

## Obituary

### Erwin Meyer, 1948–2020



**Erwin Meyer**

(Photo: Michael Steinwandter)

I first met Erwin Meyer at the International Congress of Myriapodology in Amsterdam in 1984, also attended by J. Gordon Blower, my supervisor at the time, who introduced us. Gordon was influential to Erwin who spent some weeks in Manchester as a PhD student in the 1970s. Also visiting Colin Fairhurst in nearby Salford (both of whom he had met at the congress in Hamburg in 1975) Erwin was clearly interested in the life histories of millipedes and learnt from Gordon about determining stadia in the Julida and Chordeumatida. He wrote an appreciation of the contribution of Gordon Blower to the study of millipede life cycles in the BMIG commemoration volume 19 in 2003 which resulted from a meeting in Manchester to celebrate the life and work of Gordon and Ted Eason. Erwin was joint author of a substantial paper about the millipedes of a beech woodland in South East England, the work on which was presumably a result of his stay in Manchester.

Erwin started working as a university assistant at the University of Innsbruck (Austria) in 1976, where he stayed, eventually heading up the Soil Ecology working group within the Department of Ecology, until his retirement in 2013. He completed his doctorate in 1978 and published many papers on millipede ecology, as well as diversity, distribution and

physiology, especially of species from the montane and alpine zones. The Manchester influence regarding the interest in life cycles can clearly be seen in several of these. One of his favourite millipedes is reputed to have been *Ommatoiulus sabulosus*, a species widely distributed in the Central Alps which, as well as being a spectacular species, has an interesting life cycle in being periodomorphic.

In 1990 Erwin hosted the International Congress of Myriapodology in Innsbruck, a memorable and successful congress with a full day outing into the Alps where a chairlift took us high up the mountains. The resulting proceedings were edited by Erwin, along with Konrad Thaler and Wolfgang Schedl and published in 1992.

In 2003 I caught up with Erwin again in Innsbruck, but for rather different reasons. I was in Austria on a trip to look at pollarded trees in Europe. Austria was not actually one of my planned destinations, but I had to pass through, and so I contacted Erwin to see if he was able to put me in touch with anyone in Austria who might be able to help. Of course he very cheerfully did, and as a result I spent a couple of really interesting days, facilitated by him, learning about traditional methods of managing trees in the Austrian Alps.

Erwin is reported by his students to have been an inspiring teacher, encouraging them to study ecology and especially soil zoology. His outgoing and friendly personality must have been a contributing factor to his successful teaching style. He sadly died very unexpectedly in his sleep on June 7, 2020 at age 71.

Helen Read

With additional information from the Obituary in the CIM newsletter No. 5 November 2020  
by Julia Seeber & Michael Steinwandter

**Selected publications of Erwin Meyer on Myriapoda:**

- 1973: **Meyer E.**: Über die Diplopoden Nordtirols und Vorarlbergs (Kritische Artenliste, mit biologischen Daten aus der Literatur). *Diploma thesis*, University of Innsbruck: 102 pp.
- 1974: Thaler K., **Meyer E.**: Fragmenta Faunistica Tirolensia, II (Diplopoda, Chilognatha: Julidae, Craspedosomatidae). *Berichte des naturwissenschaftlichen-medizinischen Verein Innsbruck*, **61**: 93–99.
- 1975: **Meyer E.**: Über einige Diplopoden aus dem Rätikon (Vorarlberg, Österreich). *Berichte des naturwissenschaftlichen-medizinischen Verein Innsbruck*, **62**: 63–69.
- 1979: **Meyer E.**: Life-cycles and ecology of high alpine Nematophora. In: Camatini M. [Ed.]: *Myriapod biology*, Academic Press, London, 456pp., 294–306.
- 1983: **Meyer E.**: *Trimeophorella paradisica* n. sp., ein nivaler Diplopede aus dem Gran Paradiso-Nationalpark (Grajische Alpen, Italien) (Diplopoda: Chordeumatida: Neoatractosomatidae). *Berichte des naturwissenschaftlichen-medizinischen Verein Innsbruck*, **70**: 99–104.
- 1984: Phillipson J., **Meyer E.**: Diplopod numbers and distribution in a British beechwood. *Pedobiologia*, **26**: 83–94.
- 1985: **Meyer E.**, Eisenbeis G.: Water relations in millipedes from some alpine habitat types (Central Alps, Tyrol) (Diplopoda). *Bijdragen tot de Dierkunde*, **55**: 131–142.
- 1985: **Meyer E.**: Distribution, activity, life-history and standing crop of Julidae (Diplopoda, Myriapoda) in the Central High Alps (Tyrol, Austria). *Holarctic Ecology*, **8**: 141–150.
- 1990: **Meyer E.**: Altitude-related changes of life histories of Chordeumatida in the central Alps (Tyrol, Austria). In: Minelli A. [Ed.], *Proceedings of the 7th International Congress of Myriapodology*. E.J. Brill, Leiden, 480pp., 311–322.
- 1992: Kofler E.M., **Meyer E.**: Lebenszyklus, Abundanz und Produktion von *Enantiulus nanus* (Latzel) in einem inneralpinen Eichenmischwald (Tirol, Österreich). *Bericht des naturwissenschaftlich-medizinischen Vereins in Innsbruck*, **10** Supplementum: 153–166.
- 1996: **Meyer E.**, Marsoner P., Fischer E.: Population metabolism of millipedes at two altitudinal zones in the central Alps (Tirol, Austria). *Mémoires du Muséum national d'histoire naturelle*, **169**: 451–460.
- 1997: **Meyer E.**, Singer A.: Distribution, seasonal activity and abundance of millipedes in forests of Voralberg (Austria). *Bericht des naturwissenschaftlich-medizinischen Vereins in Innsbruck*, **84**: 287–306.
- 2006: Seeber J., Scheu S., **Meyer E.**: Effects of macro-decomposers on litter decomposition and soil properties in alpine pastureland: A mesocosm experiment. *Applied Soil Ecology*, **34**: 168–175.
- 2008: Seeber J., Seeber G.U.H., Langel R., Scheu S., **Meyer E.**: The effect of macro-invertebrates and plant litter of different quality on the release of N from litter to plant on alpine pastureland. *Biology and Fertility of Soils*, **44**: 783–790.
- 2009: Seeber J., Langel R., **Meyer E.**, Traugott M.: Dwarf shrub litter as a food source for macro-decomposers in alpine pastureland. *Applied Soil Ecology*, **41**: 178–184.