

LITERATURE REVIEWS

PROCEEDINGS OF THE XIIIth INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF ARACHNOLOGY, GENEVA, 3-8 SEPTEMBER 1995

(Annales de la Société Suisse de Zoologie et du Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle de la Ville de Genève, Volumes hors série I & II)

Edited by Volker Mahnert

722 pages, with many figures and tables. 16×24 cm. Soft covers. 1996. Copies may be obtained from Dr V. Mahnert, Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, Route de Malagnou, Case Postale 6434, CH-1211 Geneva 6, Switzerland. SFr160 (£72), postage SFr15 (£7). ISBN 2-88139-002-1.

In a perfect world, active arachnologists from every corner of the globe would gather together in idyllic surroundings once every three years to interact with fellow-workers for two weeks—all expenses paid (naturally) by the World Environmental Council. Specialist workshops, followed by plenary sessions of all delegates, would allow key areas of research to be highlighted and analysed. Cooperation and interaction would be paramount. After a few days of relaxing excursions, participants would return to start to put together the proceedings, although this task would only be completed after a few more months of individual effort. The finished product would be a balanced account of the state of the art in all fields of arachnology. In the real world, most of the factors which determine who attends the international congresses and who publishes in their proceedings are so arbitrary that the resultant publication is an almost random sample of work in progress in our subject—more blunt instrument than cutting edge!

It is therefore a pleasure (and also a bit of a relief!) to be able to report that many of the seventy-one offerings in these latest proceedings are of a very high standard, and nearly all are very well written and very well presented. The two volumes have been most beautifully printed on high quality paper and the covers are a rather attractive shade of green. Editorial standards are very high, though I was not disappointed when I indulged in one of my favourite pastimes—finding errors and inconsistencies in reference lists. One other minor irritation was the lack of bold italics in the otherwise all-bold abstract headings. My only substantial criticism of these two volumes is that the English in some of the papers is below standard and in one or two it is very bad indeed. (But perhaps it is unfair of the English to be critical of others, when the great majority (myself included) speak no language except their own.)

The seventy-one papers are arranged alphabetically but can, somewhat arbitrarily, be grouped into the following broad categories (with the number of papers within each category in brackets): Ecology (21), Behaviour (14), Faunas/Biogeography (13), Taxonomy/Systematics (11), Morphology (8), and Biochemistry/Physiology (4). With such a large number of papers on a good variety of topics, it is not possible here to comment in any detail on content or even to present a complete list of short titles, as I did in my review of the Brisbane proceedings—these contained considerably fewer papers. A personal selection of a dozen (short) titles may serve to indicate the range and interest of these volumes: Tarantula prey detection; Palpigrades 1885–1995; Spiders in biological control; Genitalia and sexual selection in a pholcid spider; Vibratory communication

in a wolf spider; Biogeography of scorpions; Spiders as indicator species; Prey specificity of ctenid spider venom; Consequences of pesticide use on spider communities; Hybrid zone between two wolf spider species; Mating systems of two linyphiid spider species; Early stages of orb web construction.

As these two volumes are relatively expensive, perhaps only a limited number of individual arachnologists will be able to buy copies. Therefore, those in a position to do so should urge their institution's librarian to buy a set now. I have already asked John Stanney to order these proceedings for the B.A.S. Library.

J.E.D.

CATALOGUE OF THE SPIDERS (ARACHNIDA, ARANEI) OF THE URALS

By Sergei L. Esyunin and Viktor E. Efimik

Edited by Kirill G. Mikhailov

228 pages. 14.1×20.4 cm. Paper covers. KMK Scientific Press Ltd, Moscow, Russia. 1996. US\$27, DM40. ISBN 5-87317-023-1.

The area covered by this catalogue lies at the boundary between Europe and Asia and extends from the Polar Urals and the Yamal Peninsula in the north to the Orenburg region in the south. It builds upon 160 years (1835–1995) of study of the spiders of the Ural Mountains and the annotated checklist, compiled from 186 sources and some new data, comprises 780 species from 28 families. A particularly useful addition is a map giving physiogeographic data and the locations of particular collecting sites. The text is in Russian and English, and there is a comprehensive index including not only valid names but also synonyms and misidentifications. There are a few misprints and errors, e.g. incorrect distribution data for *Pistius truncatus* and *Heliophanus dampfi*, but in general this is a very reliable guide to the spiders of an area as extensive as that of many a European country.

This is a well produced volume, it includes valuable and up-to-date information, and is good value for money. I commend it to anyone with a keen interest in the spiders of Europe (in a geographical rather than a political sense).

Dmitri V. Logunov

NOTES AND COMMENTS

What's in a Name?—Replies: R. G. Breene's article in the last Newsletter (77: 1–4) drew an immediate response from several readers. **John Parker** was strongly in favour of keeping traditional and picturesque English common names, regarding these as proper nouns, and therefore retaining capitals for first letters. He was against committees and rules for this sort of thing. (John also kindly drew my attention to two slight misprints in No. 77 which I am pleased to correct here: p. 6, line 22—*rusticus* not *resticus*; p. 16, line 36—Antarctic not Antactic.) **Jim Wright** was very much in favour of having common names for the most frequently encountered spider species in order to make it easier for younger people and newcomers to get to know their subject by overcoming what often acts as a barrier to further interest—the plethora of scientific names. Jim suggested that the B.A.S. might consider producing a directory of common spider names after consultation