



BOOK REVIEW



Arthropoda of the Vesuvius National Park Preliminary studies

NARDI G. & VOMERO V. (eds): Artropodi del Parco Nazionale de Vesuvio. Ricerche preliminary
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The book is published in the scope of the series "Conservazione Habitat Invertebrati" which shows the results of scientific surveys carried out in Nature 2000 sites in Italy. The issue is dedicated to the arthropods of the Vesuvius National Park, which protect the

surroundings of the only active volcano in continental Europe. The results published in the book originated from a study from the master plan of the Park and represent a classic faunistic approach of entomological explorations of a region. The book summarizes joint efforts of over 60 taxonomists. The volume is A4 format, paperbound, printed attractively on quality glossy paper, with numerous color pictures showing some habitats, arthropod species and graphs.

The book starts from the two forewords, one by Cesare Patrone, Head of the State Forestry Service, the other by Amilcare Troiano, Special Commissioner of the Vesuvius National Park. The forewords are written both in Italian and English, both authors emphasizing the milestone role of biodiversity studies in monitoring the territory with such a complicated geological history and long human presence. The bulk of the miscellany dealing with different groups of Arthropoda is preceded by an introduction containing general information on the Park and a description of the study plots written by the editors. In next two contributions provide profound analyses of the vegetation landscape (by L. Filesi) and woodlands (by F. Cona and G. Di Pasquale). Only a few of the following papers are in English, most being in Italian with short abstracts in English.

Twenty-one main papers concerning various arthropod taxa, mainly insects, are presented in the form of faunistic reviews with zoogeographic analyses. The following groups of different taxonomic levels are considered: Chilopoda (by M. Zapparoli), Orthopteroidea: Blattaria, Mantodea, Isoptera, Orthoptera, Phasmatodea, Embiidina (by P. Fontana & P. Tirello), Dermaptera (by A. Vigna Taglianti), Heteroptera (by A. Carapezza), numerous families or superfamilies of Coleoptera: Carabidae (by A. Vigna Taglianti), Histeridae (by V. Vomero & G. Nardi), Cholevidae (by S. Zoia), Staphylinidae (by A. Zanetti), Lamellicornia (by E. Piattella), Elateridae (by A. Liberto), Buprescidae (by A. Libert & F. Izzillo), Lampyridae (by M. Geisthardt), Dasytidae (by G. Liberti), Nitidulidae plus Kateritidae (by P. Audisio & G. Nardi), Coccinellidae (by C. Canepari), Tenebrionidae (S. Fattorini), Cerambycidae (by A. B. Biscaccianti), Curculionoidea (by E. Colonnelli), Raphidioptera, Neuroptera and Mecoptera (by A. Letardi), Lepidoptera (by A. Zilli), Apoidea (by M. Comba). Among them, only the contributions on Dasytidae, Tenebrionidae and Lepidoptera are written in English. However, the papers differ in length and scope, each of them also comprising a species list, and some of them summarizing zoogeographic and/or ecological problems. Particularly profound analyses are contained in the paper devoted to Tenebrionidae, with ecological and biogeographical analyses in relation to the recolonization dynamics following the cyclic eruptions of the volcano. The bulk of the book is completed by *Short Notes* (written in English) comprising a list of the species recorded in the Park but belonging to groups which are not subject to regular faunistic surveys. The list contains 313 arthropod species belonging to Arachnida, Crustacea, Coleoptera, Diptera, Hemiptera, Hymenoptera and Odonata. However, since the *Conclusions* are only in Italian, thus not too readily available for much of the European community, they represent the most problematic part of the volume.

Nonetheless, the book explicitly shows the great input to the biodiversity status of the Vesuvius National Park, even though it is one of the smallest in Europe (8.482 ha) and is under the impact of natural volcanic activity and long-term anthropogenic pressure. Hardly surprisingly, the arthropod fauna is generally dominated by euryoecic and vagile species, yet relicts and/or species of conservation interest are also present (20 species). 1229 species of arthropods are found during the preliminary surveys, of which 3 are new to science, 2 new to Italy, 5 new to mainland Italy, 25 new to southern Italy, and 44 new to the Campania Province.

It must remain beyond doubt that the most important role of each national park lies in biodiversity conservation. Unfortunately, both policy-makers of nature conservation and some scientists rather rarely acknowledge the importance of this kind of research while the fauna of invertebrates is only rarely considered in management conservation. The present book clearly demonstrates how the great resources of biodiversity are hidden among invertebrates as compared to vertebrates which, like flora (610 species), are always much better explored. All this not only shows that studies on invertebrate fauna at the inventory level are basic for our knowledge of the nature values of regions (areas) but they also enable to start monitoring and sometimes can assess more quickly and with higher sensitivity the rate of change in ecosystems. It only remains to hope that similarly profound research on invertebrates will be realized in more national parks and across the Natura 2000 sites.

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