

***Macrobiotus dariae* sp. n., a new species of eutardigrade (Eutardigrada, Macrobiotidae) from Cyprus**

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Abstract

Macrobiotus dariae sp. n. is a new species of eutardigrade characterized by a smooth cuticle with small pores; pharyngeal bulb with two macroplacoids and microplacoid; eggs with a reticular sculpture around small conical processes. The new species is similar to *M. recens* Cuénot, 1932, *M. mongolicus* Maucci, 1988, *M. glebkai* Biserov, 1990 and *M. kozharai* Biserov, 1999 from which it differs in some characters (qualitative and quantitative) relating to both specimens and eggs.

Key words: Tardigrada, taxonomy, *Macrobiotus dariae* sp. n., Cyprus

Introduction

Very little is known about the tardigrade fauna of Cyprus. Kaczmarek & Michalczyk (2004) reported six species: *Echiniscus testudo* (Doyère, 1840), *Macrobiotus reinhardtii* Michalczyk & Kaczmarek 2003, *M. marlenae* Kaczmarek & Michalczyk, 2004, *M. cfr. richtersi* Murray, 1911, *Ramazzottius cfr. oberhaeuseri* (Doyère, 1840) and *Milnesium tardigradum* (Doyère, 1840); with only two species previously reported: *Macrobiotus hufelandi* Schultz, 1834 and *M. recens* Cuénot 1932 (Bertolani, 1975). The latter was considered a subspecies of *M. hufelandi*, according to the taxonomy of that period (e.g., Ramazzotti, 1972), by Bertolani (1975) whose study also included a karyological analysis which demonstrated that the populations of *M. recens* (*M. hufelandi recens*) found on Cyprus were tetraploid and parthenogenetic. *Macrobiotus recens*, as described by Cuénot (1932), had been considered a variant or a subspecies of *M. hufelandi* by several authors (e.g., Marcus, 1936; Ramazzotti 1945, 1962, 1972; Rudescu 1946; Grigarick *et al.* 1973). Horning *et al.* (1978) considered *M. recens* a *bona species* but the specimens from this study must belong to a different species. Maucci (1979, 1984 and 1985) found specimens