On the occurrence of *Acartia centrura* (Copepoda : Calanoida) in the neritic waters of the Eastern Mediterranean

by

VIVIANE BERDUGO

Israel Oceanographic and Limnological Research Company, Haifa (Israël)

The present observations are based on a survey of the Calanoid Copepods carried out within the framework of the project « Biota of the Red Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean " sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In this survey, special attention was paid to species thought to have moved from one environment to another in recent times through the Suez Canal. One such species on which we focused our attention is *Acartia centrura* in view of the distribution data available to us both from earlier sources and on our own observations.

The genus *Acartia* Dana is generally represented in the Eastern Mediterranean by the species *Acartia (Acartiura) clausi, A. (Planktacartia) negligens* (distributed over the tropical and subtropical regions of the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific oceans, the Red Sea and the whole Mediterranean) and *A. (Paracartia) latisetosa* (distributed over the Mediterranean and the Black Sea).

Acartia centrura Giesbrecht belongs to the sub-genus Odontacartia which includes Indo-Pacific forms not recorded so far in the Mediterranean. *A. centrura* is distributed in the Indian Ocean [KASTURIRANGAN, 1963], the Red Sea and the Suez Canal [GURNEY, 1927]. We also found it in a few samples collected in the Suez Canal in July, 1967. We found this species for the first time in the Mediterranean in December, 1968, in surface samples collected along the coast off Netanya (in ten-minute horizontal hauls : 65 specimens at 10 fa., and 280 specimens at 25 fa.) as well as off Tira and Ashkelon (in smaller number).

The following are the main features distinguishing this species from other species belonging to the same genus :

Female : body length 1.35 mm.

The last thoracic segment is drawn out into 2 lateral spines, and in addition two smaller spines situated more dorsally. The abdomen consists of three segments; the genital segment is twice as long as the following one and has 2 dorsal spines shorter than those of the latter. The marginal seta of the fifth foot is twice as long as the terminal claw; the latter widened at the base and with a distinct notch.

Male : body length 1.25 mm.

The last thoracic segment is also drawn into spines. The abdomen consists of 5 segments, the first one with a row of hairs, the second one has 3 pairs of spines, the third and fourth segments with 2 dorsal spines. The fifth pair of feet is modified into a grasping organ. The last segment of the left foot has a terminal spine.

The description of this species corresponds to that given by STEUER [1923] and KASTURIRANGAN [1963], but the total length of the specimens found in our area is a little longer than that mentioned by these authors.

In these same samples we found specimens of *Calanopia elliptica* Dana, which is also a species of Indo-Pacific origin.

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In view of the Indo-Pacific distribution of *A. centrura* and its appearance in the neritic waters of the Eastern Mediterranean, it may be assumed that it has recently migrated into the Eastern Mediterranean through the Suez Canal.

References

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