

Amedeo Terzi 1872-1956

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In an earlier issue of the Bulletin, John Marshall and his great achievement, *The British Mosquitoes*, was featured (Snow & Snow, 2004). The value of the book was enhanced greatly by the superb illustrations, which were by the Italian Amedeo Terzi. This was a good example of European co-operation that has continued over the years.

Terzi was born in Palermo, Italy in 1872. His father, Chevalier, was a lithographer and illustrator and his elder brother, Aleardo, was a book illustrator who painted the colour plates of insects for the Italian national encyclopaedia. Amedeo Terzi had a son and a daughter but nothing is known about his wife. The significant event in his life that led to his becoming a great scientific illustrator, and hence following in the family tradition, arose from the experiment planned by Patrick Manson to verify the theory of malaria transmission by mosquitoes. This was conducted at Ostia, Roman Campagna, in 1900. Its progress is described in a series of papers in the *British Medical Journal* over the period 1903-1908. A fuller account was subsequently published by L. Sambon and G. Low and was accompanied by drawings of equipment and landscapes, and plates of *Anopheles maculipennis* s.l., other insects and ticks, all by Amedeo Terzi. He was engaged on the project "in order to secure good drawings of mosquitoes, malaria parasites and other objects of research" but he also served as the third guinea pig, spending every night with Sambon and Low in a hut at a spot chosen as especially malarious.

Terzi trained as a painter, modeller, lithographer and engraver and later, in England, he studied zoology, especially entomology. His illustrations for Sambon and Low's paper were prepared in Italy and sent to Manson, who engaged him as an illustrator at the London School of Tropical Medicine. He arrived in England in November 1900 and joined the staff of the School in December of that year. He left the School, for unexplained reasons, in October 1901 and was invited to join the staff of the British Museum (Natural History) by Ernest Austen in September 1902. He remained there for the rest of his working life.

His best work was carried out during the early years in England when he produced the magnificent colour plates for Austen's *British Bloodsucking Flies* (1906). These were originally prepared for exhibition in the British Museum (Natural History) and intended to be displayed in the public galleries, but were deemed by Austen to be worthy of a special publication. During this time he also prepared the colour plates for Austen's *Monograph of the Tsetse flies* and *Handbook of the Tsetse flies*. The additional colour plates to be found in Edwards, Oldroyd and Smart's *British Bloodsucking Flies* and Marshall's *The British Mosquitoes* were prepared in 1923 for a new edition of Austen's *British Bloodsucking Flies* which, however, was never completed. Of his mosquito illustrations, it is probably true to say that his early black and white drawings were never subsequently surpassed. When illustrating a paper on African Culicidae, he was proud of the fact that when Fred Edwards gave him part of the hypopygia of *Culex simpsoni* Theobald to draw he recognised it as that of a new species, incorrectly associated with the accompanying body parts. Edwards was adamant and the parts were figured together. Years later he found that he had been mistaken and named the new species after Terzi and so *Culex terzii* Edwards was born.

The taxonomic specialist, Gordon Ferris described him as one of the finest entomological illustrators of the day: "an illustrator who combines the qualifications of both the artist and the scientific investigator to such a degree that his illustrations are not only pleasing to the eye but technically impeccable as well. The writer would recommend that the student who is interested in the subject of entomological illustration should study the work of Mr. A.J.E. Terzi". To draw he used a simple wooden penholder about a quarter of an inch wide and a large nib of much the same breadth and drew on a good quality paper. He accompanied his drawing with frequent snatches of Italian opera. He is said to have produced over thirty-seven thousand drawings and to have illustrated nearly fifty-five books and more than five hundred papers on tropical diseases, parasitology, anatomy, entomology (especially Diptera) and osteology of mammals.

Reference

Snow, K.R. & Snow, S.E. (2004) John Frederick Marshall and "The British Mosquitoes". *European Mosquito Bulletin* 17, 23-28.