

RESEARCH NOTES

A PARASITIC NEMATODE (MERMITHIDAE) FROM THE
PSEUDOSCORPION "*STERNOPHORUS*" *HIRSTI*
CHAMBERLIN (STERNOPHORIDAE)

Parasitic nematodes of the family Mermithidae are not uncommonly found within invertebrates (de Coninck 1965, *Traite de Zoologie* 4:683-690). Kaston (1945, *Trans. Conn. Acad. Arts Sci.* 36:241-244) and Parker and Roberts (1973, *Bull. Brit. arachnol. Soc.* 3:82-84) have noted several occurrences within spiders. However, only one case has been recorded for pseudoscorpions (Vachon 1949, *Traite de Zoologie* 6:475), where six juvenile specimens of *Hexamermis* sp. were found within a female of *Roncus* sp. (Neobisiidae).

This note reports the discovery of a juvenile mermithid nematode within a female of "*Sternophorus*" *hirsti* Chamberlin (Sternophoridae) (its generic position is soon to be changed, Harvey, in prep.), a common species which is widely distributed in eastern Australia. The sternophorid was alive at the time of collection, although the mermithid was not noticed until the host was cleared in lactic acid. Even though the parasite had not pierced through the cuticle of the pseudoscorpion, it occupied most of the abdominal cavity (Fig. 1) and its oral and caudal ends were juxtaposed against the ventral abdominal surface. The mermithid was dull orange in colour, the usual colour of the abdominal contents in the Sternophoridae.

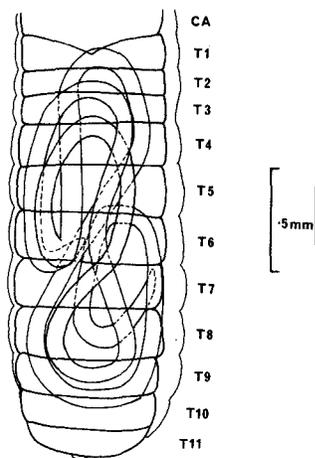


Fig. 1.—Mermithid nematode within abdomen of "*Sternophorus*" *hirsti* Chamberlin, dorsal view. Abbreviations: CA, carapace; T1-T11, terga 1 to 11.

The nematode has been dissected out of its host and preserved separately.

Specimen examined.—Female (MH302.51) of *S. hirsti*, with juvenile mermithid parasite, from under bark of *Eucalyptus* sp., 53 km W. of Tenterfield, New South Wales, Australia, 13 May 1981 (M. S. Harvey and M. Kotzman). Deposited in National Museum of Victoria.

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