

BOOK REVIEW

KONSTANTINOV A., TISHECHKIN A. & PENEV L. (eds) 2005: CONTRIBUTIONS TO SYSTEMATICS AND BIOLOGY OF BEETLES – PAPERS CELEBRATING THE 80TH BIRTHDAY OF IGOR K. LOPATIN. Pensoft Publishers, Sofia, xvi + 388 pp. ISBN 954-642-233-9. Price EUR 78.90 (hardcover).

Igor K. Lopatin has been an extremely prominent and prolific figure in beetle systematics and biogeography in the former USSR, training generations of students as beetle systematists, and increasing enormously our knowledge about Central Asian and Eastern Mediterranean beetles thanks to his research in Afghanistan, Iran, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Mongolia, and Tadjikistan, among others. But his influence went certainly beyond the iron curtain because of his professional relationship with entomologists all over the world, his important role in providing taxonomic order for an almost unknown fauna and the international projection of some of his former students. His professional activity continues until today with the same enthusiasm and almost with the same scientific production rate. The 80th birthday of such reputed figure in entomology is the “excuse” by some of these students to edit a nice contributions volume on systematics and biology of beetles, which has recruited 42 contributors from seventeen countries all over the world.

This volume is divided into two well-differentiated parts, one dealing with taxonomic and faunistic papers on Chrysomelidae (14 chapters, 193 pages), the beetle taxon that the homaged Prof. Lopatin has devoted most of his career, and one dealing with other beetle families (14 chapters, 165 pages). The part dedicated to chrysomelids includes fourteen chapters with several systematic papers mostly directed to the subfamily Alticinae from several geographical origins: Nearctic *Altica ignita* (Chapter 8, LeSage & Zmudzinska), Oriental *Aphthonoides* (Ch. 4, Doeberl), Afrotropical *Chaetocnema* of the *conducta*-group (Ch. 1, Biondi & D'Alessandro), Oriental *Hesperella* (Ch. 12, Takizawa), and Indian *Panilurus* (Ch. 12, Prathapan & Viraktamath). One chapter (Ch. 3, Daccordi) is a taxonomic study of the Australian Chrysomelinae genus *Strumatophyma*. In all, twenty Chrysomelidae species belonging to five genera are described, eight species and one genus are re-described and two taxa are proposed to change status (one elevation to species and one synonymy). Six dichotomous keys are available for Oriental *Aphthonoides*, Afrotropical *Chaetocnema* of the *conducta*-group, genera related to Southeast Asian *Hesperella*, Indian *Panilurus*, Australian *Strumatophyma* females and the Israeli species of the subfamily Chrysomelinae (Ch. 6, Friedman et al.). Besides traditional taxonomy, the book includes one paper on the chemotaxonomy of several western Mediterranean species of the chrysomeline *Timarcha*, where electrophoretic patterns of esterases are studied and described (Ch. 11, Petitpierre). Some contributions focus on biodiversity studies of leaf beetles in the Hermon mountains of Israel (Ch. 2, Chikatunov & Pavlíček) or the Bulgarian mountains (Ch. 7, Gruev), with analyses of faunistic affinities and altitude distributions in both cases, the diversity of the subfamily Chrysomelinae in Israel (Ch. 6, Friedman et al.) or the distribution of the *Cryptocephalus hypochaeridis* group in the Carpathian basin (Ch. 14, Vig). Three studies investigate host-plant relationships for the alticine *Psylliodes pallidicornis* in Turkey (Ch. 5, Dorofeyev et al.), the chrysomeline *Chrysolina pedestris* in Kazakhstan and southern Siberia, with a description of imma-

ture stages (Ch. 9, Mikhailov) and the hispine *Acentroptera pulchella* in South America (Ch. 10, Mantovani et al.).

The part of the book on non-Chrysomelidae beetles is also heavily oriented to systematic studies, with ten taxonomic papers on Apionidae, Buprestidae, Carabidae, Curculionidae, Histeridae, Scarabaeidae, and Tenebrionidae. The book provides descriptions for 21 new species in thirteen genera, two new curculionid subgenera and two new genera, one tenebrionid and one histerid, respectively; five genera and one species are re-described and eight synonymies are proposed. The systematic position of the afrotropical apionid genus *Millapion* and a new species are described in Chapter 17 (Friedman & Freidberg); new descriptions of Oriental buprestids in the genera *Acmaeodera* (Ch. 28, Volkovitsh) and *Aphanisticus* and *Sphenoptera* (Ch. 19 & 20, Kalashian) are presented; the carabid genus *Sinozulus* from China (Ch. 15, Belousov & Kabak) and the *Ophoniscus* complex from the Afrotropical and Oriental regions (Ch. 21, Kataev) are revised; two new subgenera and species of the curculionid *Polydrusus* are described from Iran (Ch. 22, Meleshko & Korotyaev); a new genus and three species of central Asian histerids are described in chapter 27 (Tishechkin); and finally it is described one new afrotropical species of the scarabaeid genus *Namakwanus* (Ch. 18, Frolov). Keys are made available for the Oriental species of the *Aphanisticus subfasciatus* group (Buprestidae) and the *Ophoniscus* complex (Carabidae), for the Chinese species of *Sinozulus* (Carabidae), and for the Central Asian species of *Turanostyphrus* (Histeridae). Another chapter describes new middle Asian tenebrionid taxa and investigates the distribution of some desert tenebrionids in this region of the Palaearctic (Ch. 23, Medvedev). But the latter is not the only contribution interested in faunistics and biodiversity of Coleoptera. Two other papers study the distribution of thirteen families of aquatic beetles (Ch. 24, Ryndevich) and eighteen families of cucujoids (Ch. 26, Tsinkevich) in Belarus. New distribution data for dytiscid species in the Holarctic is the subject of Chapter 25 (Shaverdov). And finally, the book contains an ecological study focusing on the communities of carabids and staphylinids obtained by pitfall trapping transects running through two types of forest (pine and deciduous plantations) in Belarus (Ch. 16, Derunkov).

This volume also contains a list of all taxa described by I. K. Lopatin, including one Leiodid and 574 leaf beetles, mostly in the subfamily Cryptocephalinae, but also in the Chrysomelinae. Finally, the book closes with the list of publications by the homaged entomologist from 1950 to 2005, including 194 publications.

The book is published by Pensoft in their characteristic high-quality hardcover edition, in glossy paper with good black and white drawings and pictures. Among the editors of this volume there is L. Penev, chief editor of the publishing house, which is an additional guarantee for a careful edition, and former students of Prof. Lopatin currently working in the Entomology departments of two prestigious USA museums.

In summary, this volume is certainly a valuable tool for the specialist in the taxonomic groups it covers, a great source of taxonomic and biogeographical information on beetles from around the world, and an interesting reading for beetle systematists and biologists. It should be in the libraries of every research and academic institution or department devoted to insect systematics.

J. Gómez-Zurita