

BOOK REVIEW

Berger H. 2006. Monograph of the Urostyloidea (Ciliophora, Hypotricha). 1303 p., 247 figs (2068 units), 47 tables, hardcover, €427. In: *Monographiae Biologicae* Vol. 85, H.J. Dumont (series ed.), Springer. ISBN 1-4020-5272-3.

This book on the Urostyloidea is the second step of Helmut Berger's great project: to complete a review of the alpha-taxonomy of the Hypotricha, one of most widely distributed ciliate groups. The first volume, treating the Oxytrichidae, was published several years ago (Berger, 1999).

Urostyloid ciliates are common in all kinds of freshwater, marine and soil biotopes. The history of their study dates back to Ehrenberg (1829); since then, over 260 species have been described. At present, according to the monograph, 154 urostyloid species are considered as valid, 67 are synonyms, 17 are species indeterminata, 2 nomina nuda and 29 belong to non-urostyloid taxa. This shows that practical identification of Urostyloids is a tricky task. Therefore, the monograph makes an excellent present for a ciliatologist (though a heavy one – 2.4 kg!); it is invaluable both as a field guide and as a exhaustive reference book.

The first section (72 pages) is a general one and deals with morphology, biology, phylogeny and ecology of the Urostyloidea, as well as with terminological issues and collection, culturing and investigation methods. The second section, over 1100 pages long, focuses on systematics. It contains the main parts, "How to recognize an urostyloid hypotrich in practice" and "Key to the main subgroups of the Urostyloidea", and the supplementary parts, "Taxa not considered" and "Addenda". The material of this section comprises a brief review of the most recent articles (2003-2005). The volume ends with "References" (53 pages!), "Systematics Index" (25 pages) and "Table Indexes".

The text is illustrated with line (mainly) and halftone drawings, as well as by photographs (light microscopic and, sometimes, SEM). All the necessary morphometric data on the ciliate's body, ciliature pattern and the nuclear apparatus of the hypotrichs are presented in tables.

As it is usual for the Austrian (Foissner's) protozoological school, the monograph is well done indeed. In the near future the author promised to publish the next volumes on the Amphiseliidae and the Kahliellidae. Then this ambitious project will be completed.

We can congratulate Helmut Berger and each other: many ciliatologists will profit from this excellent book. I am sure that this series will remain for a long time an unmatched achievement, like the classical monographs by F. Stein.

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