

BOOK REVIEW

LES ARAIGNEES: GENERALITES—ARAIGNEES DE FRANCE ET DES PAYS LIMITROPHES by Michel Hubert, Société Nouvelle des Editions Boubée, Paris. 227 pp. 1979. (Price FF 150.—). Available in North America from Somabec Ltée, 2475 Sylva Clapin, C.P. 295, St-Hyacinthe, Québec J2S 5T5.

Michel Hubert is Maître Assistant at the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris. He has a good working knowledge of the spiders of his country, and in this book he shares his expertise with readers who wish an introduction to the spiders in the French language.

This book is similar in approach to Kaston's "How to Know the Spiders," with chapters on collecting and preserving (6 pages), anatomy (24 pages), and general biology (23 pages), plus a systematic part giving keys and brief descriptions for 33 families, 214 genera, and about one-fourth of the species of spiders found in France and its border countries (180 pages). The key to families, however, includes an additional 23 that are regarded as exotic and whose names appear in different print.

The biological information is somewhat less than current and might have included recent advances such as Homann's findings on eye structure. The nomenclature is that of Simon with only cosmetic improvements; the concept of haplogynes and entelegynes is perpetuated, as is that of salticid classification based on number of cheliceral teeth. Literature references are mainly to general works, not to revisions that could lead to more precise identifications.

The book is illustrated with 16 colored plates and 228 (not 230 as claimed) line and stipple text figures. Eight of the plates depict, in habitus, 56 common European spiders by Jacques Rebière, and also the see-through spider taken from Chapter II in Comstock's "Spider Book;" the other plates are first rate photographs of spiders or their eggs by P. Lorne and J. Six. The dust jacket on the book gives two additional color photos. The text figures are too few; 384 species are illustrated by 182 figures. Representatives of many genera are not illustrated at all, though described, and this will frustrate users of the book. Palpi of males are shown in one view only, and spermathecae are omitted.

Is the book, as hopefully claimed in the preface by Professeur Deboutteville, of use to francophones outside Europe? A Québécois entomological colleague assures me that at least the students of his province should welcome it, as approximately 60 percent of the genera treated in the book are also represented in North America. An introduction to the spiders in French has been a notable lack till now.

Hubert has covered the ground thinly, perhaps aiming at a wide audience. This reviewer feels that arachnology in France would have been better served by a family-by-family treatment of all the genera and species of spiders known to occur in the country—in short, an update of Simon's "Arachnides de France."

Charles D. Dondale, Biosystematics Research Institute, Research Branch, Agriculture Canada, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C6.