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A Preliminary Study on the Rumen Ciliate Fauna of Turkish Domestic Sheep (*Ovis ammon aries*): II- Family Ophryoscolecidae (Entodiniomorpha)

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Abstract: The rumen ciliate protozoal composition belonging to the family Ophryoscolecidae from Turkish domestic sheep (*Ovis ammon aries*) was investigated. As the result of our investigation, 8 genera (Diplodinium, Eudiplodinium, Ostracodinium, Metadinium, Enoploplastron, Polyplastron, Epidinium and Ophryoscolex) including 10 species and 11 formae were distinguished. The genus and species which have the highest appearance frequency are Metadinium and *M. affine*, respectively, with the same value of 85.71%. At that time, the present study reports for the first time the presence of *Epidinium ecaudatum* f. *bicaudatum* and *Epidinium ecaudatum* f. *tricaudatum* in the rumen of sheep. All of the genera, species and formae determined were compared with their original descriptions and previous reports, the similarities and differences were discussed. On the other hand, it is pointed out that the genus *Ophryoscolex* should be reconsidered again since its species diagnostic characteristics, i.e., the length of the main caudal spines and the number of the rings of secondary caudal spines, are appear to be not appropriate for the classification of the species. It was determined that the rumen microfauna of the family Ophryoscolecidae from Turkish domestic sheep is closely resembles to that of Far Eastern (Chinese/Japanese) sheep and is more rich than that of Western European (Scottish) and American (Canadian/Alaskan) sheep in the viewpoint of diversity.

Key Words: Domestic sheep (*Ovis ammon aries*), Turkey, rumen ciliates, Ophryoscolecidae, Entodiniomorpha

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