



AN ENGLISH ZOOLOGIST'S TRAVELS IN MONTENEGRO 110 YEARS AGO.

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SYNOPSIS

Malcolm Burr (1878-1954) entomologist, writer, translator and traveller visited Montenegro and other Eastern European countries in 1898 while an undergraduate student at the University of Oxford. He was aged 20 at the time. He later became a world expert in two groups of insects, the grasshoppers and earwigs. His collections are in the Natural History Museum in London (world Dermaptera) and in the Hope Museum, University of Oxford (European Orthoptera). He wrote books on entomology and was one of the founders of the International Congress of Entomology. His army record includes the award of the White Eagle Serbia. The story of his journey, his observations on the wildlife and the details of his entomological collecting (Orthoptera and Dermaptera) are described and recorded here. His story not only illustrates the importance of early records and museum collections but also points a way to the future.

INTRODUCTION

"The Balkans have called me from boyhood, and inspired me with a romantic, boyish dream...I still hanker after my old haunts, and long to see old friends and comrades again" (Burr, 1935).

Malcolm Burr was an important British naturalist and amateur entomologist with special connections in the Balkans, especially Montenegro which he first visited alone in 1898 when he was 20 years old. He became an expert on the Orthoptera and the Dermaptera. He left detailed records of his work and his first journey to the Balkans in 1898. The present paper forms a brief summary of his life, his visit to Montenegro and his work as a naturalist.

EDUCATION

Malcolm Burr was born in Blackheath, London on 6 July 1878, the son of Arthur Burr a land agent. He attended one of the best schools in England, Radley College, which he entered in 1892 and although not a brilliant scholar he was very highly regarded and in 1896 became a prefect and a member of the school cricket team. At school he was an important member of a very active Natural History Society. The boys were expected to do research and present their own papers. This Society produced "The flora and fauna of Radley" in 1896 and although published under the name of the Society, it has always been attributed to Malcolm Burr. He will also have heard a series of lectures from outside speakers including one from O. H. Parry on a journey through Mesopotamia which might have given him an added stimulus to travel.

He left school in 1897 to enter the University of Oxford (New College). By this time he was a specialist on the Orthoptera and was publishing work on the group. At Oxford he obtained a first degree in modern history and later a DSc for entomology in 1909. He then trained as a mining engineer and geologist, attending the Royal School of Mines and was involved with coalfields in the UK, Africa and Russia. However his passion and main scientific interest was as an amateur naturalist and he specialized in insects.

HIS JOURNEY TO MONTENEGRO

At the end of his first year at university he made a journey to Montenegro and other countries in Eastern Europe. He developed an interest in Montenegro as a boy when he had collected postage stamps, was attracted to the stamps of Montenegro and wanted to see the country for himself. During his epic journey, he visited Vienna, Budapest, Bucharest, Croatia, Bosnia Hercegovina, as well as Montenegro. He also arranged to meet several important entomologists in these cities and collected insects in several countries.

After his journey, Burr wrote four articles in a journal called Science-Gossip. Amongst other things, these describe his journey to and through Montenegro and report on his scientific findings. On arrival he wrote, "This was Crna Gora, Montenegro, the Black Mountain, the land of my dreams" (Burr, 1935). His route through the Balkans involved travel by ship, train, rowing boat, and on foot with the help of donkeys to carry his luggage. He arrived at Dubrovnick (=Ragusa), and from Cavtat on to Herceg Novi. He then hired a rowing boat to take him en route to the Bay of Kotor, "The coast was barren, desolate and monotonous, the sun hot, the sea smooth and oily and the pace slow" (Burr, 1935). He made the rest of the journey by ship to Kotor (=Cattaro), entering the Boka Kotorska for the first time, "one of the grandest fjords in nature" (Burr, 1935). He climbed the zig-zag steps on a route behind the town to reach the plateau above Kotor and walked the whole way to Cetinje - a seven hour walk, " it was a long and tiring walk, varied with no collecting" (Burr,

1898). He also visited Lovcen and Rijeka on his way to Skadar (=Scutari) and returning to Cetinje travelled back to Kotor to catch a ship on his journey back home.

HIS FINDINGS

What did he observe, collect and record of the fauna of Montenegro? The following record some of his more interesting observations and collections.

Table 1. Orthoptera recorded by Burr (1898) in Montenegro. The Latin names in the left hand column are those used by Burr. Some revisions have taken place since that time.

Latin name	Common name	Location	Comment/Revision
<i>Stenobothrus rufipes</i> Zett	grasshopper	Cetinje	Roughly 75 species in genus
<i>Stenobothrus bicolor</i> Charp	Common field grasshopper	Cetinje	Now <i>Chorthippus brunneus</i> Thun
<i>Stenobothrus petraeus</i> Bris	Tooth - legged grasshopper	Cetinje	Now <i>Omocestus petraeus</i> Bris de Barn
<i>Stenobothrus pulvinatus</i> Fisch de Wald	grasshopper	Cetinje	Now <i>Euchorthippus pulvinatus</i> Fisch de Wald
<i>Rhacocleis discrepans</i> Fieb	Mediterranean Bush cricket	Cetinje	
<i>Oecanthus pellucens</i> Scop	Tree cricket or Italian cricket	Cetinje	Widespread in central and southern Europe
<i>Stenobothrus parallelus</i> Zett		Cetinje	<i>Chorthippus parallelus</i>
<i>Acrotylus patruelis</i>	Slender red winged grasshopper	Rijeka	
<i>Tylopsis lilifolia</i>	Slender Bush cricket	Rijeka	var. <i>margineguttata</i>
<i>Oedipoda miniata</i> Pall	No common name	Cetinje	38 species in genus

Other insects of interest recorded by Burr (1898) in Montenegro, include *Anax* (= *Hemianax*) *ephippiger* (Burmeister)(Odonata), and *Halictus calceatus* Scopoli (Hymenoptera). *H. ephippiger*, the Vagrant Emperor, identified by McLachlan (Baker, 2007), is a migrant or vagrant dragonfly. *H. calceatus* is a solitary bee which makes burrows in the ground.

Reptilia - *Tropidonotus natrix* (common grass snake).

Aves - birds include *Ardea cinerea* (grey heron), *Ardea purpurea* (great purple heron) and *Platalea leucorodia* (spoonbill) on Skadar lake.

HIS LATER WORK PLUS HIS COLLECTIONS AND RECORDS

As he grew older he became an international expert on two insect orders, the Orthoptera and the Dermaptera. His collections are at the Hope Museum at Oxford (European Orthoptera) and at the Natural History Museum, London (World Dermaptera). He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society, London in 1896, while still at school. He was one of the co-founders of the International Congress of Entomology, serving as Honorary General Secretary of the executive committee (Anonymous 1921). He also played an increasingly important role in the Royal Entomological Society serving on the Council (1903-1904) and as Vice President (1912). He was a Fellow of the Zoological Society, London. His note-books and papers are in the archives at the Natural History Museum, London and there are other papers at the Royal Entomological Society, London.

OTHER WORK

Apart from his entomological work he was an excellent linguist and spoke many of the main European languages. He acted as an interpreter and translator and served with distinction in the army during the First World War being awarded the Serbian Order of the White Eagle and the Greek Order of the Redeemer. He was also the author of books on entomology listed in the references.

He died on 13 July 1954 in Istanbul as the result of an accident - he was hit by a lorry.

CONCLUSIONS

Burr's entomological work draws attention to the importance of museums and early records. Personal collections should, sooner or later, be deposited in national museums, especially if they contain type material. It is also vital to study original reports and descriptions of type material. Malcolm Burr's work illustrates how important it is to check early records to verify if specimens have previously been recorded in a particular country or area and if so where. For example, have the species described here been recorded as occurring in Montenegro? It raises questions of how much material from Montenegro is present elsewhere in European museums. His work also emphasises the need for more baseline studies, for long term investigations and for museum searches.

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