

BOOK REVIEW

BUCHAR J. & RŮŽIČKA V.: CATALOGUE OF SPIDERS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC. Edited by Peter Merrett. Praha, Peres, 2002, 351 pages. Hardcover, din A4 (21 × 29.7 cm), 450 copies. ISBN 80-86360-25-3, price USD 15 & postage. Please order at: PERES Company, Na Klikovce 9, 140 00 Praha 4, Czech Republic.

This huge publication is a catalogue of Czech spiders, which summarises more than two centuries of arachnological work in the Czech Republic.

In more detail: The book starts with an introduction, which is in English and Czech, and printed in two columns (pp. 7–24). The preface (pp. 7–10) deals with Czech arachnology from an historical, institutional and a personal point of view. That is, the historical development since 1791, the arachnological teachers (most important are Miller and Buchar), arachnological organisations and meetings, and finally the arachnological interests of recent Czech arachnologists (most important: Miller, Kratochvíl and the two authors). Many citations are included. The national nature reserves in the Czech Republic are introduced briefly (pp. 11–13): 30 landscapes (4 national parks, 26 protected landscape areas) to help non-Czech readers understand the variety of Czech landscapes. This is followed by an overview of the sources of the 115,619 data sets included in the catalogue. Pp. 15–24 contain the explanation of the catalogue: 830 species in 37 spider families (about 35% are Linyphiidae). Nomenclature used is in the 2002-version of Platnick's Internet-catalogue*. Especially for this catalogue the authors revised the material of recently split species (like the *Pardosa lugubris*-group) as well as difficult genera (like *Porrhomma*).

The catalogue (pp. 25–189) is arranged following Platnick's system, i.e. families in taxonomic order and genera and species alphabetically. The information presented for each species includes (in separate folder):

Full systematic name, with authors, first year of description and some synonym and references.

Distribution (very differentiated – rather astonishingly “Middle Europe” includes the Balkans, Urals and Caucasus).

Nature of habitat (climax, semi-natural, disturbed, artificial – very helpful for nature reserve purposes).

Phytogeographic districts in CZ (Thermo-, Meso-, Oreophyticum).

Stratum (subterranean up to canopy level, the higher the less data available).

Humidity (five categories from very dry to very humid).

Light (five categories from open to dark).

Vulnerability (Red Data List).

No. of squares each species is known from (the most abundant eight species are recorded from more than 30% of the total number of squares, *Pardosa amentata* is most widely distributed: recorded from 258 out of 677 squares = 38%).

No. of map (see below).

Most interesting is the distribution of those species restricted to Middle Europe (94 of 830 species, more than 50% of which are Linyphiidae), and of which I know 58 are not known from Germany. As far as I know, three species are known only from the Czech Republic: *Entelecara obscura*, *Porrhomma omissa* and *Haplodrassus bohemicus*, and a few more have ranges only extending into adjacent areas. Unfortunately this kind of summarising or focussing on interesting species is not done in this catalogue.

Some imported and misidentified species are catalogued separately (pp. 190–201).

The maps are an important part of the book (pp. 204–307), and are based on the Czech national grid system (squares 12 × 11.2 km = 10' longitude and 6' latitude – based on the 1 : 25,000 maps, as in Germany and Slovakia). 8 maps are printed per page and there are different signs for records prior to and after 1950.

The final parts of the book consist of the references (pp. 309–336) and index (pp. 341–349).

I hope the detailed data on each species (this is only supplied for species with 1–4 records) will be made available in the future (the internet provides this possibility – see for example www.spiderling.de.vu). This information may be supplied by the authors, both of whom are very helpful.

For any arachnologist interested in the central European spider fauna this book is well worth buying.

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* (<http://research.amnh.org/entomology/spiders/catalog81-87/index.html>)