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SOME COMMENTS ON *CYERCE CRISTALLINA* (TRINCHESE, 1881)
(OPISTHOBRANCHIA: SACOGLOSSA) COLLECTED IN TAORMINA
BAY****.

KEY WORDS Opisthobranchia, Polybranchiidae, *Cyerce*, Ionian sea, morphology.

Summary

In the present work the anatomical features of a single specimen of *Cyerce cristallina*, (TRINCHESE, 1881), collected in Taormina Bay, are described.

Riassunto

In questa breve nota vengono descritti i principali caratteri morfologici di un nudibranco, piuttosto raro, *Cyerce cristallina*, (TRINCHESE, 1881), raccolto nella baia di Taormina ad una profondità di circa 2 metri.

The distribution of *Cyerce cristallina* (TRINCHESE, 1881) in the Mediterranean Sea has been documented by PORTMANN (1958), HAEFELFINGER (1960), SWENNEN (1961), SCHMEKEL and PORTMANN (1982), BARASH and DANIN (1982), PERRONE (1983) and THOMPSON (1988). This species is said, also, to occur in Jamaica (THOMPSON, 1977), in Bermuda (CLARK, 1984), in Florida (MARCUS and MARCUS, 1967; JENSEN and CLARK, 1983) and in the Canary Islands (ORTEA, 1981).

The present find is the first record from Sicilian waters of a single specimen of *Cyerce cristallina* (TRINCHESE, 1881): some anatomical features are described in this preliminary note.

Polybranchiids are characterized by finger-like, markedly inrolled oral tentacles and elongated radular teeth. The anus is mid-dorsal, situated in front of the pericadium, slightly to the right of the median plane. The pedale sole exhibit a transverse mesopodial groove. The digestive gland does not penetrated the cerata.

The sicilian specimen, found under a stone (depth 2m) in Taormina Bay, measured 55 mm in length (Fig. 1). The body is translucent, elongated and dorso-ventrally flattened, without well developed parapodial lobes. The lateral sides present a series of flattened cerata which are autotomised. The smallest ones are at the front, the largest are observed in the central as well as in the caudal portion.

Detached cerata continued to twitch for more than an hour. They lacked diverticula of the digestive gland.

Under slow magnification it can be observed that the ground colour of the body is pale cream-yellowish, overlain by a stable pattern of deep brown and red markings. These markings were especially conspicuous on the head, where resembled spectacles around the eyes, forming a median

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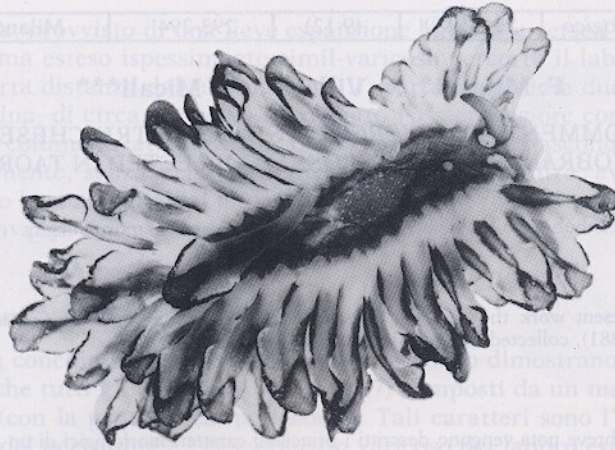


Fig. 1 - Sicilian specimen of *Cyerce cristallina*
length 55 mm, dorsal view, Taormina Bay, November 1988.

dark line overlying the pericardial prominence and a red-brown ending at the terminal part of each ceras.

All three pairs of head tentacles were markedly inrolled. The rinophoral tentacles were red-brown, the oral tentacles were yellowish. This was the colour of the anal papilla too. Ventrally, the cream-yellowish pedal sole had a transverse mesopodial groove. The frontal propodial margin was bilabiate. The radular formula was 15 x0.1.0; each tooth is elongated and denticulate.

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