

Berger H. (2001): Catalogue of ciliate names 1. Hypotrichs. Verlag Helmut Berger, Salzburg, i-viii and 206 pages; ISBN 3-902147-00-8.

For details on ordering, see “Publications” in <http://www.user.xpoint.at/berger.tb/default.html>; or contact author by E-mail: berger.helmut@protozoology.com

Catalogues of names exist in all well-studied groups of organisms and are an important tool in taxonomic work. The catalogue of hypotrich names by Helmut Berger is very good news for ciliatologists. Although such monographs are urgently needed for all ciliates, personally I am glad that this particular group is the first one to get it.

Hypotrichs are widespread in marine, fresh-water and soil habitats. Since most are morphologically adapted for “walking” on surfaces, they are associated primarily with benthic (or aufwuchs) habitats and very few are planktonic. Nevertheless, some of the “benthic” forms have been found on marine snow particles several kilometres above the sea floor. Hypotrichs are certainly the most fascinating group among ciliates. The unusual complexity of their cortex, complex morphogenetic patterns, unique behaviour (e.g., “mating dance”) and very peculiar genome organisation make these organisms interesting to many biologists. The present catalogue is an important advance in their taxonomy.

The main part of the book is a list of about 1 500 generic and species names. All the names are arranged alphabetically in a very practical way. Each record contains the following information: (i) the basionym, i.e., the name used in the original description; (ii) the author name(s), (iii) the year of publication; (iv) the page of the original description; (v) the category of the taxon; (vi) in genera and subgenera, the type designation and the type species. Under “Remarks” the reader can find important additional information, e.g., references to monographs. A list of “combinations” is also provided.

Almost 130 suprageneric names are contained in a separate chapter. Here, each group originally established as a new taxon is recognisable by an appropriate indication, name-bearing types are mentioned, and the “Remarks” point to the major revisions.

The attached bibliography consists of about 500 references dating from the eighteenth century up to the year 2001. A note preceding the bibliography states that all these references, plus about 4 500 other references concerning hypotrichs (including keywords), can be obtained from Helmut Berger as a database. The book ends with an index containing all the names mentioned in the catalogue. Species can be found there by both generic and species name, and the location of the basionym is indicated with bold print.

The book is carefully prepared and nicely edited in a convenient small format. Obviously it will be an indispensable reference tool for taxonomists describing new species or preparing revisions, and anyone looking for taxonomic references or just trying to identify hypotrich species will find this small book very helpful since the basic information is still scattered among a multitude of separate papers.