A new genus and species of Melitidae (Crustacea: Amphipoda: Hadzioidea) from Brazilian waters

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Abstract

A new genus and species of the Eriopisella group are described from Brazilian waters. The new genus is monotypic and closely related to the melitid genus Netamelita Barnard, 1962, but is distinguishable from the latter by the propodus of gnathopods 1 and 2 that is wedge-shaped, subtriangular and has the palm longer than posterior margin. This is the first amphipod of the Eriopisella group reported from Brazil.

Key words: taxonomy, Eriopisella group, GEDIP Project, habitats project, Brazil

Introduction

According to Lowry & Springthorpe (2005), the family Melitidae is divided into 78 genera which are arranged in five groups, Ceradocopsis, Ceradocus, Eriopisa, Gammarellid group (Nuuanu) and Melita. Since then, Krapp-Schickel (2008) has established the Maeridae, but she only partially diagnosed the family and did not include all genera. Lowry & Hughes (2009) diagnosed the family and included all the 40 genera. So now there are about 38 genera in the Melitidae. Yerman (2009) furthermore recognizes an Eriopisella group as distinct from Melita group, and composed of the genera Eriopisella Chevreux, 1920, Netamelita Barnard, 1962 and Psammomelita Vonk, 1988. There is not still, however, a phylogeny to corroborate the monophyly of these groups.

The genus Netamelita has many similarities to Psammomelita, but their differences have been well discussed by Vonk (1988) and later by Thomas & Barnard (1991) in their revision of the genus Netamelita, and Yerman (2009), who described the first species of Netamelita from waters beyond the southern United States and the Caribbean Sea. The new species described in this paper was first mentioned by Wakabara (1972) in her Ph.D. thesis as a new species of Netamelita, with material from the GEDIP Project, collected in 1968. However this material has never been formally described. Besides the material of GEDIP Project, we had access to material collected in 2008, in the Campos Basin, off the state of Rio de Janeiro, coming from the Habitats Project, where this species was found again.

The new species has many similarities to the ones of the genus Netamelita, but is here established as the type species of a new genus because of gnathopods 1 and 2 with the carpus smaller than propodus, the propodus wedge-shaped, palm longer than posterior margin, different from all the species of Netamelita. Regarding the relation of length of carpus and propodus on gnathopod 1, the type species of this genus, N. cortada Barnard, 1962, shows a long carpus, which seems to be longer than propodus. However, Thomas & Barnard (1991), based on reexamination of the holotype of N. cortada, diagnosed Netamelita presenting propodus shorter or scarcely shorter than carpus.

The following abbreviations were used in the figures: Md, mandible; Mx1–2, maxillae 1–2; UL, upper lip; LL, lower lip; Gn1–2, gnathopods 1–2; P3–7, pereopods 3–7; Ep1–3, epimeral plates 1–3; U1–3, uropods 1–3; T, telson; r, right; l, left.