Molecular phylogenetic evidence for the reorganization of the Hyperiid amphipods, a diverse group of pelagic crustaceans

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1. Introduction

The Hyperiidea are an exclusively pelagic group of amphipod crustaceans (Martin and Davis, 2001). The hyperiid amphipods have successfully invaded and become major constituents of a variety of ecosystems. The hyperiid amphipods are classically defined as an exclusively pelagic group broadly inhabiting oceanic midwater environments and often having close associations with gelatinous zooplankton. As with other amphipod groups they have largely been classified based on appendage structures, however evidence suggests that at least some of these characters are the product of convergent evolution. Here we present the first multi-locus molecular phylogenetic assessment of relationships among the hyperiid amphipods. We sampled 51 species belonging to 16 of the 23 recognized hyperiid families for three nuclear loci (18S, 28S, and H3) and mitochondrial COI. We performed both Bayesian Inference and Maximum Likelihood analyses of concatenated sequences. In addition, we also explored the utility of species-tree methods for reconstructing deep evolutionary histories using the Minimize Deep Coalescence (MDC) approach. Our results are compared with previous molecular analyses and traditional systematic groupings. We discuss these results within the context of adaptations correlated with the pelagic life history of hyperiid amphipods. Within the infraorder Physosomata (Bowman and Gruner, 1973) we inferred support for three reciprocally monophyletic clades; the Platysceloidea, Vibilioidea, and Phronimoidea. Our results also place the enigmatic Cystisomatidae and Paraphronimidae at the base of the infraorder Physosomata (Bowman and Gruner, 1973) suggesting that Physosomata as traditionally recognized is paraphyletic. Based on our multilocus phylogeny, major rearrangements to existing taxonomic groupings of hyperiid amphipods are warranted.

The structure and anatomical position of these fine-scale cuticular features are developmentally labile characters and can show significant variation within species. Overall, morphology based reconstructions among and within the four major groups of Amphipoda suggests that convergent evolution may be playing a central role in amphipod evolution.

The Amphipoda are generally organized into the largely bentic taxa, the Gammaridea, Caprellidea, Ingolfiellidea, and the pelagic midwater taxon Hyperiidea (e.g., Martin and Davis, 2001). In comparison to the bentic, nearshore, and intertidal amphipods, hyperiid amphipods exhibit morphological traits correlated with their pelagic life history and commensal/parasitic associations with other zooplankton groups (Gasca et al., 2007; Harbison et al., 1977; Madin and Harbison, 1977). Some of these adaptations include hypertrophied olfactory and visual systems, duplications of the eyes, and a wide array of antennal and appendage modifications. However there is no known single morphological synapomorphy that unites the suborder Hyperiidea. Further the failure of traditional morphological analyses to identify relationships between higher level taxonomic groupings within the hyperiids suggests that potentially
homoplasious morphological features may be masking true phylogenetic relationships among extant hyperiid amphipods. As a consequence, the notion of hyperiid polyphyly has also been suggested by some of the major taxonomic works on the suborder (reviewed in Vinogradov et al., 1996).

Where comparative morphological and systematic analyses alone have had limited success in resolving relationships between hyperiid lineages (e.g. Pirlot, 1932; Bowman and Gruner, 1973; Coleman, 1994; Vinogradov et al., 1996; Zeidler, 1999, 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2006, 2009), independent molecular phylogenetic studies can be used to distinguish phylogenetically informative characteristics from convergently evolved traits (Browne et al., 2007). The identification of the former is necessary for inferring synapomorphic morphologies that define higher level relationships, whereas the latter are particularly useful for understanding the evolutionary origins of convergent morphologies. Specifically in the case of hyperiid amphipods, how biological form and function are linked to evolutionary radiations within oceanic midwater niches will inform the broader question of how patterns of biological diversity have arisen in the largest contiguous habitat on the planet.

Here we infer a molecular phylogenetic history of hyperiid amphipods in order to determine if morphological similarities among these pelagic forms have a common evolutionary history or represent convergent evolution. In order to sample a broad diversity of hyperiid amphipods, we used traditional net based collection techniques in combination with recent advances in submersible and SCUBA in situ midwater collection techniques. Multiple gene-tree and species-tree methods were used to analyze sequence data sets from the nuclear genes 18S rRNA, 28S rRNA, and Histone H3 (H3) and the mitochondrial gene cytochrome oxidase I (COI). Results of gene-tree and species-tree analyses are compared and the utility of species-tree analyses for reconstructing ancient evolutionary histories is discussed. The resulting phylogenetic hypotheses are interpreted in the context of visual and olfactory modifications that may correspond with discrete midwater niches.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Specimen collection

Hyperiid amphipods were collected (Table 3) via snorkeling, blue-water diving (Hammer, 1975; Hammer et al., 1975; Haddock and Heine, 2005) on both open-circuit (OC), and closed-circuit rebreather (CCR) SCUBA (Ambient Pressure Diving Ltd., UK), remotely operated underwater vehicles (MBARI), ring nets, and opening-closing trawling nets (Childress et al., 1978). Oceanic midwaters sampled include the Northeast, Northwest, and Central Pacific. In the Atlantic, the western edge of the Gulf Stream, the Caribbean, and the Weddell Sea were sampled. Physical vouchers exist for specimens and are housed at the University of Miami (Coral Gables, FL) and the Smithsonian NMNH (Washington, DC) (Table 3). Specimens of hyperiid amphipods were identified using the taxonomic keys of Bowman and Gruner (1973), Vinogradov et al. (1996), and Zeidler (1999, 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2009). Two hyperiid taxa included in this analysis were not identified to species level. They have been assigned temporary names indicating their affinity to described species. Two isopod genera, Cystathura sp. and Idotea sp., were collected and sequences were used for outgroup comparison.

2.2. Sequence cloning

Genomic DNA was extracted using the DNeasy Tissue Kit (Qiagen, Inc.) from isolated pleopod and/or dissected and isolated trunk muscle tissue. Amplification of Cytochrome Oxidase I (COI), Histone (H3), 18S, and 28S ribosomal genes were completed using primers indicated in Table 1. PCR products of the appropriate size were directly sequenced by Macrogen, Inc (South Korea). All sequences have been deposited with GenBank (Table 3).

2.3. Phylogenetic analysis

2.3.1. Alignments

Sequences were aligned in ClustalX using default parameters. COI and H3 sequences were translated into protein sequences prior to alignment. Some regions of the ribosomal sequences (18S and 28S) were too divergent to be confidently aligned, therefore, the software program Gblocks v. 0.91b (Castebrasana, 2000) was used to identify poorly aligned regions for removal prior to further analysis. Gblock parameters were defined as follows: minimum number of sequences for a conserved position (50%), minimum number of sequences for a flanking position (50%), maximum number of contiguous non-conserved positions (10), minimum length of a block (5), and allowed gap positions (with half). Alignments after removal of non-conserved positions were 1465 bp and 2214 bp long for 18S and 28S, respectively.

2.3.2. Gene tree reconstructions

Evolutionary models for phylogenetic analyses were selected independently for each locus using MrModeltest (Nylander, 2004) under the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC). Phylogenetic reconstructions of concatenated and individual gene-trees were performed using both Bayesian Markov Chain Monte Carlo (MCMC) and Maximum Likelihood (ML) criteria. Bayesian reconstructions were performed using MrBayes 3.1.2 (Huelsenbeck and Ronquist, 2001; Ronquist and Huelsenbeck, 2003), to the MCMC analysis of concatenated datasets, each locus was assigned as a separate partition and rates were allowed to vary across partitions. Protein coding datasets (COI and H3) were further partitioned by codon site for a total of nine partitions. Bayesian analysis of concatenated datasets included two runs for 1 × 106 generations and analyses of datasets from individual loci were run for 1 × 106 generations (S1). Trees were sampled every 1000 generations using four Markov chains and default heating values and a burn-in fraction of 10%. Convergence was assessed by standard deviation of split-frequencies (<0.01) and by examining trace plots of log-likelihood scores in Tracer 1.5 (Rambaut and Drummond, 2007).

ML gene-trees were estimated using the software RAxML 7.0.3 (Stamatakis, 2006). For the concatenated dataset we employed the GTR + Γ model of evolution. The RAxML software accommodates the GTR model of nucleotide substitution with the additional options of modeling rate heterogeneity (Γ) and proportion invariable sites (I). Modeling of invariable sites is discouraged by the author as invariable sites are already accounted for when rate heterogeneity is included in the model; including both parameters may be problematic as they cannot be estimated independently. The concatenated dataset was partitioned by loci and protein coding sequences were further partitioned by codon site; substitution rates and α-shape parameters were optimized separately for each partition. Three separate ML searches were run from different randomized maximum parsimony trees. Nonparametric bootstrapping (100 replicates) was used to estimate support values at each node. These analyses utilized the rapid bootstrapping algorithm (i.e. option –f a in RAxML). Bootstrapped trees were pooled across runs and the ML tree is displayed with pooled bootstrap values shown at the nodes (S2).

2.3.3. Species-tree reconstructions

To reconstruct species-trees from our four locus dataset we used the parsimony-based Minimize Deep Coalescence (MDC) method. MDC analyses were performed using the software
program Phylonet (Than and Nakhleh, 2009) (i.e. option –m MDC). The MDC tree-search algorithm used by Phylonet differs from other heuristic search methods (Maddison and Maddison, 2010); Phylonet uses linear integer programming to find the exact species-tree topology that minimizes the number of conflicts (deep-coalescent events) among independent gene-trees (Maddison, 1997; Maddison and Knowles, 2006). MDC trees were evaluated using both majority-consensus Bayesian gene-trees and ML gene-trees as input topologies (evolutionary models and run parameters described above). All input gene-trees were rooted using Cyathura sp. and Idotea sp. as outgroups.

3. Results

3.1. Genetic variation

Sequence products were obtained for all four loci from all 51 of the sampled taxa. PCR products for the four loci averaged 810 bp, 360 bp, 1570 bp and 2790 bp for COI, H3, 18S and 28S, respectively (Table 2). Clustal alignments of the COI dataset resulted in 8 indels ranging in length from three to nine basepairs. Alignments were performed on translated datasets for COI and H3 and no frameshift indels occurred in the final alignment. No indels occurred in the final alignment of the H3 dataset. Alignment of datasets for both the 18S and 28S ribosomal genes resulted in a large number of indels ranging in length from three to nine basepairs. Alignments were performed on translated datasets for COI and H3 and no frameshift indels occurred in the final alignment. No indels occurred in the translation of the H3 dataset. Alignment of datasets for both the 18S and 28S ribosomal genes resulted in a large number of indels ranging in length from one to 9 basepairs for the 18S alignment and 1 to 106 bp for the 28S alignment. Length of aligned datasets, variable and parsimony informative sites, and best fitting model are summarized in Table 2.

3.2. Phylogenetic analyses

3.2.1. Concatenated dataset

Gene trees recovered from ML and Bayesian analysis of concatenated datasets have nearly identical topologies (Bayesian tree with corresponding ML bootstrap support values is shown in Fig. 1). Both the ML and Bayesian analyses recovered four major clades with 100% posterior probability/bootstrap support: Physosomatida, Phrominoidea, Platysceloidea, and Vibilioida. Physosomatida is traditionally recognized as its own infracoan (Bowman and Gruner, 1973). Our analyses discovered robust support for the inclusion of two enigmatic monogenic families, the Cystisomatidae and Paraphronimidae, as branching basally to this group. Within Physosomatida, we also recovered the two principal superfamilies supported by previous morphological investigation, the Scinoidea and Lanceoloidea. Among the Scinoidea our concatenated gene analysis supports a sister group relationship between Acanthoscina and Mimonecutes with Scina branching basally. For the Lanceoloidea our concatenated gene analysis discovered strong support for the neotonic Microphasma, a member of the Microphasmidae, as branching from within the Lanceola, a member of the Lanceoloidea. Finally, we discovered Scypholanceola to be robustly supported as having more than one branch within the Lanceola. Thus we infer that the Lanceoloidea, as currently recognized, is polyphylectic.

The three remaining clades, Phrominoidea, Platysceloidea, and Vibilioida, are reciprocally monophyletic and broadly contain taxa from the traditionally defined infracoan Physosomatophala (Bowman and Gruner, 1973). The basal-most branching clade is comprised of the Phrominoidea. Our analysis inferred strong support for a sister group relationship between the Phronimidae (Phronima + Phronimella in this study) and the Phrosinidae (Phrosina + Primno in this study). Our results also strongly support a clade composed of Hyperioides, Hyperietta, and Lestrigonus as the Lestrigonidae proposed by Zeidler (2004). The Lestrigonidae have robust support for sister group relationship with the Hyperioidae sensu Zeidler (2004). Within the Hyperioidae we discovered strong support for the group that includes the genera Iulopis, Hyperoche, Hyperia, and Themisto. Among the Hyperioidae the principal difference between our concatenated Bayesian and ML results is the position of the genus Themisto. In

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<td>Polymorphism data summary and best fitting model for all loci.</td>
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Among the clade composed of the Platyscelioidea our analysis strongly supported the sister grouping of *Tryphana* (Tryphanidae) with *Thyrops* (Parascelidae) at the base of the Platyscelioidea. The Brachyscelidae are highly supported as sister to the Oxycephalidae. Within the Oxycephalidae (*Rhabdosoma, Lycaea, Glossocephalus, Leptocots, Streetsia, Cranocephalus, Calamorhynchus and Oxycephalus in this study*) Rhabdosoma is highly supported as branching basally. While we discovered high support for the monophyly of the Oxycephalidae, the ML bootstrap values were generally low for many internal branching nodes. The Vibilioida clade is composed of two well supported, reciprocally monophyletic groups, the Vibiliidae and the monogenic Cyclopodidae.

### 3.2.2. Individual gene trees

Both Bayesian and ML gene trees supported the four major clades identified in the concatenated gene-tree for three out of four loci (COI, 18S and 28S; Fig. 1). The Histone H3 gene-tree was poorly resolved in both Bayesian and ML reconstructions. Bayesian and ML trees for individual loci are depicted in the Supplementary material (S1 and S2, respectively). Species that were represented by more than one specimen remained monophyletic for all analyses. Relationships among major clades and several basal taxa did vary among the gene-trees we analyzed. Specifically, the placement of the Vibiliidae differs between the COI tree and the nuclear gene trees (S1, S2). Also there are two taxa, *Tryphana malmi* and *Paraphronima gracilis*, that fall outside the three/four major clades.
and whose placement varied greatly among the individually analyzed loci. Given the observations of gene tree heterogeneity across nuclear loci a species tree approach to the phylogenetic reconstruction of hyperiid relationships was warranted (Knowles and Kubatko, 2010).

3.2.3. MDC Species tree results

Results from our MDC analyses based on both Bayesian and ML input trees recovered the same four major clades observed in the concatenated gene trees (Fig. 2). However the two MDC topologies disagreed on the relationships between the three clades comprising the infraorder Physocephalata. MDC analysis based on Bayesian input trees placed the Vibilioidea as sister group to the Platyscelioidea consistent with the results obtained from both concatenated tree analyses (Fig. 2a). Whereas MDC analysis of ML input trees grouped the Vibilioidea with the Phronimoidea (Fig. 2b). Between the two different MDC analytical methods rearrangements among terminal taxa within the Oxycephalidae was observed. Within the infraorder Physosomata neither MDC analysis recovered a monophyletic Scinoidea. Additionally, rearrangements among terminal taxa within the Lanceoloidea were also observed.

4. Discussion

4.1. Significance to pelagic midwater hyperiid amphipod phylogeny

Our analysis discovered significant support for the placement of several problematic groups that have been historically difficult to reconcile based on morphology alone. For example the relationship of both Cystisoma and Paraphronima to other hyperiids based on morphological evidence has been unclear (Vinogradov et al., 1996; Zeidler, 2003a, 2003b). Classically these two genera have been unsatisfactorily placed in the Vibilioidea, based solely upon the morphology and position of the first antennae (Bowman and Gruner, 1973). In addition, both Cystisoma and Paraphronima independently possess suites of synapomorphies that have made classical taxonomic treatment perplexing. For example attempts to remove Cystisoma from the Vibilioidea based on unique...
Fig. 2. Species-tree estimates based on Minimize Deep Coalescent (MDC) criterion as performed by Phylonet. Input tree topologies were generated using (a) Bayesian and (b) ML criterion (deep coalescent events for MDC trees numbered 114 and 69 for Bayesian and ML analyses, respectively). Individual gene trees are shown as Supplemental data (S1 and S2).
attributes of the head and reproductive structures has resulted in an unwieldy artificial arrangement of a superfamily, Cystisomatoidea, composed of a single monogenetic family, the Cystisomatidae, with a single genus, Cystisoma (Zeidler, 2003a). Cystisoma is often found at the limit of down welling sunlight and the hypertrophied eye field is completely dorsalyzed (Fig. 3a and b). The anterior brain has also been significantly modified in Cystisoma with nerve fibers innervating a highly dispersed retina (Land, 1981; Fig. 3c). In contrast to all other amphipods, Cystisoma embryos are retained in an internalized brood chamber (Brusca, 1981; Fig. 3a–c).

Both concatenated gene tree and species tree analyses advocate a natural classification in which Cystisoma is highly supported as the basal most branch of the Physosomata (Figs. 1 and 2); this placement is consistent with earlier analysis of COI data (Browne et al., 2007; supplemental data). The Physosomata have classically been defined as inhabiting deep bathypelagic and abyssopelagic midwater depths, possessing a ‘swoollen/inflated’ pereon, a ‘short’ head, small or absent eyes, a proximally enlarged first antennae, mandibles without a molar process, and a first maxilla possessing an inner lobe (reviewed in Vinogradov et al., 1996). In support of the placement advocated here, Cystisoma has been described as possessing an inflated pereon (Vinogradov et al., 1996), genital papillae (Zeidler, 2006), as well as possessing a juvenile form originally described as physosoma by Wolterek (1903). The presence of classical Physosomata features in the juveniles of Cystisoma, such as a spherical pereon and small head, also lend support to the idea that the Physosomata are broadly composed of taxa retaining neotonic features.

Our analyses also strongly promotes the reassignment of the monogenetic family Paraphronimidae, containing Paraphroninina, to the Physosomata. The multi-locus result generated strong support for Paraphroninina branching between Cystisoma and the remainder of the Physosomata (Fig. 1). MDC Bayes inference places Paraphroninina basal most within the Physosomata (Fig. 2a). MDC RAxML inference groups Paraphroninina with Cystisoma (Fig. 2b). In contrast to the majority of the members of Physosomata both Cystisoma and Paraphroninina inhabit dimly sunlit mesopelagic depths, participate in diel migrations, and possess very large heads with spectacularly hypertrophied eyes (Fig. 3a–f). Our analyses find the traditionally defined infraorder Physosomata to be paraphyletic and it should be redefined to include both Cystisomatidae and Paraphronimidae. The phylogenetic scenarios presented here suggest the superfamily distinction Cystisomatoida for Cystisomatoidea is invalid.

Within the Scinoidea both Acanthoscina and Scina have traditionally been included in the family Scinidae whereas Mimonectidae is considered a member of the family Mimonectidae defined by the possession of several neotonic features. In contrast to the arrangement proposed by Vinogradov et al., 1996 in which the Mimonectidae branch basal to the Scinidae, we discovered support for Mimonectidae branching between Scina and Acanthoscina (Fig. 1) suggesting that the Scinidae as currently defined may be polyphyletic. Both MDC analyses also recover a polyphyletic Scinidae with high support. Additional sampling within the Scinoidea is necessary to evaluate the validity of currently recognized family level relationships with the group. Phylogenetic placement of members of the Proscinidae would be particularly useful in this regard.

Within the Lanceolidae we discovered strong support across our analyses for the neotonic Microphasma, a member of the Microphasmidae, as branching from within the Lanceola, a member of the Lanceolidae (Figs. 1 and 2). We also infer robust support for Scypholanceola, a genus within the Lanceolidae defined primarily by atypical cuticular morphology associated with their reduced eyes (Fig. 3g and h), to have more than one branch within the Lanceola (Figs. 1 and 2). Thus we suggest that the Lanceolidae as currently recognized (Vinogradov et al., 1996) is polyphyletic. In this scenario the cuticular modifications associated with the eyes of Scypholanceola would be convergent adaptions and thus not useful as phylogenetically informative characters. Additional sampling among the Lanceolidae is certainly warranted given our results. Information from members of the Chuneolidae will also be useful in defining relationships within the Lanceolidae.

Both multi-locus and MDC results recover the monophyletic infraorder Physocelata. The Physocelata have classically been defined as inhabiting sunlit epipelagic and mesopelagic water depths. In contrast to deep water taxa, the Physocelata typically display varying degrees of transparency, possess large heads with well developed eyes, have mandibles with a molar process, a first maxilla possessing an inner lobe, and males generally have long antennal flagellum (reviewed in Vinogradov et al., 1996). Our molecular analyses recover three major clades within the Physocelata previously identified by morphology alone; the Vibilioida, the Platscelioidea, and the Phronimioidea. With respect to the Vibilioida, our analyses broadly advocate removing both Cystisoma and Paraphroninina and support redefining Vibilioida to include the Vibiliidae (represented by Vibilia in this study) as reciprocally monophyletic to the Cylopodidae (Clypopus sensu Zeidler (2003b). In contrast to most other Physocelata the eyes of Vibiliidae are variable in size and do not encompass the entire head. Clypopus (Cylopodidae) however does retain the hypertrophied eye characteristics of most Physocelata. While our multi-locus concatenated gene tree and MDC Bayes species tree consistently recovered the Vibilioida as sister to Platscelioidea, the MDC RAxML result recovered Vibilioida as sister to the Phronimioidea.

Members of the clade comprised by the Platscelioidea predominantly inhabit the well lit uppermost epipelagic region of the water column. Males in this group possess unique sexually dimorphic characters associated with both first and second pairs of antennae (reviewed in Vinogradov et al., 1996). Within the Platscelioidea the placement of the monotypic Tryphana based on morphology and COI has been problematic (Vinogradov et al., 1996; Browne et al., 2007). Our analysis inferred strong support across both the multi-locus concatenated tree and MDC analyses for a clade that includes Thyropus and Tryphana branches basally within the Platscelioidea. Additional sampling within Parascelicidae and Platscelioidea should be pursued to confirm this result. The position of the Lycaeidae within Platscelioidea based on morphology has also been difficult. Earlier analysis of COI placed Lycaea close to Glossoscelus in the Oxycelphalidae but with poor support (Browne et al., 2007). Our results discovered additional strong support for the position of Lycaeidae within the Oxycelphalidae. Thus we suggest that the family Lycaeidae may be invalid and Oxycelphalidae should be redefined to include the genus Lycaea. Additional sampling of Lycaeidae, and importantly Simorhynchotus, should also be pursued to confirm this result.

Members of the clade comprised of the Phronimioidea are well represented at both epipelagic and mesopelagic depths. Males in this group possess unique sexually dimorphic characters associated with the first and second pairs of antennae (reviewed in Vinogradov et al., 1996). Within the Phronimioidea we discovered strong support for two reciprocally monophyletic groups the Phronimidae + Phrosinidae clade and the Lestrigonidae + Hyperiidae clade. Our analyses consistently recovered a monophyletic Lestrigonidae sensu Zeidler (2004), represented in this study by Lestrigonus, Hyperietta, and Hyperiidae. Among the Hyperiidae we found that Hyperi branches from within Hyperoche suggesting that Hyperoche as currently recognized is polyphyletic. The Phronimidae are united by a suite of head and eye modifications as well as the unique use of Thaliacean tissue to craft transparent ‘barrels’
used for transport as well as maternal brood care (Ball, 1977; Laval, 1978; Land, 1981; Fig. 3k–n). Their sister group, the Phrosinidae, possess analogous hypertrophic modifications of the fifth pereopod particularly with respect to the distal most elements.

4.2. Species trees methods assessment

It is now widely understood that phylogenetic reconstructions based on concatenated gene sequences are insufficient for
reconstructing species-level relationships (Degnan and Rosenberg, 2009). Both Bayesian and ML analyses of concatenated datasets of- ten produce highly supported, yet incorrect species-tree topologies (Huang and Knowles, 2009; Liu and Edwards, 2009). Differences between gene-trees and species-trees due to incomplete lineage sorting are exacerbated when internal branch lengths are short rel- ative to ancestral effective population sizes; a situation which de- scribes the speciation history of most marine invertebrates (Degnan and Rosenberg, 2009; Knowles and Kubatko, 2010). To ad- dress this problem, a number of species tree methods including parsimony, likelihood, and Bayesian approaches, have been de- veloped. These methods are routinely applied to phylogenetic ques- tions of recent radiations where the number of OTUs is relatively small (i.e. <20) (Cranston et al., 2009; Linnen and Farrell, 2008; Hollingsworth and Hulsey, 2010). However, species-tree methods are rarely applied to broader scale phylogenetic questions with a greater number of OTUs.

Here we used parsimony species-tree methods to analyze a moderate sized dataset consisting of four loci from 51 OTUs. Our MDC analyses supported the existence of the same four major clades identified in the concatenation tree (Fig. 2). Disagreements among trees produced under different phylogenetic methods did occur at basal nodes, indicating that relationships among the four major clades are still unresolved. Despite strong support of basal nodes in the concatenated tree, disagreements between the species tree methods indicate that the current dataset does not contain en- ough information to confidently reconstruct these older evolution- ary events. Additional loci and inclusion of more taxa are needed to increase the resolution at these basal nodes. Also, increased sam- pling within species may improve tree based inference using coa- lescent-based analyses such as BEAST (Drummond and Rambaut, 2007; Heled and Drummond, 2010) and BEST (Liu, 2008). The sampling strategy employed for the present study included, in most cases, only one representative from each OTU. The inclusion of multiple samples per species is recommended for coalescent analysis as within-species polymorphisms contain valuable infor- mation regarding ancestral population sizes.

4.3. Conclusions

In summary we have been able to infer with a high degree of support two monophyletic radiations among pelagic amphipods; the Physosomata, inhabiting primarily bathypelagic depths and the Physocephalata, inhabiting primarily epipelagic and mesope- logic depths. Importantly our results have suggested placement of previously enigmatic taxa as well as highlighting problematic existing groupings. The analyses presented here strongly support the inclusion of Cystisoma and Paraphronima as basally branching taxa within the Physosomata clade and thus support the emergence of the Physosomata from an ancestral pelagic amphipod stem lineage that inhabited shallower regions of the water column in which downwelling light regimes played a significant role. How- ever the relationship of Physosomata to the other major clade, the Physocephalata, remains undetermined and thus the issue of hyperiid monophyly is unresolved.

The deep water Physosomata are largely characterized by an overall reduction in the size of the head and eyes relative to the body (e.g. Fig. 3i and j). In the absence of downwelling sunlight members of this clade often exhibit significant cuticle pigmen- tation, a common cryptic coloration strategy among deep sea organ- isms (Johnsen, 2005; e.g. Fig. 3g–j). In contrast the radiation of the Physocephalata in shallower oceanic midwaters has been strongly influenced by downwelling light regimes resulting in many mem- bers of this clade exhibiting varying degrees of transparency, a common crypsis strategy in well-lit pelagic environments (Johnsen, 2001; e.g. Fig. 3k–p). Most Physocephalata taxa also have large heads and eyes relative to their body length (e.g. Fig. 3o).

Traditional morphological analyses of hyperiids have generally been more focused on characters useful for systematic classification schemes and less focused on characters useful for determining phylogenetic groups. In particular characters associated with feeding morphologies have been heavily used in existing hyperiid sys- tematic treatments (Bowman and Gruner, 1973; Vinogradov et al., 1996). However recent studies suggest these morphologies are particularly plastic among amphipods (e.g. Havermans et al., 2010). Thus character states associated with the presence or ab- sence of mandibular palps and the reduction of the maxillae and maxillipeds (e.g. Vinogradov et al., 1996) are evolutionarily labile and may not accurately reflect evolutionary histories (Browne and Patel, 2000). Structural simplifications associated with abdom- inal epi- merons and reductions of the uropods are also problematic. In contrast, our results suggest that structural elaborations, for example sexually dimorphic morphological hypertrophies associ- ated with the first and second antennae, correlate remarkably well with our multi-locus molecular phylogenetic analyses. In light of our results additional sampling of hyperiid taxa is warranted to as- sess the validity of the proposed phylogenic relationships for this important group of midwater organisms.

The issue of hyperiid monophyly and other outstanding ques- tions regarding relationships among the major amphipod radia- tions should be addressed more broadly by employing a taxon sampling strategy that seeks to increase representation among the major gammaridean amphipod groups in combination with a scalable phylogenomic strategy (Hejnol et al., 2009). This will en- sure a large number of loci are sampled across a wide swath of amphipod diversity and will ultimately prove useful for examining relationships across a group that has historically proved recalcitrant to morphological analyses.

The gammaridean amphipod Parhayle hawaiensis has emerged as a powerful model system for both developmental and genomics studies within the crustaceans and offers a significant opportunity to delve into the details of specific developmental programs rele- vant to morphological attributes that appear to be important to the pelagic life history of hyperiid amphipods (Browne et al., 2005; Kontarakis et al., 2011; Zeng et al., 2011; Blythe et al., 2012). Future work on improving both phylogenetic inference and modeling morphological development in amphipods will al- low us to begin to circumscribe the connections between genotype and phenotype that have generated the remarkable morphological diversity we see in the largest contiguous habitat on the planet, the oceanic midwaters.

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Appendix A. Supplementary material

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References


