

Key to the fauna of ČSSR, Part IV., pp. 684, 185 plates, Academia 1971

After a ten-year interval another part has been added to the three preceding parts of the Key to the fauna of ČSSR. The volume includes the phyla Tardigrada, Pentastomida and the sub-phylum Chelicerata. The difficulty in compiling the last mentioned subphylum was the main reason why there was such a long interval in the publication of the Key. The credit for the preparation of this collective work is due to its editors M. Daniel and V. Černý, the scientific workers of the Institute of Parasitology, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in Prague. The extensive material did not permit to accomplish the initial plan of constructing keys down to species. Due to the fact that for many years the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences has been publishing a series of monographs Fauna ČSSR, a reasonable compromise has been achieved while compiling the present volume—keys have been constructed down to the species level only in those groups well studied in Czechoslovakia, but not included for the publication in the Fauna ČSSR series. They are the groups of no great economic or medical importance, or those of which insufficient material is available from the territory of this country. On the other hand, in the groups important for practice and which have already appeared as monographs or whose publication has been planned in the series, the keys have been constructed down to the generic level only.

Now let us have a brief survey of contents. The phylum Tardigrada has been compiled by the late Professor Bartoš. It is arranged down to genera because the same author has already written a detailed monograph of the phylum (Fauna ČSSR, vol. 17, 1967). Likewise, the phylum Pentastomida has been compiled in the same volume by J. Šlais who constructed the identification tables in the Key down to generic level only. The opening chapter to the sub-phylum Chelicerata including the keys to orders has been written by M. Daniel. The keys to the order Pseudoscorpionidea facilitating species identification have been written by P. Verner who mentions species known in Czechoslovakia as well as those from the adjoining countries. The order Opilionidea has been compiled by V. Šilhavý, who is the author of a monograph on this order in the Fauna ČSSR (vol. 7, 1956). The most extensive section of the book (pp. 51 to 316) are the keys to the order Araneida, constructed by F. Miller, who has been studying spiders in Czechoslovakia for a score of years. It is a remarkable accomplishment facilitating species identification of Central-European spiders amounting to almost 1100 species. With most of them also biotopes of

their occurrence and numbers are mentioned in short characterizations.

The construction of keys down to the order Acarina has surely posed a difficult problem. The author of the opening chapter with a key to suborders is M. Daniel who adheres to the system proposed by Vitzthum. Keys to the suborder Mesostigmata, compiled by F. Dusbábek and K. Samšínák, have been constructed down to genera. The suborder Ixodides has been compiled by V. Černý and B. Rosický and the relevant keys facilitate species identification of ticks in Central Europe. Keys to the systematically difficult suborder Trombidiformes, facilitating generic identification have been mostly constructed by M. Daniel, only the subgroup Tetrápodili has been compiled by the Polish specialist Professor Boczek. Keys to the group Hydrachnellae have been constructed down to species by the late F. Láška, a specialist who also mentions biotopes of occurrence, as is the case with spiders. The suborder Sarcopiformes is divided in groups Acaridiae and Oribatei. Keys to the first group constructed by V. Černý and K. Samšínák facilitate generic identification, and with the family Acaridae also keys to hypopi stages are included. The part relating to the group Oribatei was written by M. Kunst. It comprises keys to families and keys to genera are included only in those families whose representatives have been found in Czechoslovakia.

The book is provided with an alphabetical index of Latin names, a list of Czech names and with a table of contents in which the systematic classification of categories compiled shows up clearly. The texts of relevant keys are complemented with a great number of good illustrations (pen drawings) representing morphological details included in the keys and making their use very easy. The general appearance of the book makes a very good impression and successfully reflects the development of Czechoslovak zoology after the Second world war. Most keys are the results of the year-long experience of particular authors, only some categories in which nobody has so far specialized in Czechoslovakia, have been done by co-authors. Most illustrations are original.

On the whole, the book is free of shortcomings and the reviewer has hardly any criticism to make, except that the enumeration is not quite uniform and that in opening chapters to some groups mentions on the mode of collection and preservation of material have been omitted.

The Key, which will greatly contribute to further knowledge of the fauna of Czechoslovakia, will serve as a good basis for other