality binding and printing? Should D'Abrera simply not produce the books because many will not be able to buy them? I cannot afford to buy a Greek island or even a yacht to get me there, but I never grumble about it. Some of the Seitz volumes in my museum's library have a price of £22 written in them, and they now would sell for hundreds. Perhaps fifty years from now people will say "It used to be possible to buy D'Abrera's books for just \$300 each!" (Investors, are you listening?).
5. "Some of the species shown are misidentified." Considering that saturniid taxonomists have worked intensively in recent years in the BMNH collection, was it not reasonable for D'Abrera to assume that the specimens were correctly identified and arranged? Where does the blame really belong on this point?

As I said above, some of the other criticisms are valid. I would agree that some errors of names on the wrong illustration could be avoided by more careful checking of galley proofs. With the help of Kirby Wolfe, I am able to point out the following errors or suggestions for improvement:

1. Pages 102–103: there is no mention of the yellow male form of *Lonomia electrae*, so someone with such a specimen would likely misidentify it as *L. achelous* using this book.
2. Pages 120–121: the male figured as "*Automeris* sp." is *A. tridens*, better though wrongly known as *A. rubrescens*.
3. Pages 160–161: a specimen of *Paradirphia winifredae* is misidentified as *P. semi-rosea*. The latter is more widespread, yet not shown in this book.
4. Page 162: *Rhodirphia carminata* does not occur in Mexico, despite what Draudt (*in Seitz*) wrote.
5. Pages 166–167: the designer transposed seven names onto the wrong figures. *Paradirphia valverdei* is mislabeled as *Automeris peigleri*; *Paradirphia winifredae* is mislabeled as *Automeris stacieae*; *Automeris peigleri* is mislabeled as *A. ahuiotli*; *Leucanella hosmera* is mislabeled as *P. valverdei*; *Automeris stacieae* is mislabeled as *Paradirphia manes*; *Paradirphia manes* is mislabeled as *P. winifredae*; *Automeris ahuiotli* is mislabeled as *Leucanella hosmera*.

An errata sheet will easily correct all such errors. Regarding page 42, I believe that D'Abrera has done a fine piece of detective work pertaining to correct application of the name *Paradaemonia castanea*, and I agree with his conclusion. He clearly does not blindly accept all other taxonomic work.

If my defense of D'Abrera and his work enrages his critics, they should consider that *some* of their complaints irritated me and presumably others. I suspect that D'Abrera's worst critics buy and routinely use his books. By offering some invalid criticisms, they discredit themselves to the point that others do not take their valid criticisms seriously. I have on occasion published sarcastic and unkind reviews of books, but I feel no justification for doing so here. It is easy for the critic to tear apart in a few minutes what someone else took many months to produce.

D'Abrera's new book supports my claim that the Saturniidae are the most spectacular and popular of all moths. In spite of criticisms from me and others, the work is beautiful and extremely useful. We have some of the other volumes of his works in my museum. I routinely pull *Sphingidae Mundi* (1986) off the shelf to check something. I anticipate using and enjoying *Saturniidae Mundi* for many years to come. Despite the high cost, I highly recommend this book for museums, universities, and individuals.

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