

Morphometrical analysis, histology, and taxonomy of *Thyrosocyphus ramosus* (Cnidaria, Hydrozoa) from the coast of Brazil

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Abstract

The hydroid *Thyrosocyphus ramosus* is redescribed based on optical and SEM observations of morphology and on histological studies. Colonies from several localities extending over a coastline distance of over 4,000 km in Brazil were studied to establish intraspecific variations using morphometrical parameters in a correspondence analysis. We conclude that differences noted in some populations were taxonomically insignificant, and related to non-historical factors such as microhabitat diversity.

Key words: Cnidaria, Hydrozoa, Leptothecata, *Thyrosocyphus ramosus*, morphology, morphometry, histology, Brazil, systematics

Introduction

Studies of hydrozoans in Brazilian waters have been undertaken primarily in the southeastern region, especially in São Paulo state (Migotto *et al.* 2002; Marques *et al.* 2003). Detailed comparisons of materials from different localities across the long coastline of the country (over 8,000 km) are scarce, notwithstanding the ready availability of study sites. One of the few hydrozoan species that has been compared over a wide geographic area in Brazil is the anthoathecate *Eudendrium carneum* Clarke, 1882, studied from northeastern (viz. Fernando de Noronha Island and Bahia state), southeastern (viz. Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo states) and southern (viz. Santa Catarina state) regions (Marques 2001). Oliveira *et al.* (2000) studied morphometrical variations in certain species of *Eudendrium*, but the study was geographically restricted to the São Sebastião channel (São Paulo state). No Brazilian species has yet been the subject of strict morphometric analyses in relation to geographic range, and few such studies have been undertaken worldwide.