

Bryozoans represent one of the most common and characteristic elements of detritic bottoms in general and are very significant within the Biocenosis of Coastal Detritic Bottoms (*sensu* PERES & PICARD, 1964). Assemblages such as these have been studied for the area around Marseilles (HARMELIN, 1976) and the Hyeres Islands (HARMELIN, 1978), in the Aegean area (HARMELIN, 1968; 1969) and along the coasts of Catalonia (ZABALA, 1986). This paper represents a first approach to the study of this type of association in the Central-Southern Mediterranean.

The Bryozoan assemblage of a particular facies of the Coastal Detritic Biocenosis, characterized by strong hydrodynamism with a community prevalently made up by the mollusks *Modiolula phaseolina*, *Laevicardium oblongum*, *Pteromeris minuta*, *Calyptraea chinensis*, and the Echinoderm *Echinocyamus pusillus* and a thanatocoenosis characterized by the extreme abundance of calcareous Algae of the species *Mesophyllum lichenoides* was studied. The sample (PS/81 10 C) comes from the continental shelf of South-Eastern Sicily (Bay of Noto); it was dredged two and half miles off the coast of Pachino (Lat. 36°43,48 N; Long. 15°11,30 E) at a depth of between 61 and 57 metres. In this zone there are several biotopes largely characterized by coarse, organogenic sediments recording an autigenous productivity, often placed side by side with rocky bottoms colonized by the Coralligenous Biocenosis (VIOLANTI *et al.*, 1990).

The faunistic content of about 30 litres of bottom sediment was analyzed. Granulometrically, it is a gravelly sand with a subordinate muddy fraction and an exclusively organogenic composition. The characterizing element is given by the calcareous Algae (84%), while the rest is essentially made up of Mollusks and Bryozoans. Echinoderms, Crustaceans, Serpuloids and Cnidarians are distinctly subordinate.

A total of 13 species were determined (2 Cyclostomes, 6 Cheilostomes Anascina and 5 Cheilostomes Ascophorina). Within the assemblage, made up overall by 131 colonies, the most abundant species are *Beania hirtissima hirtissima* and *Beania robusta* which together reach 49.26%, followed by *Calpensia nobilis* and *Setosella vulnerata* each with 11.45%, by *Schizobrachiella sanguinea* with 9.92% and *Copidozoum planum* with 4.58%. *Annectocyma major* and *Hincksinoflustra octodon* are present each with 3.05%. All the other species are much more subordinate (*Entalophoroecia deflexa*, *Hippopodinella kirkempaueri*, *Cleidocasmidra çanakkalense*, *Reptadeonella violacea* and *Turbicellepora coronopus*) each present with only two specimens and with 1.53%. It is to be noticed how almost all the species fall into the stock of characteristic (exclusive and preferential) species of the Coastal Detritic Bottom Biocenosis with *Beania hirtissima hirtissima*, *Beania robusta*, *Calpensia nobilis*, *Reptadeonella violacea* and *Setosella vulnerata*. In particular, the first four species are linked to the small substrata which lie on the bottom such as shells or more often calcareous Algae, as has been already noted by GAUTIER (1962), HARMELIN (1976; 1978) and ZABALA (1986). On the other hand, *Setosella vulnerata* electively colonizes very small elements (1-2 mm) developing spiral-growth colonies but which never totally cover the substratum-grains. The species *Cleidocasmidra çanakkalense* was first noted here after its initial description on specimens from the Dardanelli Strait at depths between 60 and 70 metres (UNSAL & d'HONDT, 1979) and can also be included in the stock of Coastal Detritic Biocenosis (ROSSO, in prep.). This species prefers to colonize the bulgy parts of the calcareous Algae. The ubiquitous *Annectocyma major* and *Entalophoroecia deflexa*, here present with vinculariform morphoses which are more typical of the lower surfaces of small elements lying on the bottom (HARMELIN, 1976; ZABALA, 1986), can also be considered characteristic of the Coastal Detritic Biocenosis. Also the sciaphylous *Turbicellepora coronopus*, with small globular colonies which would be more typical of Shelf-Edge Detritic Bottom Biocenosis (HARMELIN, 1978), could be included in such a stock. Finally we must consider as accidental *Schizobrachiella sanguinea* and *Hippopodinella kirchempaueri*, both having a typically infralittoral distribution, and *Hincksinoflustra octodon* which up until now was only known in deep and muddier stations in the westernmost part of the Mediterranean (ZABALA, 1986). From a compositional point of view, this assemblage shows more affinity with the Bryozoan assemblages from analogous Coastal Detritic Bottom Biocenosis (between 60 and 100 metres) from the area around Marseilles (HARMELIN, 1976; 1978) than with those of the Eastern Mediterranean (HARMELIN, 1968; 1969). The number of species found (13) is, in any case, lower than that quoted from the Mediterranean localities (17-30) studied by HARMELIN.

The analysis of the zoarial morphotypes, with which the species of the assemblage are present, indicates that the bottom is influenced by a strong hydrodynamism. In fact, a very high percentage of encrusting forms can be seen (Membraniporiform, Petraliiforms, Setoselliniforms and Celleporiforms), as well as flexible erect types (Flustriforms) which overall represent about 95% of the zoarial forms present and which allow us to suppose that there are bottom currents of moderate to moderate-high intensity (*sensu* SCHOPF, 1969). The species with a Vinculariform habitus could develop in more sheltered micro-habitats. On the other hand, the inferred rate of sedimentation is low in that almost all the morphotypes, with the exception of Setoselliniforms, Flustriforms and Vinculariforms to a certain degree, do not like muddy conditions. These data agree well with the bottom granulometry (gravelly sand with a subordinate muddy component).

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