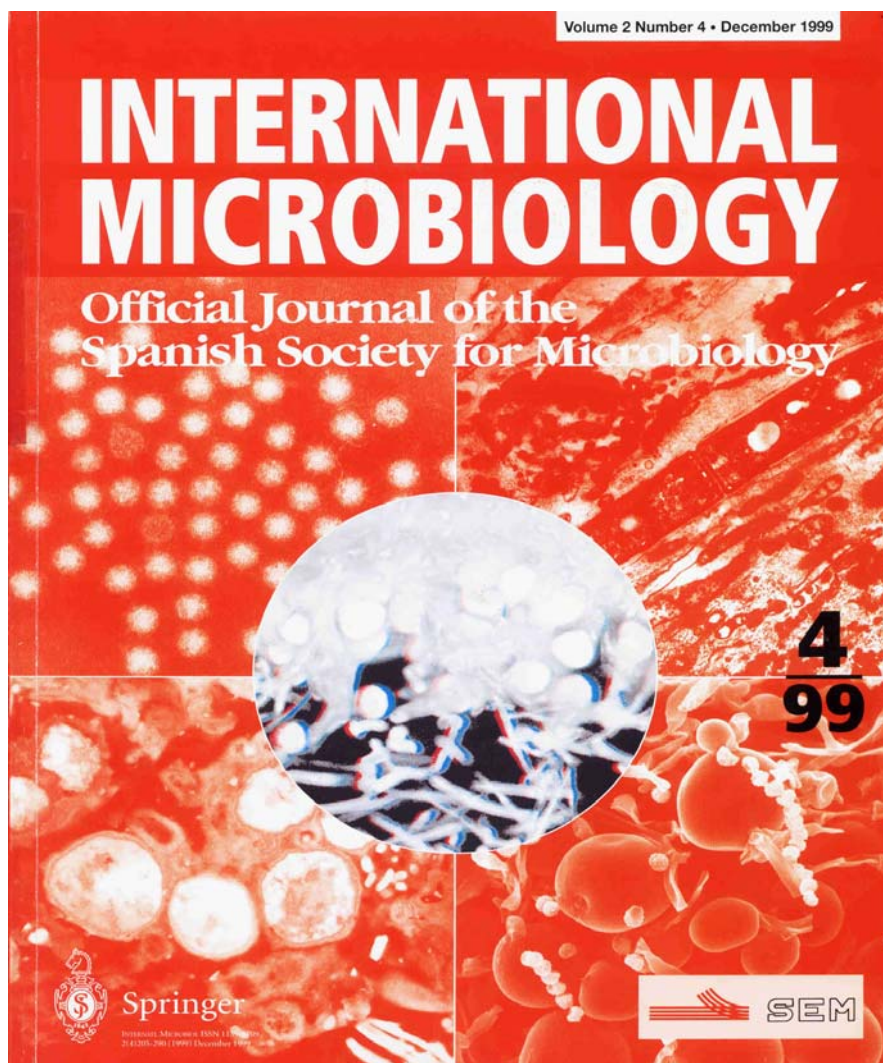


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COVER

CENTER. (Note: Stereo-color glasses are needed to see the 3D effect.) Reconstruction of the 3D structure of a hydrated *Parmelia omphalodes* thallus showing the upper cortex, algal layer and medule. This image of the lichen was obtained by Confocal Laser Scanning Microscopy and by processing 20 confocal sections (1 μm intervals) of acridine orange stained lichen thallus. The image (70 μm diameter) is presented as an stereo image; the 3D effect could be observed with stereo-color glasses. See article by de los Ríos, A. et al., this issue pp. 251–257. (Micrograph by Jacek Wierzchos and Carmen Ascaso.)

Upper left. Human astrovirus serotype 1 isolated in stool from a child with acute gastroenteritis. Serotyping was performed with Oxford astrovirus reference antisera. Immune electron micrograph by Albert Bosch, University of Barcelona, Spain. (Magnification, ca. 200,000 \times)

Upper right. In situ ultrastructure of the prokaryotic complex community of a microbial mat from the Ebro Delta, northeastern Spain, studied in the frame of the European program “Laboratoire Européen Associé (LEA) CNRS-CSIC, Sciences de la mer”. Transmission electron micrograph by Marie-Odile Soyer-Gobillard, Oceanologic Observatory of Banyuls, France. (Magnification, ca. 2,500 \times)

Lower left. Endolithic microbial community formed by algal and fungal cells within sandstone rock of the Ross Desert (Antarctica). Scanning electron microscopy in backscattered electron mode (SEM–BSE) micrograph by Jacek Wierzchos, University of Lleida, and Carmen Ascaso, Environmental Sciences Center, CSIC, Madrid, Spain. (Magnification, ca. 2,800 \times)

Lower right. Hülle cells and conidia of *Emericella varicolor* var. *varicolor* isolated by J. Antonio Leal from leaves of *Prunus laurocerasus*. Micrograph obtained in a Philips XL 20 scanning electron microscope, Centro de Investigaciones Biológicas, CSIC, Madrid, Spain. (Magnification, ca. 1,750 \times)