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## The Lepidoptera collection of Friedrich Wilhelm NIEPELT in the Museum of Natural History, University of Wrocław

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**ABSTRACT.** Friedrich Wilhelm NIEPELT's Lepidoptera collection preserved in the Museum of Natural History, University of Wrocław, Wrocław, Poland is summarised. The bulk of the collection, donated to the Museum about eighty years ago, comprises 3905 specimens of exotic butterflies and moths representing 2388 species and subspecies of 389 genera of Castnidae, Nymphalidae, Papilionidae and Pieridae. A small collection of type specimens representing thirteen species and subspecies is kept separately; this collection is characterised in detail, with photographic documentation of specimens and their labels.

**Key words:** NIEPELT, Insecta, Lepidoptera, type collection, Wrocław University, Poland.

### INTRODUCTION

Friedrich Wilhelm NIEPELT (1862-1936) was a renowned dealer of natural history specimens and a devoted lepidopterist based in Lower Silesia. Born in Strzegom (= Strigau), NIEPELT spent his youth in Świebodzice (= Freiburg) as a son of a tavern owner. There he received his basic school education and at the age of merely 14 became a bookbinder apprentice. Four years later NIEPELT travelled across Germany to settle down in Kassel for a short period of time, and eventually enlisted in the army. The end of his military service and return to Świebodzice-Ciernie (= Zirlau) mark the beginning of the entomological chapter in NIEPELT's life. He then managed to raise funds for a trip to the Caribbean Islands, and the money obtained by selling the collected insects enabled him to establish an apparently prosperous business as a dealer in entomological equipment and natural history specimens. NIEPELT collected various animals during several further tropical expeditions and traded specimens with many contemporary dealers and naturalists. He became a dedicated collector of butterflies and moths, and published numerous descriptions of new species and subspecies. Moreover, specimens from his

collection were made available to other taxonomists, most notably to Embrik STRAND and Hans FRUHSTORFER, who also described many new taxa. NIEPELT's achievements in lepidopterology were honoured by several authors who dedicated new taxa to him, for example *Morpho niepelti* RÖBER (Fig. 1), *Dismorphia niepelti* WEYMER, *Dalaca niepelti* FIETZNER, *Delias niepelti* RIBBE or *Deudorix niepelti* JOICEY & TALBOT. More detailed data on the life and publications of F. W. NIEPELT can be found in BERNER (1996), CALLIESS (1932), HEIKERTINGER (1937), RÖBER (1932) or STRAND (1932).

The NIEPELT Collection, housed in the Museum of Natural History, University of Wrocław (MNHW), has been briefly characterised by GONZÁLEZ et al. (2013). It currently consists of a large non-type specimen collection kept in separate cabinets and type specimens incorporated into the general type specimen MNHW collection. The specimens were most probably donated to the Museum by NIEPELT himself between 1932 and 1936, shortly before his death, although the circumstances and details remain unknown. The structure and contents of the collection strongly suggest that the specimens are all doublets from a larger NIEPELT's private collection (discussed by GONZÁLEZ et al. 2013). Jan KINEL (1957), the first Polish post-war MNHW curator, found the NIEPELT Collection provisionally ordered in the museum drawers and cabinets immediately after WWII. This seems to indicate more than one donation, as a single large donation of systematically or geographically organised material would have been most likely retained in original NIEPELT's boxes or drawers and kept without transferring the specimens to the standard museum drawers. The last pre-war German MNHW director,



1. *Morpho niepelti* RÖBER, an example of a butterfly species dedicated to F.W. NIEPELT (photo J. MASŁOWSKI)

Ferdinand PAX Jr. (1949) lists the NIEPELT Collection among those found undamaged after WWII, when he visited the Museum at the end of 1945. However, only KINEL (1957) gives some basic details in his report prepared shortly before his death in 1950. Jan KINEL moved to Wrocław in May 1946 from the DZIEDUSZYCKI Museum in Lviv, to



2. One of cabinets containing the NIEPELT Collection

curate the MNHW collections. He counted 240 drawers, most with a glass bottom, with exotic butterflies, and contained in four remarkably large cabinets. Additionally, about twenty drawers contained moths. In this form, the collection was kept until recently, virtually untouched but well-protected against pests under proper storage conditions.



3,4. Examples of Pieridae (3) and Danaidae (4) from the NIEPELT Collection



After the MNHW entomology department moved to a new building in 2003, the NIEPELT Collection was rearranged and catalogued. Presently the collection occupies 192 numbered drawers (10 standard cabinets) (Figs 2-5). The electronic MNHW database entries comprise data that allow locating every taxon in a respective drawer and valid combinations for each nominal species and subspecies.

The main MNHW NIEPELT Collection (Table 1) comprises 3905 specimens of Lepidoptera representing 2388 species and subspecies classified in 389 genera. Only Castniidae, Nymphalidae, Papilionidae and Pieridae are present in this collection. Nymphalidae are most numerous, both in terms of taxa and specimens, and make up nearly 70% of the collection. The smallest part, the Castniidae, with only 31 specimens, has been summarised in a recent publication (GONZÁLEZ et al. 2013). Most of the taxa



5. Examples of Nymphalidae from the NIEPELT Collection

are Neotropical (over 40%), followed by Oriental (over 25%), Afrotropical (ca. 15%) and Australian (ca. 11%), the small remaining fraction comes from Nearctic and Palaearctic (mostly the Himalayas). The specimens are generally in good condition (Figs 3-5), mostly with appropriate collecting data, although frequently restricted to the locality only.

There are also several drawers kept separately, containing mixed butterflies and moths, some of them bearing identification labels identifiable as handwritten by NIEPELT, but they consistently miss any locality labels. This problematic collection has not been catalogued and the specimens are not included in Table 1.

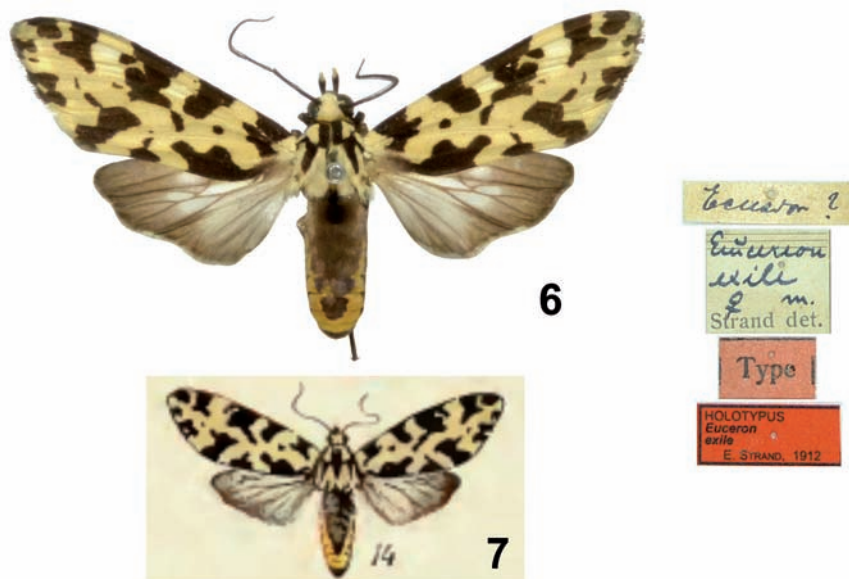
The type specimens from the NIEPELT Collection are kept separately, as a part of the Lepidoptera type specimen MNHW collection. Only fourteen type specimens of thirteen species and subspecies have been identified, and their details are presented below, in alphabetical order (f - female, m - male).

#### Checklist of the Lepidoptera type specimens in the NIEPELT collection

##### Family Arctiidae

*Euceron exile* STRAND, 1912: 146; holotype [f]; Ecuador; MNHW No 1038 Fig. 6).

*Hyalurga cinctella* STRAND, 1911a: 42; holotype [f]; Ecuador, Sarayaku; MNHW No 1036 (Fig. 8).



6,7. *Euceron exile* STRAND, holotype female (6) with its labels and illustration of the same specimen reproduced from STRAND (1912) (7)

**Family Lasiocampidae**

*Claphe macasibia* STRAND, 1912: 154; holotype [m]; Ecuador, Macas; MNHW No 1040 (Fig. 9).

**Family Noctuidae**

*Sypna hieroglyphigera* STRAND, 1911b: 101; holotype [f]; Ecuador, Macas; MNHW No 1041; current status: *Lichnoptera hieroglyphigera* (STRAND, 1912) (Fig. 10).

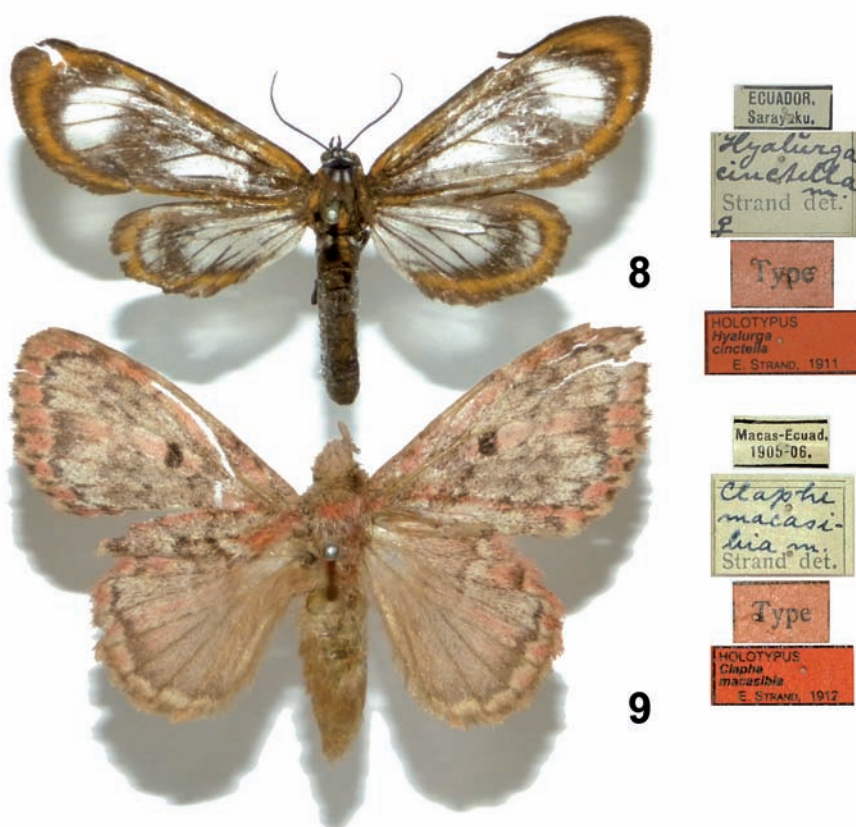
**Family Notodontidae**

*Hemiceras dyari* STRAND, 1911a: 41; holotype [m]; Ecuador, Sarayaku; MNHW No 1035 (Fig. 11).

**Family Nymphalidae**

*Euphaedra medon neustetteri* NIEPALT, 1915: 58; syntype [m]; Kongo, Kasai Riv.; MNHW No 1129 (Fig. 13).

*Pyrameis dejeani sambaluna* FRUHSTORFER, 1898a: 150; syntype [m]; Indonesia, Lombok Is.; MNHW No 1127; current status: *Vanessa dejeani* GODART, 1824 (Fig. 14).



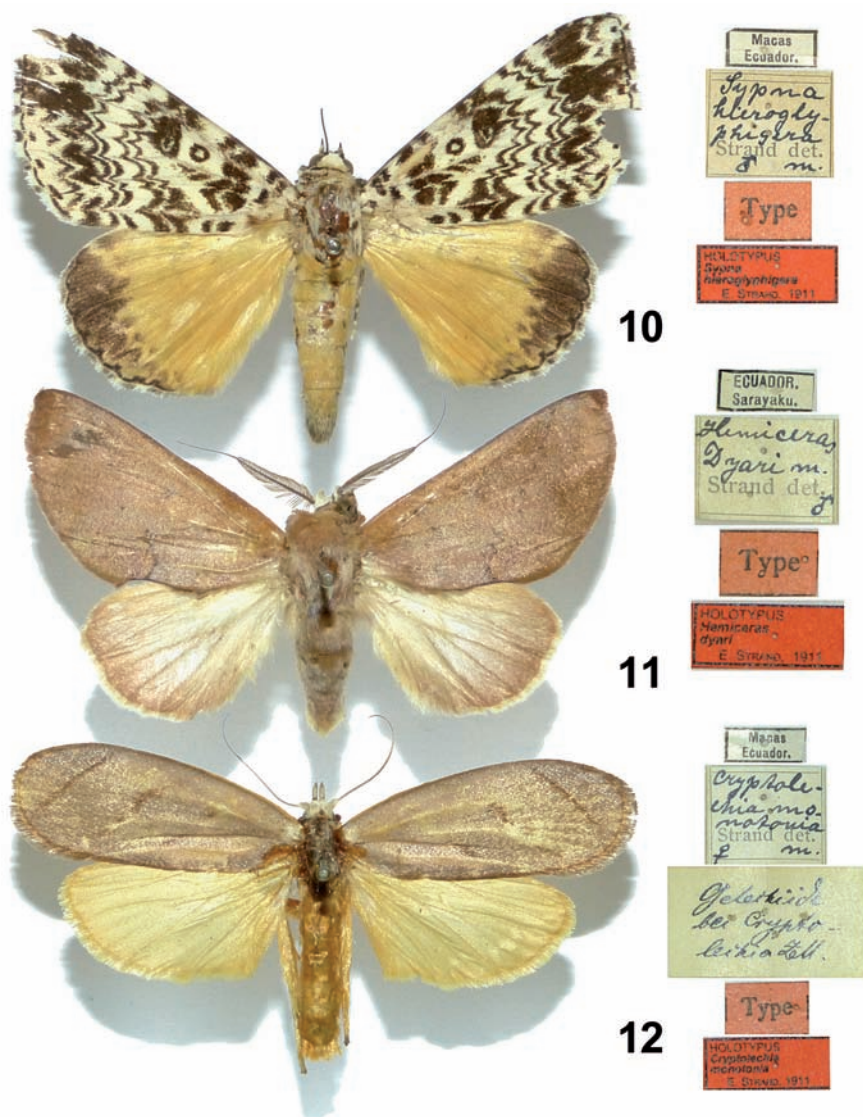
8,9. *Hyalurga cinctella* STRAND, holotype female (8) and *Claphe macasibia* STRAND, holotype male (9), with corresponding labels



*Rhinopalpa megalonice eunice* FRUHSTORFER, 1898b: 331; syntype [f]; Indonesia, Sulawesi; MNHW No 1128; current status: *Rhinopalpa polynice megalonice* (FELDER, 1867) (Fig. 15).

**Family Oecophoridae**

*Cryptolechia monotonia* STRAND, 1911c: 151; holotype [f]; Ecuador, Macas; MNHW No 1037; current status: *Timocratica monotonia* (STRAND, 1911) (Fig. 12).



10-12. *Sypna hieroglyphigera* STRAND, holotype female (10), *Hemiceras dyari* STRAND, holotype male (11), and *Cryptolechia monotonia* STRAND, holotype female (12), with corresponding labels





13



14



15



13-15. *Euphaedra medon neustetteri* NIEPALT, syntype male (13), *Pyrameis dejeani sambaluna* FRUHSTORFER, syntype male (14), and *Rhinopalpa megalonice eunice* FRUHSTORFER, syntype female (15), with corresponding labels

**Family Papilionidae**

*Ornithoptera joiceyi* NOAKES & TALBOT, 1915: 59 (in JOICEY & TALBOT 1915); 2 syntypes [mf]; Papua New Guinea, Arfak Mts.; MNHW No 1049; current status: *Troides goliath samson* (NIEPELT, 1913) (Figs 16-17).

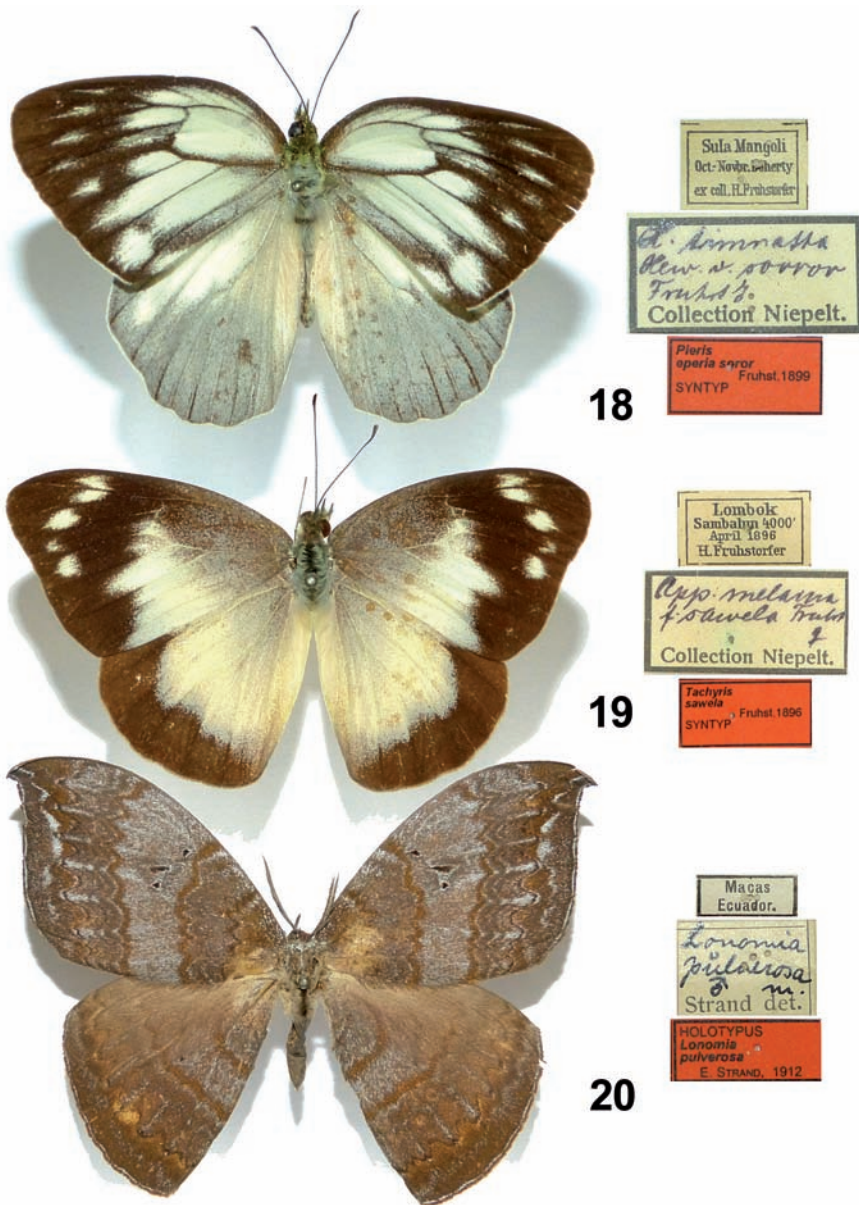
**Family Pieridae**

*Pieris eperia soror* FRUHSTORFER, 1899: 10; syntype [m]; Indonesia, Mangoli; MNHW No 1122 (Fig. 18).



16,17. *Ornithoptera joiceyi* NOAKES & TALBOT, syntypes male (16) and female (17) with corresponding labels

*Tachyris sawela* FRUHSTORFER, 1896: 115; syntype [f]; Indonesia, Lombok Is.; MNHW No 1121 (Fig. 19).



18-20. *Pieris eperia soror* FRUHSTORFER, syntype male (18), *Tachyris sawela* FRUHSTORFER, syntype female (19), and *Lonomia pulverosa* STRAND, holotype male (20), with corresponding labels

**Family Saturnidae**

***Lonomia pulverosa*** STRAND, 1912: 150; holotype [m]; Ecuador, Macas; MNHW No 1039 (Fig. 20).

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**Table 1.** Summary of non-type specimens in the main MNHW NIEPELT Collection.

	genera	species & subspecies	specimens
<b>Lepidoptera</b>	<b>389</b>	<b>2388</b>	<b>3905</b>
<b>Castnidae</b>	13	19	31
Castninae	13	19	31
Castniini	11	17	29
Gazerini	2	2	2
<b>Nymphalidae</b>	293	1657	2600
Apaturinae	11	25	34
Biblidinae	35	173	260
Charaxinae	14	96	142
Anaeini	5	8	9
Charaxini	2	64	93
Euxanthini	1	3	5
Pallini	1	2	2
Preponini	4	13	19
Prothoini	1	6	14
Cyrestinae	7	61	93
Cyrestini	3	49	78
Pseudergolini	4	12	15
Danainae	40	287	453
Danaini	8	128	218
Ithomiini	32	159	235
Heliconiinae	32	246	401
Acraeini	4	88	139
Argynnini	9	26	50
Heliconiini	10	86	140
Vagrantini	9	46	72
Limenitidinae	39	267	407
Adoliadini	18	117	189
Limenitidini	12	72	108
Neptini	7	66	91
Parthenini	2	12	19
Morphinae	26	129	206
Amathusiini	11	40	77
Brassolini	12	61	90
Morphini	3	28	39
Nymphalinae	34	196	369
Coeini	2	2	2
Junoniini	5	80	169
Kallimini	3	13	25
Melitaeini	11	45	74
Nymphalini	7	37	72
Victorini	4	14	18
incertae sedis	2	5	9

	Satyrinae	55	177	235
	Elymniini	16	85	121
	Eritini	2	3	3
	Haeterini	3	10	15
	Melanitini	3	13	19
	Satyrini	31	66	77
<b>Papilionidae</b>		19	354	625
	Papilioninae	15	346	615
	Baroniini	1	1	1
	Leptocircini	8	96	151
	Papilionini	1	147	269
	Troidini	6	103	195
	Parnassiinae	3	7	9
	Parnassini	1	5	7
	Zerynthini	2	2	2
<b>Pieridae</b>		64	358	649
	Coliadinae	16	87	216
	Dismorphiinae	6	35	60
	Pierinae	42	236	373
	Anthocharidini	5	17	30
	Colotini	5	28	39
	Pierini	32	191	304

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