REVIEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS*

JOHANSEN, H. W., Coralline algae, a first synthesis. CRC Press, Boca Raton, Florida. 239 pp., 92 ill., published 1981, ISBN 0-8493-5261-4, 18.5 × 26 cm, price \$79.50 (outside U.S.A. \$90.00).

A text on the Corallinaceae is logical because of the well-defined nature and biological significance of the group. Once virtually neglected, the calcified red algae comprising the Corallinaceae are now a relatively well-known group and the subject of numerous coralline algal specialists. For example, about 75% of the published research on the assemblage during the period 1890-1940 was contributed by only two individuals. At the time of this writing, an edited coralline algae newsletter is being organized among some 33 workers (representing 15 countries), who are now active in the group. Johansen's synthesis, dealing with cytology, anatomy, reproduction, calcification, phytogeography, ecology, production, fossils, and taxonomy finally puts to rest the outdated concept that research on the coralline algae presents extraordinary difficulties, although some notable gaps still remain in our knowledge of the group. Only a little over a decade ago, one worker illustrated his despair in the following statement: "It is doubtful whether the genera of crustose melobesioids can be differentiated in the field. . . ." This sort of frustration has long since been overcome, and the excellent summary of generic characterizations and tabular keys provided by Johansen centralizes the critical information. In fact, this book, by (1) highlighting the important world-wide ecological and geological roles of coralline algae and (2) providing marine ecologists who lack phycological training with the requisite morphological-taxonomicnatural history tools in a condensed format, will likely result in a further burgeoning of activity in the group. Indeed, it might be said that interest in the Corallinaceae has finally "come of age." Overall, the text is timely, accurate, and relatively free of typographical errors. The illustrations, while appropriate, range from mostly excellent to a few hastily done. Several interpretive problems exist; e.g., the statement on p. 189, "Abrasion is not a feature encountered in the ocean except on seashores frequented by man." Surely abrasion, due to rock tumbling, sand scour, whiplash, and epilithic grazers, is not to be ignored in a group so well adapted to tolerating it. Further, Johansen's conservative treatment of this assemblage could have benefited from a more synoptic perspective in terms of providing critical evaluation of present status, overview, and long-term outlook in reference to knowledge of other Rhodophyta. The result is a highly-specialized text containing a welter of technical terminologies with which most marine biologists will have to struggle. With the publication of this work, Johansen has brought the Corallinaceae onto center stage and predictably will stimulate intensified research on this remarkable group over the next decade. The price could largely restrict this book to institutional libraries when, in fact, it should be readily available to a much wider clientele. [Mark M. Littler, Washington, D.C.]

Citation

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