

Berger, H. (1999): Monograph of the Oxytrichidae (Ciliophora, Hypotrichia). Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 1080 pp., 2.400 figures, cloth, NLG 880,00.
ISBN 0-7923-5795-7.

With this voluminous revision of the Oxytrichidae Helmut Berger completed an admirable project. He has profoundly updated our knowledge about these ciliates. Originally this book was planned as volume 6 (Hypotrichia) of the Protozoenfauna series (Gustav Fischer Verlag), publication of which was, unfortunately, suspended in 1996 for financial reasons. Luckily Kluwer Academic Publishers undertook to produce this monograph.

Earlier comprehensive guides to oxytrichid ciliates were provided in 1932 in the encyclopaedic work of A. Kahl and in 1974 by the Hungarian ciliatologist J. Stiller. From those times until now, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of described species that required inclusion in this new book. In addition to this expansion, almost all published illustrations of these ciliates are included in Dr. Berger's monograph, covering also morphogenetic data that are indispensable in modern, phylogenetically-oriented systematics of ciliates. Synonymy is discussed in detail. It is also welcome

that available records about physiological, ecological, and faunistic aspects of this group of hypotrichs are reviewed.

The first 100 pages are devoted to general aspects such as morphology, biology, terminology, phylogeny, classification, parasitism, ecology, occurrence, geographical distribution, collecting, culturing, observing, and staining of Oxytrichidae. This part is followed by the section on systematics, over 800 pages long. Beside the expected discussion of the known genera and species, this includes such interesting topics as "Taxa of unknown position within the Oxytrichidae", "Taxa not considered", "Illustrations of species indeterminata and insufficient redescrptions" as well as an "Addenda"-paragraph which covers most recent articles which were published during the last phase of the production of this book. The "References" are very exhaustively presented on about 110 pages; the "Index" is, as anticipated, also very detailed.

This ambitious monograph of the Oxytrichidae, which clearly reveals the breath of the Foissner-school, is a highly welcome addition to the book shelf of ciliatologists, not only as a field guide, but also as a reference book which will be valid for decades, if not for a century or more.

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