



Italian marine Gastrotricha: VI. Seven new species of Macrodasysida

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Abstract

Seven species new to science are described from Italian waters, some of which also occur along nearby coasts: *Macrodasys acrosorus* n. sp. and *M. digronus* n. sp. in the family Macrodasysidae, *Acanthodasys flabellicaudus* n. sp., *Diplodasys sanctimariae* n. sp., *Tetranchyroderma hyponiglarum* n. sp., *T. korynetum* n. sp. and *T. oligopentancrum* n. sp. in the family Thaumastodermatidae.

Key words: Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, Benthos, Meiofauna, Systematics, Taxonomy, Italy, Cyprus, Egypt

Introduction

The coastline of Italy is the best known long coastline in the world, with 91 species of Gastrotricha Macrodasysida known as of this writing. This introduction reviews the taxonomy of new macrodasysid gastrotrichs from Italy. Only one reference was made to these animals in the 19th century, with the description of *Hemidasys agaso* by Claparède (1867), a species that is probably extinct, its never having been seen again. There were four papers in the first six decades of the 20th century – Remane (1927), Gerlach (1953), Wilke (1954) and Papi (1957)—describing several genera and species. Already, nearly two-thirds of the known genera were reported. The curve continued with three publications in the 1960's—Boaden (1965a, 1965b) and Clausen (1965)—four publications in the 1970's—Schrom in Wieser (1970), Luporini, Magagnini & Tongiorgi (1971, 1973) and Schrom (1972)—and two papers in the 1980's—Tongiorgi & Balsamo (1984) and Todaro, Balsamo & Tongiorgi (1988).

In the last decade of the 20th century, results expanded greatly, with numerous papers on systematics, biogeography and ecology—Todaro, Balsamo & Tongiorgi (1992), Hummon, Todaro & Tongiorgi (1993 “Italian marine Gastrotricha: II”), Balsamo, Fregni & Tongiorgi (1994), Hummon, Todaro, Balsamo & Tongiorgi (1996 “Italian marine Gastrotricha: III”), Hummon, Todaro, Tongiorgi & Balsamo (1998 “Italian marine Gastrotricha: V”), Fregni, Tongiorgi & Faienza (1998), and Fregni, Faienza, De Zio Grimaldi, Tongiorgi & Balsamo (1999). In the first decade of the 21st century one additional species was described—Todaro, Guidi, Leasi, & Tongiorgi (2006)—along with an illustrated key to genera of the phylum—Todaro & Hummon (2008). [Note that “Italian marine Gastrotricha: I” and “Italian marine Gastrotricha: IV” were on members of the order Chaetonotida.]

The first decade of this century saw a detailed inventory, cross referenced by site and species to Italian marine Gastrotricha—Todaro, Hummon, Fregni, Balsamo & Tongiorgi (2001). A global database for marine gastrotrichs was established on CD—Hummon (2001)—which was later revised and placed on line—Hummon (2004, 2007, 2009). A homepage web site was begun—Todaro (2002)—with periodic revision in progress—Todaro (2007). A video database was put on line—Hummon, Todaro & Evans (2005)—and to be periodically revised—Hummon (2007, 2009).