

Foreword

"The battle delivered against taxonomy has obtained a victory: nowadays the classification of an organism has become a difficulty." Ramón Margalef wrote this statement in 1968 in his book *Principles of Ecological Theory*. Since then the status of taxonomy in the scientific world has fallen increasingly. However it is surprising to observe that many scientific articles are published -such as those published in emblematic magazines like *Science* or *Nature*- and TV documentaries warn us of the importance of biodiversity and how it is seriously threatened by insatiable human greed. And it is even more surprising to see that scientific, community totally aware of such threats, ignores or undervalues men of science who are trying to find out how many species live in ecosystems and how to identify and distinguish them correctly. The biased use of the index of impact is leading the Natural Sciences towards a cul-de-sac: the number of taxonomists is decreasing at a dramatic rate and as a logical consequence so are the monographs on flora and fauna.

Can you imagine a language that does not update its dictionaries? It will soon be considered a dead language. It seems that ecology is moving in this direction. Our "dictionaries" are becoming obsolete and this will ultimately bring us to an ecology with deficits, founded on a taxonomic basis obtained decades ago.

In this gloomy panorama the work of Bouillon *et al.* on the Mediterranean Hydrozoans is charmingly anachronistic in the best sense of the word. It is a splendid work that helps to palliate the ignorance about an important but difficult taxonomic group due to the lack of works like the present monograph. There is no doubt that this work fully accomplishes the difficult mission of being the tiger shot for future studies on the ecology and biology of these interesting organisms. This is a thorough and complete work that updates all the taxonomic knowledge of this broad group of cnidarians.

Having this work published in the journal *Scientia Marina* is a great satisfaction for me and makes me feel very proud. The work follows the journal's tradition of publishing basic studies on marine fauna and flora, which was initiated with the case *Crustáceos Decápodos Ibéricos* (1968) by Ricardo Zariquiey-Alvarez and has achieved worldwide recognition. It is a great satisfaction to have the work of Bouillon *et al.* in our hands. Maybe the victory of the battle of taxonomy is not such a victory.

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