

A PRELIMINARY LIST OF FRESHWATER CRUSTACEANS FROM THE MALTESE ISLANDS

Alfred E. BALDACCHINO

"Kestrel" in Melita House, Notary Zarb Street, Attard, MALTA

ABSTRACT

Two species of branchiopods, one species of cladoceran, two species of ostracods, one species of isopod and one species of amphipod from a small collection of freshwater Crustacea are recorded from the Maltese Islands.

INTRODUCTION

Previous records of freshwater crustaceans from the Maltese Islands were those of MEDLYCOTT (in SEDDALL, 1870) and of GULIA (1873). MEDLYCOTT recorded *Branchipus stagnalis* (Cuv.) as rare in tanks and freshwater, and *Cypris pubera* O.F. Müller in stagnant pools on Manoel Island. GULIA lists *Limnodia melitensis* sp. nov., *Daphnia pulex* Müller and *Cyclops vulgaris* Edw. GULIA also states that besides these, other species of *Daphnia*, three species of *Cypris* and one species of *Cypridina* also occur. *Limnodia melitensis* Gulia is a *nomen nudum* since GULIA gives no description of this species.

The Maltese freshwater Crustacea have received little attention since GULIA's paper. ZAMMIT-LUCIA (1971) in a study of the macrofauna of Chadwick's reservoir between December 1969 and May 1970 recorded the genera *Cypris*, *Cyclops* and *Daphnia* as well as *Asellus aquaticus*. This author was more concerned with the ecology of the reservoir and did not attempt to identify the Crustacea to species level.

The present work deals with a small collection of freshwater crustacea collected from stagnant pools from Malta and Gozo in 1972. It is interesting to note that the rainfall from September to April and from September to November, when the collection was made was 69.1 cm and 8.1 cm respectively. The specimens were collected using a fine net with specimen tube attached.

SPECIES LIST

Subclass: Branchiopoda

Order: Anostraca; Family: Branchipodidae; Subfamily: Branchipodinae

Branchipus stagnalis L. - Four specimens from Wied ta' l-Isperanza (Mosta), 30/IV/72 from a stagnant pool of 1 m diameter and 0.5 m depth.

Order: Cladocera; Family: Daphnidae

Simocephalus vetulus (O.F. Müller) - Collected from a large pool at Rabat under the Mtarfa bridge where it was very common. Specimens kept alive in a freshwater aquarium reproduced successfully.

Order: Conchostraca; Family: Cyzicidae

Eocyclus (?) *orientalis* Daday - Three specimens from the same pool as *Branchipus stagnalis*. Wied ta l-Isperanza (Mosta), 30/IV/72.

Subclass: Ostracoda

Order: Podocopa; Family: Cypridae; Subfamily: Cyprinae

Herpetocypris reptans (Baird 1835) - Collected from Gozo, 24/IV/72.

Herpetocypris intermedius (Kaufmann 1900) - Collected from Gozo, 24/IV/72.

Subclass: Malacostraca

Superorder: Peracarida; Order: Isopoda; Suborder: Asellota; Family: Asellidae

Asellus (*Proasellus*) *coxalia* Dollfus - Collected from Gozo, 24/IV/72.

Superorder: Peracarida; Order: Amphipoda; Family: Gammaridae

Gammarus pungens Milne-Edwards - Collected from Rabat under the Mtarfa bridge and also from Bañrija, both in November 1972.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is grateful to Mr. G.M. Bennel, Dr. G.A. Boxhall and Dr. Lincoln of the British Museum (Natural History) for identifying the specimens of freshwater crustacea. Thanks are also due to Mr. P.J. Schembri for help in the preparation of this paper.

REFERENCES

- GULIA, G. (1873). Fauna Maltese - Indice dei Crostacei. *Il Barth*, 1(15,16): 314-315, Malta.
- MEDLYCOTT, W. (1870). Appendix X: Notes on the Geology, Botany and Natural History of Malta, in SEDDALL, H. *Malta: Past and Present, being a History of Malta from the days of the Phoenicians to the present time*, Chapman & Hall, London, 355 pp.
- ZAMMIT-LUCIA, M. (1971). *A Study of the Macrofauna of Chadwick Lakes*. M.Sc. thesis, The Royal University of Malta; 84 pp.

(Author's Note: This paper was prepared in 1972)

received July 1977

Arnold Stribner

March 2004