

BOOK REVIEW

NILSSON A.N. & VONDEL B.J. VAN: AMPHIZOIDAE, ASPIDYTIDAE, HALIPLIDAE, NOTERIDAE AND PAELOBIIDAE (COLEOPTERA). In: World Catalogue of Insects, Volume 7. Apollo Books, Stenstrup, Denmark, 2005, 171 pp. ISBN 87-88757-49-8. Price excluding postage DKK 320 from the publisher.

The seventh volume of the series "World Catalogue of Insects" is the fourth on water beetles. This time, Anders Nilsson, who treated the Dytiscidae in Volume 3, joined forces with Bernhard van Vondel, a leading Dutch specialist on the Haliplidae. Together they cover most of the remaining, "smaller" families of aquatic Hydradephaga (5 species of Amphizoidae, two Aspidytidae, 204 Haliplidae, 250 Noteridae, and six Paelobiidae), leaving only the very recently described Neotropical family of Meruidae with a single species and the Gyrinidae with more than 1,000 described species. I have not forgotten the Hygrobiidae – Anders Nilsson decided, perhaps controversially, to replace this long-used name with Paelobiidae.

Following the established structure of the series, the third volume is again divided into a brief joint introduction followed by five chapters on the families treated, each with its own and more substantial introduction, the catalogue, appendices (nomina nuda of unknown identity and/or species excluded from the family) and references. The book concludes with a detailed joint index.

This volume combines the strong points of Hansen's volumes on the Hydrophiloidea and the Hydraenidae (more detailed distributional data) and Nilsson's volume on the Dytiscidae

(detailed information concerning the status of the type specimen and references to major relevant taxonomical papers), but does not include information on the fossil taxa.

The approach of co-authors to higher-level taxa in the Haliplidae and the Noteridae is somewhat inconsistent, reflecting perhaps the different levels of knowledge about each group. While Bernhard van Vondel does not recognize any subfamilies or tribes in the Haliplidae, Anders Nilsson establishes a new monobasic tribe, the Pronoterini, within the Noterinae. The catalogue does not introduce any replacement names but proposes quite a few new synonyms and combinations, which unfortunately are not listed separately. An interested reader thus lacks a quick overview of changes resulting from all the meticulous research underlying this catalogue.

This catalogue is generally presented with great precision, characteristic of this series. Errors and omissions are scarce and minor (e.g., the incorrect information on the depository of the holotype of *Brychius obenbergeri* Říha, which is now housed in the Natural History Museum in Vienna, and the missing Czech accents in its type locality). The book thus adds another most valuable piece to the Earth's biodiversity jigsaw puzzle. It is only a pity that the World Catalogues cannot be accompanied by electronic versions. I understand that their release might be hampered by copyright restrictions, but I hope that this issue can be resolved at some point in the future, making the Catalogues a continuously updated source of information for taxonomists and conservationists alike.

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