

BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

Ilham Alekperov

AN ATLAS OF FREE-LIVING CILIATES

(classes Kinetofragminophora, Colpodea, Oligohymenophora, Polyhymenophora)
Baku, 2005.

Bibl. 258, Figs 109, Tables 1, 310 p. (*In Russian*)

The end of the twentieth century saw an upsurge of faunistic studies of free-living ciliates in various regions of the globe, from the Arctic and the Antarctic to equatorial Africa and Australia. As a result, many new ciliate taxa have been described and modern views on evolution and macrosystem of Ciliophora have changed essentially.

Modern investigations of ciliates necessarily require application of previously exotic, but now ordinary and obligatory methods of impregnation of ciliates' kinetomes by silver nitrate and protargole. Only the use of impregnation methods can guarantee reliability of the data obtained, allowing comparison of new results with those of other investigations. These methods also make it possible to preserve type material on new species according to the rules of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature. Impregnation should be applied not only for description of new species and redescription of rare ones, but also for redescription of common and well known species. Firstly, it allows one to reveal intraspecific changes in different populations from various regions. Secondly, modern descriptions of ciliate taxa are much more complex than those made before introduction into practice of impregnation methods, and the range of taxonomic characters currently used is much broader. Comparison of modern descriptions with earlier ones is, therefore, extremely inconvenient and often impossible.

On the other hand, extensive publications with modern descriptions are not many, and most of them are in German and French. Most data needed by specialists are scattered in numerous articles, large and small, which hampers the process of taxonomical identification. Only two large taxonomic works on ciliates from the former USSR territory were published in Russian: an excellent monograph by Dr. A.V. Yankowsky "Subclassis Chonotricha" (1973), which is still a table book of ciliatologists, and a monograph by Dr. F.G. Agamaliev "The Ciliates of the Caspian Sea" (1983), including descriptions of 100 ciliates species.

In 2005, a monograph by Ilham Alekperov "An atlas of free-living ciliates (classes Kinetofragminophora, Colpodea, Oligohymenophora, Polyhymenophora)" was published (in Russian). The monograph summarises the results of the author's numerous faunistic investigations of free-living ciliates from marine and freshwater habitats, as well as soils. Most of the species were collected in Azerbaijan, but some were obtained from the author's collections elsewhere and from numerous samples sent by colleagues from other regions. Therefore, the monograph contains descriptions of new and known aquatic and soil ciliates from Azerbaijan, Russia, the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, as well as Polynesia, the Chukchi and the Bering seas. The material is presented in taxonomical order according to Corliss's macrosystem, taking into account modern views on taxonomy of some ciliate groups.

Altogether the "Atlas" contains short morphological descriptions of 251 species of free-living ciliates, illustrated with original drawings and microphotographs. Almost 90 species, 8 genera and 2 families of ciliates are described for the first time. The monograph also features a critical review of common collection and investigation methods applied to aquatic and soil ciliates, with a detailed analysis of advantages and disadvantages of each one. This part is valuable, in particular, for students and young ciliatologists. The atlas is very useful for identification of many species and, in fact, may serve as an identification key.