The two well-known German protozoologists from Bochum joined their efforts to produce this medium-sized textbook on general protozoology: prof. Mehlhorn is a prolific author of many textbooks and treatises on parasitic protozoa, while prof. Ruthmann has been studying general problems in free-living protozoa and cytology.

A short introductory part on the taxonomy of protozoa follows a classical, conservative pattern; the ciliate classification can be regarded as completely outdated although perhaps more easy to teach than the present complicated systems. Brief characteristics of phyla and other taxa are given, along with a selection of representative genera and species.

The main part of the book is split into two parts, one on the free-living forms and one on the parasitic ones. This evidently reflects the fields of interest of the two authors. Such an arrangement is quite unusual and may well please those interested primarily in parasitic protozoa. In most of the general protozoology texts the balance is in favour of free-living forms representing outstanding models in e.g. cell biology, genetics and biochemistry. Thus separate treatment may emphasize the features otherwise neglected in similar textbooks. On the other hand, it seems in many respects artificial and makes the book rather heterogeneous.

Nevertheless, in spite of the inevitable overlapping, duplication and sometimes differences in characteristics of the same topics, both parts are up to the point and aptly describe all basic structural and biological features of both groups of protozoa, including quite recent findings. While the first part is followed by some fundamentals on the ecology of free-living protozoa, the "parasitic" section is supplemented by summary-like chapters on mode of transmission, immune reactions, in vitro culture, cryopreservation, diagnostic and isolation from the hosts and chemotherapy.

The value of the book could have been increased by paying more attention to some mistakes, misprints or incorrect statements, which are easy to occur in a handbook of this scope but still present obvious "Schönheitsfehler".

The book is nicely printed and has an appealing format, the figures have been well reproduced. "Allgemeine Protozoologie" is another good, standard contemporary protozoological handbook and as such will find its way in the bookshelves of university libraries and in the hands of those who wish to be introduced in the study of protozoan protists.

Jiří Lom