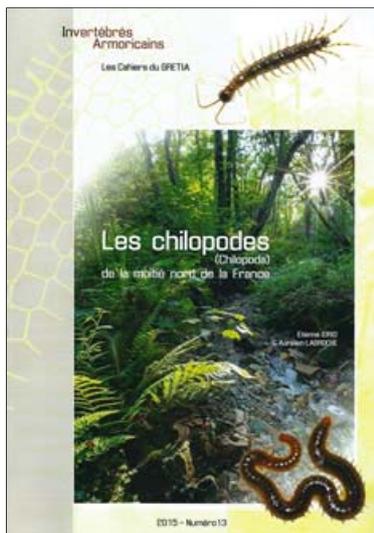


## BOOK REVIEWS



## LES CHILOPODES (CHILOPODA) DE LA MOITIÉ NORD DE FRANCE

Etienne Iorio & Aurélien Labroche

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This account covers the centipedes of the northern part of France and is therefore of particular interest to British and Irish workers and to colleagues in Belgium, The Netherlands and Germany west of the Rhine. The region covered includes Alsace, Lorraine, Franche-Comté, Champagne-Ardenne, Bourgogne, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Picardie, Normandie, Bretagne, Pays de la Loire and Ile-de-France and includes 65 taxa plus three very doubtfully occurring ones. As such it excludes

species only known from southern France, Alps, Pyrenees, the Mediterranean coastal area and Corsica.

After a brief introduction, the main bibliographical resources for a study of the French fauna are listed along with notes on hand collecting techniques and the making of a collection. This is followed by a list of species, their presence or possible occurrence and an estimate of their frequency of being found from CC (très commun), PC (peu commun), R (rare) to RR (très rare). Amongst types that might occur are included three species of *Eupolybothrus*, *Lithobius latro*, *L. lucifugus* and *Schendyla dentata*. Of species whose presence in the northern part of France is very doubtful we have *Lithobius erythrocephalus*, *Dignathodon microcephalus* and *Henia brevis*. The presence of *S. dentata* and *H. brevis* as only either potential or doubtful might surprise British workers. A map showing the numbers of species recorded from various départements indicates more than 20 across all the Norman and Breton ones, no doubt, in part at least, due to the activity of Etienne Iorio himself in Armorica with 33 in Finistère but with the richest fauna, not unexpectedly in southern France (69 in Alpes-Maritimes).

A key to the four orders of centipedes is followed by keys to the individual species. What is notable about these keys is not only the presence of an English as well as a French version (most welcome to those whose school-learnt French is not fluent) but the presence throughout the keys of macrophotographs of the various features used in them. Go to page 73 and you can see a colour photograph showing that extra spine on the 15<sup>th</sup> leg between VpP and DpP in *Lithobius borealis* or VmH (VmC) and VaH (VaC) in *L. pilicornis* on page 33! This seems to be a major leap forward in illustrating a centipede key for ease of use (as compared with using only drawings) and the authors should certainly be congratulated on this innovation which sets a standard for the future.

For those “allergic to keys” and those just beginning work on centipedes, there follows a number of illustrations of certain species based on a maximum of three simple characters. Such include *Lithobius forficatus*, *L. variegatus*, *Cryptops anomalans* (based on size), *Geophilus ribauti*, *Henia vesuviana*, *Himantarium gabrielis*, *Mecistocephalus guildingii*, *Stigmatogaster subterranea*, *Strigamia crassipes* and *S. acuminata*. Would a similar exercise be worth doing for British & Irish species?

Tony Barber