

REPORT ON ECHINODERMS FROM MALTA

Dušan ZAVODNIK

Center for Marine Research, "Rudjer Bošković" Institute
Rovinj, Yugoslavia

Abstract. In a small collection of echinoderms from Malta 15 species were found of which 4 were not previously reported for the area (Amphiura chiajei, A. filiformis, Genocidaris maculata, Brissopsis lyrifera). It is supposed that the echinoderm fauna from Malta is characterised by thermophile species.

Résumé. L'analyse d'un petit nombre d'Echinodermes provenant de Malte fournit 15 espèces dont 4 (Amphiura chiajei, A. filiformis, Genocidaris maculata, Brissopsis lyrifera) sont nouvelles pour cette région. Il est supposé que la faune échinologique de Malte est caractérisée par de espèces thermophiles.

The echinoderms from Malta are scarcely known. Most data on them were provided by Despot (1930), Tortonese (1935), and Micalleff and Evans (1974). For this area, the authors have cited 35 echinoderm species.

By the courtesy of the ex Mediterranean Marine Sorting Center, Khereddine, Tunisia, I have received for determination a small collection of echinoderms (Holothurioidea excluded) which in 1965 and 1967 MM. J. Štirn and F. Evans had sampled by means of the dredge d'Agassiz, the grab vanVeen, or by diving. In total, 58 specimens were collected at 10 stations (Table I).

In the biological material collected, fifteen species of echinoderms were found:

Astropecten bispinosus (Otto): Station 3 (1 specimen)
Ophidiaster ophidianus (Lamarck): 2 (2), 3 (2)
Asterina gibbosa (Pennant): 3 (1)
Echinaster sepositus (Retzius): 3 (2)
Coscinasterias tenuispina (Lamarck): 2 (1), 3 (1)
Marthasterias glacialis (Linnaeus): 2 (1), 3 (1)
Amphiura chiajei (Forbes): Z1 (1)
Amphiura filiformis (O.F. Müller): A2 (1), B2 (1)
Ophioderma longicaudum (Retzius): 3 (1)
Cidaris cidaris (Linnaeus): 1 (30), 2 (1), 6 (2)
Centrostephanus longispinus (Philippi): 2 (1)
Genocidaris maculata A. Agassiz: D1 (2)
Paracentrotus lividus (Lamarck): 3 (2)
Echinocyamus pusillus (O.F. Müller): C1 (2 tests)
Brissopsis lyrifera (Forbes): A2 (1 juvenile, 1 test)

Table I: Collection cites

Station	Position		Depth (m)	Sampling
A2	35°57.1'N;	14°34.1'E	135	van Veen
B2	35°58.4'N;	14°32.8'E	132	van Veen
C1	35°58.1'N;	14°29.4'E	75	van Veen
D1	35°59.4'N;	14°27.5'E	59	van Veen
Z1	35°54.3'N;	14°35.0'E	121	van Veen
Z3	35°57.4'N;	14°38.1'E	138	van Veen
1	35°50'N;	14°34'E	80	Agassiz
2	35°55'N;	14°33'E	10-40	Diving
3	36°02'N;	14°12'E	50	Agassiz
6	36°00.2'N;	14°30.6'E	110	Agassiz

Out of these species, four were not previously recorded in the area of Malta: Amphiura chiajei, A. filiformis, Genocidaris maculata, and Brissopsis lyrifera. Consequently, for the area of Malta, only about 40 species of echinoderms are reported. It is less than one can expect, in spite of the supposition that the marine fauna in this area is rather poor (Micalleff and Evans 1974). In general, the echinoderm fauna of Malta is similar to that in other parts of the Mediterranean: the species of atlanto-mediterranean and the boreal-mediterranean distribution prevail. The fauna of Malta is, however, characterised by thermophile species, such as Hacelia attenuata, Ophidiaster ophidianus, and Centrostephanus longispinus.

R e f e r e n c e s

- DESPOTT, G., 1930 - Echinological notes. Bull. Mus. La Valetta, 1 (2) : 88-90
- MICALLEFF, H., and EVANS, F., 1974 - The marine fauna of Malta. Roy. Univ. Malta, Contr. in Mar. Sci., 1 : 143-172
- TORTONESE, E., 1935 - Contributo alla conoscenza degli echinodermi mediterranei. Ann. Mus. Civ. Stor. nat. Genova, 57 : 219-272