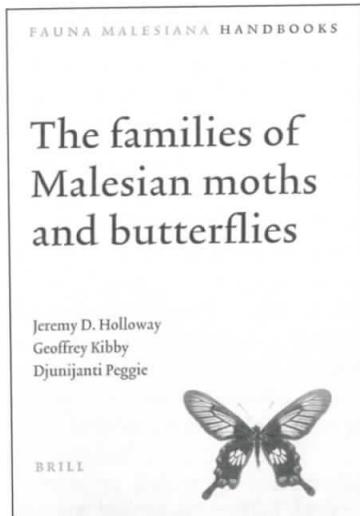


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## BOOK REVIEW

**THE FAMILIES OF MALESIAN MOTHS AND BUTTERFLIES**

by J. D. Holloway, G. Kibby, and D. Peggie

2001. Brill, Leiden, Netherlands (in cooperation with Fauna Malesiana Foundation, Leiden, Netherlands) (*Fauna Malesiana Handbook* 3). 455pp, 8 pl. (17 x 24cm), \$100.00 cloth. ISBN 90-04-11846-2.

The title to this new book refers to Malesia, an area name possibly unfamiliar to many readers, referring to the region of Southeast Asia from Malaysia to New Guinea, and north to the Philippines: a region of great biodiversity. Other than Malaysia proper, it is a region composed mostly of numerous islands, some very large (New Guinea) and many very small (Indonesia has a few very large islands, but thousands of smaller islands), and other regional names are also used, such as Melanesian (for Malaysia and islands) and Papuan (for New Guinea and the Solomons).

The main author, Jeremy Holl-

oway, has had considerable experience with the moth faunas of many of the islands of Malesia, particularly Borneo and his long-running series, *The Moths of Borneo*. Many parts of Malesia are still very little known for moths (for example, *The Moths of Borneo* series is mainly based on collections from Sarawak and Sabah, since the Kalimantan side is still largely unexplored entomologically). The new book on the Lepidoptera families involved in this region is, thus, a welcome addition to available literature on the subject. The book is part of a new series, called *Fauna Malesiana Handbooks*, and is volume 3 in this series (the book does not indicate what so far has been published as volumes 1 and 2 in the series): the *Fauna Malesiana* series is sponsored by the National Museum of Natural History, in Leiden, Netherlands.

The book has a thorough 175-page general introduction to Lepidoptera biology and morphology, as well as a key to families, something that will be a useful and handy summary for students in Southeast Asia. Within the introductory material is a section on collection management by David Carter. The second half of the book treats all the known families within the region. There is also a small table, contributed by Scott E. Miller, showing changes among microlepidopteran families between some older works for the region and current classification.

It is good to see reference to alternate family classifications, like my *Classification of Lepidoptera* (1998), so that the fervently cladistic version adopted in the recent Lepidoptera volume for *Handbook of Zoology* (1999) is not seen as the only world view of Lepidoptera classification. However, the new book mainly follows the *Handbook* classification, resulting in the continued promotion of the extreme splitting and other features prevalent in that work. As one case, we see the continued nonsensical use of the name Roeslerstammiidae for a small family that long has been, and needs to be, called Amphitheridae (even the Zoological Code, if impartially applied in this case, requires the use of Amphitheridae as the correct name): it is not correct to continue using Roeslerstammiidae (and Holloway is here just following what the *Handbook* uses) and then also use Nepticulidae (instead of Stigmellidae) in the same book; i.e., if one used the same logic and family naming principle equally for the same situation for each family, then one must use Stigmellidae as the name for Nepticulidae if one

were to also use the name Roeslerstammiidae (the latter name is invalid in any case by the Code, due to incorrect original usage).

As for some of my own views of family placement, it is interesting that Holloway prefers to present my views from 25 years ago instead of current views, since these have changed as more information became available over these years: e.g., he states under Glyphipterigidae that my view (taken from 1977 when the family was placed in Copromorphoidea) conflicts with the world "consensus" of the family being in Yponomeutoidea, yet I have agreed with that already for many years but my recent notes on this are not mentioned, only my original view from 1977! If Darwin had published preliminary ideas in 1830 that differed from his final evolutionary theory of 1859, who would quote Darwin from 1830 instead of 1859 when discussing evolution? But, this is Holloway's strange tactic. Holloway also expresses surprise that my classification is entirely dichotomous in each division, rather than a pectinate "Hennigian comb" system as in the *Handbook* cladistic arrangement, yet evolution probably operates from the individual level on up dichotomously, rather than a more complicated and probably fictitious instant 3-way or 4-way split toward a higher group, or other "comb" version, and so forth, as some of the cladistic results imply in the *Handbook* classification.

A couple of other errors were noted in the book that should be corrected: 1) Holloway states that my classification (viz., the 1998 article) is "promoted by" the Association for Tropical Lepidoptera (ATL), and later even calls it "the ATL classification": these are completely erroneous and misguided statements, since ATL has no connection to my classification other than as the publisher of my 1998 work, and would equally and impartially publish articles by others like Holloway if they submitted any classification paper to ATL journals. And, 2) the book states that yearly literature reviews for Lepidoptera are published in the ATL journal, *Tropical Lepidoptera*, whereas the correct publication involved is *Lepidoptera News* (No. 4 of each year).

The plates for the book are superbly done by Bernard d'Abrera. One just wishes the authors had included more than only 8 color plates, and not only macro-moths plus a single butterfly plate. Although another recent book illustrated many of the commoner Malesian micro-moths, the present new book would have been more complete in itself if at least some micros had also been illustrated. The size and diversity of the Malesian lepidopteran fauna should have been worth at least 32 plates, but one understands the economics of book publishing and the work involved in setting up plate compositions as single exposures.

Overall, and notwithstanding my other comments above, the book is really excellent and should enable many students in Malesia to be able to work more easily with their vast fauna of Lepidoptera. The book will be useful also for other areas in Southeast Asia beyond Malesia, such as India, Thailand, and southern China. The book will provide an excellent introduction and should allow all but the most unusual species to be placed to family, although the complexity of the fauna does not allow easy key couplets in all cases. Anyone interested in this vast fauna should acquire a copy of the book for their reference library.

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