



GLOBAL DIVERSITY OF EARTHWORMS— PAPERS IN HONOR OF İBRAHİM METE MISIRLIOĞLU (1972–2021) AND CLIVE EDWARDS (1925–2021) AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TWENTY YEARS OF *ZOOTAXA*

Edited by

MARIE L. C. BARTZ, DANIEL F. MARCHÁN, ANH D. NGUYEN & BARRIE G. M. JAMIESON

Introduction

This Special Issue on Oligochaeta is particularly dedicated to two great and esteemed scientists: **Ibrahim Mete Misirlioğlu** and **Clive Arthur Tudor Edwards**, both outstanding and globally recognized researchers. Dr Misirlioğlu, worked as an earthworm taxonomist, with valuable contributions to the fauna of Turkey, but also the globe (Misirlioğlu *et al.*, 2023). On the other hand, Dr Edwards worked on earthworm biology and ecology, their ecotoxicology, role in the breakdown of organic matter, interactions with other organisms and industrial applications (which included vermiculture and vermicomposting in later years), publishing several key books that have been essential references worldwide.

Here, both scientists are honored with species names dedicated to them. Czusdi *et al.* (2023) described *Dendrobaena misirlioglui* sp.nov. found in a stream bank near a Monastery in Bulgaria, while James *et al.* (2023) described *Kerriona clivedwardsi* sp.nov. from specimens found in a swamp at Vila Velha State Park in Paraná state, Brazil.

Also, this Special Issue is a contribution to the 20 years of *Zootaxa*. As remarked by Magalhães *et al.* (2021), two special volumes edited by R. Schmelz on global diversity of earthworms and other oligochaetes (Schmelz 2012; 2018) greatly contributed to the knowledge on taxonomy, systematics and distribution of the group. During this period more than 900 species of earthworms (Oligochaeta) were described (Misirlioğlu *et al.*, 2023), many of them in the journal *Zootaxa* (Magalhães *et al.* 2021).

So, almost five years later, this Special Issue in *Zootaxa* is an effort to instigate, promote and improve the submission of papers on the Oligochaeta (Crassicitellata) taxa in *Zootaxa* including: theories and methods of systematics and phylogeny, taxonomic monographs, revisions and reviews, catalogues/checklists, biographies and bibliographies, identification guides, analysis of characters, phylogenetic relationships and zoogeographical patterns of distribution, descriptions of taxa, and nomenclature.

This Special Issue has a total of 30 manuscripts from 14 countries on four continents (Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America) and they are organized by continent. More than half of the contributions are from Latin America. We have two manuscripts and one letter in honor to earthworm taxonomists and ecologists, who passed away in 2021 and 2022. The description of new species comprises 11 manuscripts, of which two include molecular analysis and three also provide new records of other species. A total of 29 new species are presented in this Special Issue. Other 11 manuscripts are records of species for different places and/or regions around the globe, of which two use molecular analysis helping to define family, genus and/or species classification levels. Finally, five more manuscripts are checklists, four for states and/or countries and one is an updated list of all the valid earthworm species in the World. This updated list closes this Special Issue and the current status of known earthworm species in the World totaling of 5,406 species plus an additional 332 unique subspecies, i.e., not counting the nomino-typical subspecies (thereby totaling 5,738 species/subspecies), belonging to 23 families (Misirlioğlu *et al.* 2023).

The editors would like to kindly thank the effort and contribution of all the referees as well as the editorial team of *Zootaxa*, who made this Special Issue possible.

Finally, as part of a continuous effort to instigate, promote and improve the dissemination and availability of information on oligochaete taxonomy, systematics and distribution, we announce the continuation of these Special Issues. In 2023 and 2024 we will prepare and publish another special issue entitled **4th Global Diversity of Earthworms: Papers in Honor of Victor Pop (1936–2022)**, resulting from the 9th International Oligochaete Taxonomy Meeting, to be held in San Lorenzo del Escorial, Spain, at the end of 2023, in honor of this great earthworm taxonomist. Please join us in making this new special issue a reality in benefit of earthworm knowledge advancement!