REVIEWS

The emergence of lichenology in Switzerland is traced to an important 1742 work by the great physiologist, Albrecht von Haller. This included 160 taxa and was the first to recognize the variability of species, while von Haller’s contemporaries, Linnaeus, regarded them as divinely fixed entities. The contributions of about 15 other luminaries are documented in this historical section. Eduard Frey (1888–1974) is eulogized as having been the foremost authority, along with Josef Poelt, on the lichen flora of the Alps. In the past few decades, the Systematisch-geobotanisches Institut at the University of Berne, and its cryptogamic department established by Klaus Amman, have been a center for ecological, systematic and floristic studies of Swiss lichens, as well as for the training of students. More recently, however, organizational changes have led to the closure of the institute, and leaner times have set in. Clerc candidly describes and regrets these developments, noting that as large, but otherwise similar in landscape diversity and climate, Discoveries of additional species are anticipated particularly among the saxicolous crusts.

And then the catalog. This adheres to the circumscription, the “lichenized fungi,” and thus excludes a substantial number of calicoid and other genera, some comprising lichenized taxa, that are commonly treated in other recent catalogs of lichens and “allied” species. The omission is understandable, though references could have been provided indicating where the Swiss representatives of these genera have been treated. But this is a minor caveat. The catalog is an enormous feat of bibliographic, nomenclatural, and taxonomic research. It seems certain to fulfill the desideratum, stated in the Introduction, of stimulating lichen floristic research in Switzerland. It will also be a trove of information and taxonomic opinion for lichenologists elsewhere. Numerous specialists of various genera are thanked in the acknowledgments, cementing the impression that this distillation of knowledge is as thorough and reliable as it possibly could be.