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BOOK REVIEW

PFEFFER A.: ZENTRAL- UND WESTPALÄARKTISCHE BORKEN- UND KERNKÄFER (COLEOPTERA: SCOLYTIDAE, PLATYPODIDAE). Pro Entomologia, c/o Naturhistorisches Museum, Basel, 1995, 310 pp., ISBN 3-9520840-6-9. Hardbound. Price CHF 45.00.

My book reviews are usually long overdue, and this one is no exception. When I received the book in late 1995, I had no idea that the review would be at the same time an obituary. Antonín Pfeffer, our long-time collaborator and former member of the Editorial Board, died 19 February 1997, at the age of 93. This book, summarizing the results of his lifetime devotion to bark beetles, is therefore an appropriate corollary of his scientific career.

The book, first published as a journal article [*Entomol. Basil.* **17**, 1994 (published 1995):

5–310], treats the bark beetles (Scolytidae) and ambrosia beetles (Platypodidae) of the Palaearctic region, with the exception of the Canary Islands and the Far East, and is composed of several parts. A short cursorial general introductory section (sometimes perhaps too superficial and fragmentary) deals with aspects of biology (such as trophical relations to plants and fungi, behavioural aspects, reproduction and brood care, gallery systems, succession and interspecific relations) and types of geographical distribution. The following, main part of the book is a systematic treatment containing short characteristics of supraspecific taxa, keys for identification of adults down to species or subspecies, synonymies, and biological and distributional notes. One new subspecies is described, and one new species name is established replacing a junior homonym. The next part is a list of host plants with associated bark beetle species. A list of literature, somewhat arbitrarily divided into Monographs and Catalogues, Bibliographies, and a third subdivision entitled "Einzelne wichtige Beiträge", is followed by a taxonomic index. The book ends with a block of 48 pages of illustrations of bark beetle morphology (line drawings and scanning micrographs prepared by M. Knížek) and gallery systems (photographs by V. Zumr).

Bark and ambrosia beetles are of considerable practical importance and are for traditional and practical reasons frequently treated as separate families by specialists, although beetle taxonomists currently tend to include them as subfamilies within the family Curculionidae (even in its narrow sense). These tendencies are not mentioned, and a few surprising points can be found in the classification used (for a review by a specialist see Beaver, *Entomol. Mon. Mag.* **132**, 1996: 303–304). The most prominent surprise undoubtedly is the reviving of the Scolytoplatypodidae (containing a single genus *Scolytoplatypus* Blandford) as a separate curculionoid family, without the slightest explanation other than bringing up the differences from Scolytidae and Platypodidae in the family key on p. 31. *Scolytoplatypus* is always included in Scolytidae in recent beetle compendia, and such an unexpected action (the more so because the genus does not occur in the region treated in the book) would certainly require careful argumentation.

A few further nomenclatoric notes follow which may be useful to the reader. Pfeffer divides the family Scolytidae Latreille, 1807 into the subfamilies Hylesininae Erichson, 1836, Ipinae Reitter, 1894 and Scolytinae Latreille, 1807 (I note that the subfamily Scolytinae cannot be included "as a tribe within the Ipinae" as Beaver suggests, since the family Scolytidae would be thus left without its nominate subfamily Scolytinae which is of course against the nomenclatoric rules). Lawrence & Newton (in *Biology, Phylogeny, and Classification of Coleoptera Vol. 2*, Polish Acad. Sci., Warszawa, 1995, p. 913), who obviously undertook painful re-examination of higher category beetle names including their authors and validity, list Latreille, 1804 (a publication not cited by Pfeffer) as the correct year for the family-group names based on *Scolytus* Geoffroy. The same authors consider the status of the name Ipinae uncertain, and list Bedel, 1888 as the first correct use of a family-group name based on *Ips* DeGeer. On pp. 207–208, the author ascribes the family Platypodidae to Latreille, 1802, the nominate subfamily Platypodinae to Strohmeyer, 1911, and the nominate tribus Platypodini to Schedl, 1938. This is incorrect (family-group names based on the same genus bear the same author and date); moreover, Lawrence & Newton list Shuckard, 1840 as the author.

Some statements from the general introductory chapters appear oversimplified or even incorrect. The subsection entitled "Intraspezifische Beziehungen", for example, begins with: "Innerhalb der Ordnung Coleoptera ist Brutpflege durch Männchen und Weibchen nur bei den Borkenkäfern anzutreffen." Such care for offspring does exist in other beetles (e.g., in Nicrophorinae or Passalidae).

Regardless of the author's few imprecisions, "idiosyncrasies" (Beaver), and occasional formal inconsistencies (which could have been eliminated by more careful proofreading), the book certainly makes a major contribution to the knowledge of bark and ambrosia beetles. Unlike the previous two author's comprehensive works (concerning only Central Europe) which were published in Czech, this one, being in German, is much more widely accessible. It will be indispensable (particularly as an identification tool) to both coleopterists and forest entomologists. We were lucky that it was finished just in time, and the author deserves an "in memoriam" acknowledgement for his devoted efforts as an excellent specialist.

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