

BOOK REVIEW

CALDER A.A. 1998: COLEOPTERA: ELATEROIDEA. In Wells A. (ed.): ZOOLOGICAL CATALOGUE OF AUSTRALIA. Vol. 29.6. CSIRO, Melbourne, XIII + 248 pp. Hardbound. ISBN 0-643-06354-4. Price not stated.

The Zoological Catalogue of Australia has been recently reviewed as a complete series in the pages of the European Journal of Entomology by P. Štys (Vol. 95: 63–64, 1998) and we now have in hand a new entomological volume. This volume covers the coleopteran superfamily Elateroidea, including the families Rhinorhipidae, Eucnemidae, Throscidae, Elateridae, Lycidae, Lampyridae and Cantharidae, which are represented in Australia by 129 genera and 1,105 species. The introductory chapter covering the whole superfamily, as well as chapters on the individual families and/or subfamilies bring together the most recent information on each group and can be very useful to the taxonomist. Each species entry is accompanied by everything necessary for taxonomical work (citation of original description, type data, type locality, synonymy, distribution, ecology and biology). The series of Zoological Catalogues of Australia are well organised, serving as a printed database composed of the most comprehensive and recent information on each species in Australia. We still await a similar work on Palaearctic fauna.

The spirit of computers is encountered on every page of the Catalogue. The alphabetical database format and repeated information in every entry are logical and this can help if you are not a specialist, but for the specialist on a particular group it can be uncomfortable. This is an obvious cost of its computerised logi-

cal arrangement, which does not respect the phylogenetic relationship of groups below the family level.

Any attempt to improve the nomenclature can sometimes prove counterproductive if the treated group has been poorly studied. The author has proposed 85 new combinations within the genus *Porrostoma* (Lycidae) and at the same time he has cited in "Generic reference" one article, where *Porrostoma* is considered to be a synonym of *Metriorrhynchus* while the type species of *Metriorrhynchus* is treated as *Cladophorus*. A notice that the classification of this group is unclear might be disturbing in the environment of computer perfection, but it would make the reader more cautious. The representatives of different genera were wrongly classified in *Metriorrhynchus* and now many of them are also wrongly classified in *Porrostoma*.

Although a long time was spent in the attempt, I have not found the exact date of publication of this volume, where many nomenclaturally important changes are introduced. The dates of publication of previous volumes are given in the final appendix, but the present volume is presented there as being unpublished.

This volume accumulates all the essential information on the taxonomy of the treated groups and it not only provides readily accessible information but it can also help accelerate further taxonomic research. The "life-span" of different parts of this volume will depend on the state of present knowledge. The families Elateridae and Eucnemidae, on which several phylogenetic studies have been published (by A.A. Calder and J. Muona, respectively), along with some studies of the Australian fauna, have a better chance of longevity than the remaining groups, whose fauna awaits serious study.

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