

Coralliophilidae from the Mediterranean Sea off the Coast of Israel

H. K. Mienis

Abstract: A revision of the Coralliophilidae collected along the Mediterranean coast of Israel confirmed the presence of four species: *Coralliophila brevis*, *Coralliophila meyendorffi*, *Coralliophila squamosa* and *Babelomurex cariniferus*. The latter seems the most common one.

Key-words: Mollusca, Gastropoda, Coralliophilidae, distribution, Mediterranean Sea, Israel.

The Coralliophilidae or Coral snails constitutes a gastropod family, which is very popular among shell collectors. Especially the numerous species living in the tropics excell in form and sculpture. A most up-to-date review of the family was published by Kosuge, S.–Suzuki, M. (1985), however, recently numerous additional species have been described from the Western Pacific. Eleven species have been reported so far from the Mediterranean Sea (Sabelli, B. et al., 1990), but it is rather doubtful whether *Coralliobia* (*Quoyola*) *madreporarum* (Sowerby, 1822), an Indo-Pacific species, has indeed settled permanently in the Mediterranean Sea. The scientific name of the latter is a fine example of the taxonomic difficulties encountered in this family. While Sabelli, B. et al., 1990 listed it as a *Coralliobia*, Kosuge, S.–Suzuki, M. (1985) and Bosch, D. T. et al. (1995) placed it in *Coralliophila*. These differences of opinion are due to the fact that classification of the Coral snails is based on shell characters only. All the species in the family are parasites and lack a radula: one of the most important taxonomic characters within the Muricacea.

The Coralliophilidae occurring off the Mediterranean coast of Israel have been enumerated by Barash, A.–Danin, Z. (1992). They mentioned four species, however, the names of two species are not correct and have to be changed. The opportunity was taken to have a second look at the material present in the National Mollusc Collections of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HUJ) and the Tel Aviv University (TAU). It confirmed the presence of four species in that part of the Mediterranean Sea, although voucher specimens of one species could not be located.

Coralliophila brevis (Blainville, 1832)

Shiqmona, on the beach, leg I. Yaron, 6 August 1971 (TAU/1).

Additional specimens are most probably in the collection of F. Nordsieck in the Senckenberg Museum, Frankfurt am Main, since he reported this species also from Shiqmona (Nordsieck: 1974: 60).

Coralliophila meyendorffii (Calcara, 1845)

Acco, leg. Ch. Leurer, 1965 (HUI 7138/1); Qishon, leg. N. Katz, 5 February 1965 (TAU/1); Atlit, 1965 (HUI 2606/1); Atlit, leg. H.K. Mienis, 1971 (HUI 2752/1); Bat Yam, leg. H.K. Mienis, 18 December 1996 (HUI 7147/2); Palmahim, leg. H.K. Mienis, 29 July 1972 (HUI 10087/1).

Barash & Danin (1992: 127) mentioned still specimens from Rosh HaNiqra, Nahariya, Shiqmona and Nizzanim, but that material could not be located in any of the collections.

Coralliophila squamosa (Bivona, 1838)

(= *Coralliophila alucoides*: Barash & Danin, 1992: 128)

Shave Ziyon and Atlit: both are mentioned by Barash & Danin (1992: 128), but the specimens are neither in TAU nor in HUI. Since the present author had identified both samples some 20 years ago, they are recorded here.

Babelomurex cariniferus (Sowerby, 1834)

(= *Coralliophila babelis*: Barash & Danin, 1992: 127)

Haifa Bay, 10 fath., SFRS 84, 28 February 1954 (TAU/1-specimen not in vial); Atlit, dredged from a depth of 54 m, ± 1947 (HUI 889/1); off Atlit, dredge 28, 28 April 1968 (TAU/1); Atlit, leg. G. Haas, J. Heller & H.K. Mienis, May 1971 (HUI 30995/1); Atlit, leg. H.K. Mienis, 1971 (HUI 2753/1); Atlit-Dor, 30-40 fath., SFRS 1179, 12 Nov. 1965 (TAU/1); Tantara, 1950 (HUI 20036/1); Netaniya, dredged from a depth of 36 m, 15 February 1950 (HUI 890/1); Tel Aviv, near the harbour, leg. N. Glass, 21 Febr. 1949 (TAU/1); Palmahim, beach, leg. D. Ben-Ami, 12 Dec. 1966 (TAU/1); Palmahim, leg. H.K. Mienis, 7 September 1983 (HUI 608/1); Nizzanim, 35 m., leg. Ch. Lewinsohn, 29 June 1977 (TAU/1); Ashqelon, 17 fath., SFRS 1 144, 18 Aug. 1965 (TAU/1).

Barash & Danin (1992: 127) mentioned still material from the following localities: Nahariya, Akko, Bat Gallim, Shiqmona, Caesarea and Netanya, but voucher specimens are neither in TAU nor in HUI.

The most common species turned out to be *Babelomurex cariniferus*, but this might be due to collecting bias. It is the most attractive one among those species of Coralliophilidae recorded from the Mediterranean beach of Israel.

References

- Barash, A.–Danin, Z. (1992): Fauna Palaestina – Mollusca I. Annotated list of Mediterranean molluscs of Israel and Sinai. 405 pp, 372 figs. The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Jerusalem.
- Bosch, D.T.–Dance, S.P.–Moolenbeek, R.G.–Oliver, P.G. (1995): Seashells of Eastern Arabia. 296 pp. Motivate Publishing, Dubai, Abu Dhabi & London.
- Kosuge, S.–Suzuki, M. (1985): Illustrated catalogue of *Latiaxis* and its related groups Family Coralliophilidae. Institute of Malacology of Tokyo, Spec. Public., 1: 83 pp, 50 pls.

- Nordsieck, F. (1974): Marine shells from the Mediterranean coast of Israel. Argamon, Israel J. Malacology, 4 (2-4): 57-63.
- Sabelli, B.-Giannuzzi-Savelli, R.-Bedulli, D. (1990): Catalogo annotato dei molluschi marini del Mediterraneo – Annotated check-list of Mediterranean marine mollusks, 1: XIV + 348 pp. Libreria Naturalistica Bolognese, Bologna.

MIENIS, Henk K.
National Mollusc Collection,
Berman Building Dept. Evolution,
Systematics & Ecology
Hebrew University, IL-91904 Jerusalem, Israel

National Mollusc Collection,
Dept. Zoology The George S. Wise Faculty
of Life Sciences Tel Aviv University,
IL-69978 Tel Aviv, Israel E-mail:
mienis@netzer.org.il & mienis@hotmail.com