

A new *Tetranchyroderma* (Gastrotricha, Thaumastodermatidae) with triancrees from the Mediterranean Sea

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Abstract

As part of a project dealing with the meiofauna diversity of three Italian Marine Protected Areas (MPA), a new species of gastrotrich is described. *Tetranchyroderma aapton* n. sp. is characterized by the cuticular armature made up of triancrees whose shape approaches those of *T. tribulosum* rather than the ancrees of *T. adeleae* or *T. gausancrum*, the only other congeners exhibiting a triancrous covering. The new species is from the MPA Capo Caccia-Isola Piana (Northwestern Sardinia, Italy) where it was found in organogenous sediment collected at 20 m water depth, together with 17 other gastrotrich species, most of which appear undescribed. The results call for widening the survey to deeper sediments, usually neglected in gastrotrich faunistic surveys.

Introduction

This study falls within the framework of BIO-IMPA (Biodiversity of Inconspicuous Organisms In Marine Protected Areas), a research project sponsored by the Italian ministry of the University and Research. The aim is to ascertain biodiversity patterns of poorly known meiofauna taxa, at species, community and population level, in Marine Protected Areas (MPA), which are representatives of the main biogeographical sectors of the Italian coastlines. Here we describe a new interesting gastrotrich species found in samples collected at the MPA of Capo Caccia-Isola Piana (North-West Sardinia). Accounts of the subprojects have been presented as contributions to congresses (e.g. Curini-Galletti et al. 2006, Dal Zotto et al.

2007, Balsamo et al. 2008), while details of the overall research will be provided in forthcoming papers.

Materials and methods

The sampling campaign took place in July 2005 and included 12 locations within the MPA Capo Caccia-Isola Piana and adjacent areas (Northwestern Sardinia, Italy). The species described herein was found in sublittoral samples collected at ca. 20 m water depth, in sediment made up of organogenous sand with some detritus (see type locality below). About 1 liter of sediment was collected by scuba divers by means of plastic jars and soon after taken to the field laboratory

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