

Book Review

PSOCIDS, PSOCOPTERA (BOOKLICE AND BARKLICE) (2nd edition). By T. R. New. Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects, Vol. 1, Part 7. Royal Entomological Society, London, 2005, iv+146 pp. ISBN: 0-901546-84-4.

At first glance this book was a double surprise for me. The very traditional and unsophisticated appearance of the former 'Handbooks' (size 23 × 15 cm) is here for the first time replaced by a new appealing design characterized by the presence of an excellent colour photograph (representing a winged psocid) on an elegant glossy blue and yellow cover and by the slightly larger size (24.5 × 17.5 cm). However, this was counterbalanced immediately by the misidentification of the photographed psocid. Although named on the back cover (and on p. iv) as a species of *Amphigerontia*, there is no doubt that it is *Psococerastis gibbosa* (Sulzer), con-familial with *Amphigerontia* (i.e. Psocidae) but in a different subfamily (see p. 120).

This lapsus is a symptomatic: there are too many incorrect figure legends. This is probably partly due to an actually positive element in the new design of the series: the bigger size of the book allows combination of the text of the keys with some figures illustrating the most important diagnostic characters; these figures are placed on right of the corresponding key couplets. This procedure works well and enables the user of the book to identify many taxa without continuously turning pages for consultation of figure plates. However, this leads also to exaggerated size reduction of some figures or to their unnecessary redundancy. Thus, an identical figure of the forewing of *Graphopsocus cruciatus* appears twice and the figure of the forewing of *Stenopsocus stigmaticus* three times on pages 92–94, and the identical figure of the forewings of *Trichopsocus* species (*T. brincki*, *T. clarus*, *T. dalii*) twice on pages 106 and 107. Elsewhere enough space exists to insert additional figures to explain important diagnostic characters. For instance, an illustration of the gonapophyses of *Caecilius* and/or *Valenzuela* would be useful for a comparison with the gonapophyses of *Enderleinella* shown in Fig. 151 (p. 86, couplet 2 of the key).

All 334 figures are numbered consecutively throughout the book. Probably the above mentioned iconographical strategy has been decided editorially, with the author then renumbering the figures, which initially were arranged in classical figure plates. Most incorrect legends or erroneous text references to figures probably derive from editorial complications after the manuscript had passed review (page iv). To assist users of the book the principal such errors are: Fig. 10 illustrates only thorax structures (not thorax and leg structures, as indicated in the legend);

Fig. 11 illustrates only leg structures (not thorax and leg structures, as indicated in the legend); Fig. 14(j) illustrates not the ornamentation of the epiproct, as indicated in the text, but the raised basal prominence of the epiproct present in Myopsocidae; Fig. 100(a) represents forewing and hindwing of *Psyllipsocus ramburii* (not only forewing, as indicated in the legend); Fig. 110 represents not a species of group B, as indicated in the key to species groups of *Liposcelis*, but is the same as Fig. 114, which correctly shows *L. pubescens* (species group C); male wing rudiments of *Lachesilla greeni* are illustrated in Fig. 192(b) and not in Fig. 191, as mentioned in the text of the key, the latter figure represents the dorsal view of the pterothorax of a micropterous female; Figs 199 and 201 have been interchanged (Fig. 201 shows the female subgenital plate of *Ectopsocus axillaris*, Fig. 199 that of *E. petersi*); Fig. 213 represents *E. petersi* (not *E. axillaris*, as indicated in the key); the statement '(This morph not confirmed from Britain, see below)' concerns the macrop-terous morph of *Ectopsocus vachoni* (see p. 98) and has to be deleted for the micropterous morph; Fig. 214, phallosomes of *Ectopsocus* spp. (e) is *E. richardsi* (not *E. vachoni*) (f) is *E. vachoni* (not *E. petersi*) (g) is *E. briggsi* (not *E. richardsi*) (h) is *E. petersi* (not *E. briggsi*); Figs 267 and 269 have been interchanged (Fig. 267 shows the female subgenital plate of *Philotarsus parviceps*, Fig. 269 that of *P. picicornis*).

Besides many minor printing errors (e.g. parentheses remaining open in text and keys, inconsequences of inter-punctuation in the species checklist or spelling errors in the list of references, especially concerning papers written in German) some additional mistakes worthy of explicit mention include: in Fig. 12 the 'nodulus' of the forewing is erroneously labelled 'nodules'; p. 92: in Stenopsocidae the external valve is not a setose lobe as mentioned in the text, but a bare lobe as shown correctly in Fig. 176; in Fig. 215(a) the arrow should point to the Rs-M fusion and not outside the hindwing.

Despite aforementioned problems, this modern monograph on British Psocoptera is fundamentally important for all entomologists: some psocids are of considerable economic importance in stored food, especially certain species of *Liposcelis* and *Lepinotus*. Keys and short descriptions for the 98 species of psocids recorded from Britain, belonging to 19 families and 44 genera, are provided, together with a comprehensive checklist containing also their most important synonyms (p. 35–46). The nomenclature corresponds to the most recent world catalogue of the group, thus being more up-to-date than in any other European Psocoptera monograph. A useful glossary of morphological and descriptive terms is included. The

introductory texts on biology, morphology and methodology are informative and easy to read, even for nonspecialists. It was an excellent idea of the author to insert a chapter on 'Field identification and recognition', representing a new approach in psocid literature. The illustrations (ink drawings) are somewhat schematic but usually sufficient for diagnosis. This second edition of the monograph on

British Psocoptera by T. R. New constitutes a great progress compared to the first edition of 1974, despite several mistakes that need correction in any future third edition.

CHARLES LIENHARD
Museum of Natural History
Geneva, Switzerland