

The malacological publications of Jos Christiaens (1927-2013)

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Abstract: Christiaens had a thorough knowledge of malacological literature, especially of limpets. Several examples are given of his interest in publications on molluscs. The bibliography of Jos Christiaens comprises 62 publications.

Introduction: Joseph Marie Jean (Jos) Christiaens (09.03.1927-29.09.2013) was a Belgian malacological author. He earned his living as a construction engineer. Some biographical information, with portraits, is given in a few publications (Christiaens, 1986; Anonymous, 2019).

His main interest concerned the limpets, i.e. Patelloidea, Fissurelloidea, Phenacolepadidae, Hipponicidae, Calyptraeidae, Capulidae, Siphonaroidea (Christiaens, 1986: 18). His nickname was “Mister Patella” (Anonymous, 2014), and his extensive collection is now in the Royal Belgian Institute for Natural Sciences at Brussels (Anonymous, 2014).

When other malacologists and shell collectors met Christiaens in the sixties of the previous century they were impressed by his thorough knowledge of the malacological literature on limpets. This resulted in a request for tips, advice and a detailed description of his procedure to search the literature (Van Bulck, 1968). In response to this request, Christiaens (1968) started with the advice to start with the series of monographs of the 19th century by Sowerby, Reeve and Tryon & Pilsbry and many others. He also recommended to check publications like Zoological Records, Geological Records and Biblioteca Zoologica in the search for relevant publications. Then the large French encyclopedias, with dozen of volumes, of the first half of the 19th century were mentioned, followed by more than 30 malacological journals. He finished with (translated from the Dutch) “... I want to give you some good advice. Don't get discouraged by this long and

incomplete list. I myself have not completely studied these works.” I can imagine that many readers were actually discouraged by this encouragement.

His interest in literature is also shown by his publication on a holiday of a fortnight in Ireland. After an impression of the country of three pages, including only a few lines on collected shells, he dedicated four pages to a chronological list of publications on molluscs from Ireland and a survey of Irish journals with malacological articles. Moreover, in his publication on the genus *Scutus*, he mentioned (Christiaens, 1986: 2) that his documentation on limpets contains nearly 5,000 references. It is therefore not surprising that Christiaens was described as ‘very encyclopedic’ (Anonymous, 2014). He saw himself as ‘systematic’ (Christiaens, 1978: 95).

A survey of his new taxa was presented by Delsaerdt (1991) and Anonymous (2019). Both references list 29 new taxa. The latter reference also lists his five eponyms. However, information on his publications is very limited (Delsaerdt, 1991: 35-36; Anonymous, 2014), the number ranges from 6 to 14. Here (see Annex) 62 publications are listed, for all of which Christiaens is the sole author. This bibliography is thought to be complete.

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Annex: Malacological publications of J. Christiaens

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