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A periodical record of entomological investigation published at the Department of Entomology,
University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.

Volume 15

Number 1

January 1979

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BOOK REVIEW

TRAUGOTT-OLSEN, E. and E. SCHMIDT NEILSEN. 1977. 'The Elachistidae (Lepidoptera) of Fennoscandia and Denmark'. Scandinavian Science Press Ltd. Klampenborg, Denmark. 299 pages.

This is a frustrating text because it contains more information than is usually presented in a general handbook, but less than one might expect in a revision.

However, the nine introductory sections provide an excellent basis for understanding the treatment of elachistine genera and species found in northern Europe. Structure of adults and immatures is described and all characters used in the text are described and figured. The position of the family Elachistidae within the Gelechioidea is discussed and the family diagnosed. A generic phylogeny is presented, and status of questionable genera is explained. There are brief sections on bionomics, zoogeography, and nomenclature.

The remaining seven sections of text consist of keys to genera and species, and descriptions of taxa known to occur in the area covered. This part of the book is well organized, as are the keys, which contain very few ambiguous couplets. Where possible, keys for larvae are also presented. Descriptions are detailed and uniform in presentation, with short sections covering biology, distribution, and major synonymies. Unfortunately, the authors chose not to point out diagnostic characters in species descriptions, so that while keys are sufficient for identification purposes, differences between closely related species are not readily appreciated from the descriptions, and even less so in the keys. This could be confusing if the descriptions are to be used in conjunction with the keys, and it is certainly confusing to the reader.

The figures are generally clear and sharp, although the presentation of larval mining patterns is less than satisfactory. These are presented as half-tone pencil drawings which makes details in many of them difficult to perceive. Simple line drawings would have presented these patterns much more clearly. Scales are not given on the plates, but Figures 1 through 152 are stated to be approximately 5.5 times

magnification. Figures 153 through 536 are without indication of magnification, as are all text figures.

Distributional data are not well presented, and are dealt with only superficially. There are no distribution maps, although, with considerable effort, they could be constructed from data presented. This is an area where treatment is weak and where the synthesis falls short of that which might be expected in a revision of the group. In defense of the authors, a catalogue arranged by species and province is presented in which records are shown by a full or half dot. However, no indication is given of the significance of the two symbols used. A half dot appears to be used where two provinces are combined in the catalogue and appear to represent presence in one, but not in the other; there is a 50 percent chance of guessing correctly. No precise locality data are presented, and type localities are not mentioned. Biogeography is treated very superficially.

Although a generic phylogeny is presented, species relationships are not discussed beyond broad species groups in the largest genus. Little attempt is made to discuss trends in structure or bionomics.

The text is generally free of errors.

If you are interested in Fennoscandian Elachistidae, this is a reasonably good text; if you are not, there is little here for you. If this review seems harsh, it is simply because the authors have missed a number of opportunities to synthesize their data more completely, and thus make the work more valuable to those outside a rather restricted field of interest.

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