

Supervisor's assessment

Michala Tůmová Bryndová

Thesis Title: The relationships among functional traits of tardigrades (Tardigrada), their diet, and environmental conditions.

The study of the tardigrades as a group of important limnoterrestrial fauna has been burdened for many years by the fact that the experts dealing with this group are mostly taxonomists. Although dozens of new species are described each year, ecological knowledge of their role in the ecosystem is paradoxically in many respects literally insignificant. Although tardigrades are a common and regular group in virtually all soil types from the tropics to the polar, many colleagues need to be persuaded of this trivial fact over and over again. For methodological reasons in particular, it is simply not customary to look for them in the soil (not only mosses) and deal with them. The presented dissertation aims to change this point of view at tardigrades and show that the ecology of tardigrades, their feeding behavior is not only interesting, but also often does not correspond to the usual clichés and many repeated claims of tardigradology fathers, which are not based on deeper knowledge let alone experiments. The presented work is not only a breakthrough in the methodological and experimental approach, but hopefully it has the potential to bring a progress in the study of tardigrades as a whole.

Michala turned out to be a student who is very passionate about the topic and who has been raising awareness about the object of her interest since her bachelor's studies with burning eyes. During her doctoral studies, she became an unmissable figure at the Institute of Soil Biology, organize the institute's seminars and an international conference. Her colleagues often have a lot to do to resist her enthusiasm she throws around. Michala enjoys her studies so much that she extended it to almost 7 years. Thanks to her communication skills, she fits very independently not only into the international community of tardigradologists.

Overall, I must praise the student's interest in the topic, her diligence and the effort, despite the unfavorable circumstances, to bring the work to a successful end as well as her individuality, independence and invention and willingness to learn. I was honored to accompany Michala during her studies and I look forward to continuing to work with her in my team after she becomes a full doctor.



Miloslav Devetter

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