

ARNETT, R. H., M. C. THOMAS, P. E. SKELLEY, AND J. H. FRANK (Eds.). 2002. American Beetles. Vol. 2. Polyphaga: Scarabaeoidea through Curculionoidea. CRC Press, Boca Raton, Florida. 861 pp. ISBN 0-8493-0954-9. Softback. \$125.

This is a magnificent volume that completes the 2-volume series. The first volume dealt with 22 families, the more primitive of the Coleoptera, including Carabidae. This volume deals with 109 families. It is a far thing from the original book by Ross Arnett, *The Beetles of the United States*, which was published in a single volume in 1962. I own a copy of the 1968 edition of it, which has 1112 pages and is in small format. The quality of that book and its illustrations are nowhere near comparable to the present volumes, which do credit to CRC Press. A very complete bibliography ends each of the chapters.

Sixty-eight "contributors" collaborated in this volume, and the result is excellent. Robert Woodruff, unfortunately, did not contribute to the account of Scarabaeidae, but the account of Passalidae is due to the pen of my friend Jack Schuster, one of the foremost specialists on this group. The Lampyridae, to cite only a few of the accounts, were treated by James Lloyd, the specialist on their nocturnal lights; the Endomychidae and Erotylidae, the latter remarkably illustrated, were revised by Paul Skelley, the Curculionidae were revised by Robert Anderson, and there are so many others that I would have liked to mention. All these families are revised with brio by the best specialists on the American fauna. Ross Arnett died too soon to treat the family dear to his heart, the Oedemeridae, which he was never able to revise completely because he was always occupied with production of some new book. It was he who first had the idea to produce this re-edition with his friend Michael Thomas. He worked hard at it until a terrible illness laid him low in just a few months. He was followed in less than two years by his wife and faithful collaborator, Mary, who lived to see the re-edition of *American Insects* and the first volume of *American Beetles*. She showed them to me in 2001.

Thanks to God and John Kingsolver, the Bruchidae were considered an independent family, and were not amalgamated within Chrysomelidae. These latter were fragmented into three families (Megalopodidae and Orsodacnidae are set apart), an arrangement with which

not everyone concurs. The subfamily Synetinae are not the tribe Synetini, and have nothing in common except a certain superficial convergence with the subfamily Eumolpinae. At all events, and this is what matters most, the Chrysomelidae were treated with brio by Shawn Clark, Edward G. Riley, R. Wills Flowers, and Arthur J. Gilbert. The genus *Cadiz*, whose larva has never been described, is placed as *incertae sedis*, in the vicinity of *Timarcha*. It will be good if the author of this generic name one day provides us with a description of the adult, the larva, and the biology of this mysterious Californian insect, perhaps with a subfamily of its own to accommodate it. A little molecular biology would help to show the correct situation. It lives in sandy habitats and feeds on Boraginaceae. Under the name Hispinae are lumped the cassidines and hispines; the alticines and galerucines are also lumped, under the name Galerucinae. This is only a question of interpretation, because before his recent sacking, Sicien H. Chen had already proposed similar changes, of which nobody took notice. It is all a question of interpretation, and I will not belabor the point. Like Michael Schmitt, I consider Jacoby's old classification, albeit slightly modernized, to be the best now and best thought-out.

Let's congratulate the authors, the collaborators, and finally the editors for having produced this magnificent work. These two volumes are indispensable for those who wish to study the beetle fauna of North America and northern Mexico, in other words the Nearctic fauna. This fauna has elements in common with that of Asia and especially of Europe, the connections with the neighboring continents having existed in various epochs. The faunas of the Antilles and of Central America are not far removed either, and this book will serve as a basis for their study. A production of this quality will perhaps be necessary for France, bringing together various volumes of the series *Faune de France* which, unfortunately, are far from complete for the Coleoptera.

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