

Nitidulidae (Coleoptera) of the Himalayas and Northern Indochina, Part 1: Subfamily Epuraeinae, Theses Zoologicae, Volume 28

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BOOK REVIEW

KIREJTSHUK, A. G. 1998. **Nitidulidae (Coleoptera) of the Himalayas and Northern Indochina, Part 1: Subfamily Epuraeinae, Theses Zoologicae, Volume 28.** Koeltz Scientific Books, Koenigstein, Germany. 489 pp. ISBN 3-87429-399-8. Price DM 159.00.

In these days of taxonomists struggling to meet the needs of their institutions to bring in cold hard cash for overheads, or continually fighting to maintain an income and basic research funds, a comprehensive monograph dedicated to a taxonomically important group of beetles is always a pleasure to see. In this opus on one of the most complex groups of Nitidulidae, the subfamily Epuraeinae, Alexander Kirejtshuk, the specialist on the family, has produced an admirable treatment of the group. Kirejtshuk is famous for producing a large number of descriptive works that are catalyzed by useful line drawings, but are typically inaccessible to us 'westies' because many are written in Russian. The Northern Indochinese/Himalayan (NIH) contribution is special because it is Kirejtshuk's most lofty contribution to date and is written in English. A second volume is forthcoming. Eighty-five species are covered, 67 in the genus *Epuraea*. Two new genera, *Taeniolinus* Kirejtshuk and *Carpocryraea* Kirejtshuk, are placed into a new tribe Taenioncini (which includes the type genus *Taenioncus* Kirejtshuk). There is also a reshuffling of species that only Kirejtshuk is capable of because of his expertise on the group. Reviews of the Nitidulidae described from the Indochinese region are included, as well as discussions on morphology, systematics, taxonomy, bionomy (=biology, a new word?), palaeontology, and distribution. While the text is readable, the sections on systematics and biology are mainly authoritative and lack some important citations. The keys to higher taxa and species contain some lengthy Thomas-Casey type couplets, and there is a new tribe of Cryptarchinae (Platyarchini Kirejtshuk) described in the key that is not indexed with a detailed justification (perhaps to be included in volume 2). The subgenera and certain species groups of *Epuraea* are difficult to identify and exact determination may be compromised by some of the qualitative characters used in the descriptions and certain couplets in the keys. Dissection of male genitalia, careful comparisons to the figures, and detailed study of comparative notes will certainly confirm species identification. Many of the species and genera treated are not restricted to the NIH region, and Kirejtshuk has included detailed geographic information making this volume particularly useful to taxonomists world wide. This is certainly a necessary reference for nitidulid workers and specialists on this geographical region. Because of the complexity of the subfamily Epuraeinae, this book will serve as an important guide to the genera and will be useful for identifying key characters if the classification is treated in a global context. We should be grateful to Kirejtshuk for his highly commendable efforts on revising the Epuraeinae, one of the most difficult groups of Nitidulidae to identify, and I look forward to volume 2.

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