Feeding and Digestion in Cephalopods

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I. Summary and Perspectives

Since Bidder's review (1966), the knowledge about feeding and digestion in cephalopods has steadily increased. The diet and feeding habits of species such as the common benthic hunters, octopods and sepioids, as well as of other less common cephalopods such as *Nautilus*, cirrate octopods, and oceanic squids, are becoming better known. Accordingly, rearing and laboratory maintenance of cephalopods are in progress.

Anatomists and ethologists have studied in detail the mode of prey capture and ingestion of food in some species. The different stages of attack and the functioning of organs such as the suckers and the different parts of the buccal mass have been thoroughly analyzed. Thus, the part played by the different feeding organs

(for example, in drilling holes through shelled molluscs) and the neural control of food intake are now well established in *Octopus*.

The poison glands of cephalopods have always deserved much attention. A number of biological amines, enzymes, and true toxins such as cephalotoxins, eleidosin, and tetrodotoxin have been recognized in the posterior salivary glands of various cephalopods.

As far as digestion is concerned, the fine structure of digestive organs turns out to be very similar among the species investigated by electron microscopy (Sepia and octopods). Digestive enzymes such as chymotrypsin, cathepsin, various peptidases, amylases, chitinases, and lipases have been recognized in the alimentary tract and organs. The digestive gland and the salivary glands (in octopods) are considered the most important site of digestive-enzyme synthesis. The digestive gland is also one of the main organs concerned with digestive absorption, at least in Octopus and Sepia. Moreover, in Sepia, the ancestral process of intracellular digestion has been maintained.

Thus it appears, from these data, that most of the cephalopods investigated (mainly Octopodidae and Sepioidae) present very similar digestive features, and are, from a digestive point of view, more closely related to other molluscs than previously assumed. The primitive "multipurpose" digestive cell of molluscs (Purchon) was maintained in the cephalopods' digestive gland, in which a single type of cell performs various functions, such as secretion, absorption, intracellular digestion, and excretion.

In spite of increasing data on the digestive processes in cephalopods, there is still an urgent need for more information on digestive enzymes, their nature and localization, and their involvement in intracellular digestion. We need to know more about neural and hormonal control of digestion. Most of the studies have been restricted to a few species (mostly octopods and sepioids), and very little is known about digestion in teuthoids. Such a gap must be filled as soon as possible in order to obtain a more complete picture of digestion in cephalopods. This should not be difficult because of increasing success in laboratory maintenance of squid.

II. Introduction

Cephalopods stand apart from other molluscs because of the extensive development of their central nervous system. They have been competing with fishes since the emergence of vertebrates. Various feeding methods have been developed in other molluscan classes, whereas cephalopods are all predaceous carnivores, either benthic or nectonic hunters. Thus they have come a long way from their primitive, deposit-feeding molluscan ancestors.

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evolved a *vertebrate* mode of digestion, with *pancreatic* secretion of extracellular enzymes and *intestine-like* absorption (in the caecum and intestine) of small molecules. Although this scheme holds largely true, recent observations suggest that intracellular digestion also occurs in some species.

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Cephalopods are active predators that feed on moving, living animals. Crustaceans, fishes, and molluscs are their usual prey.

1. Diets in the Wild

Direct observations of cephalopods feeding, generally made by scuba divers, have been restricted to common coastal species such as octopuses, cuttlefishes, and some loliginids (Boletzky and Hanlon, 1983). The diet of octopuses can be determined from the discarded remains around the holes they inhabit (Altman, 1967; Wells, 1978), but the most common way to gather information on the cephalopod diet is by examining stomach contents of freshly caught animals. Some large-scale studies have been made on commercial catches of squid (Fields, 1965; Nigmatullin and Ostapenko, 1976; Loukashkin, 1977; Guerra, 1978; Worms, 1979; Karpov and Cailliet, 1979).

Shrimps, prawns, and crabs are the most commonly found crustaceans in the stomach contents of coastal, bottom-living cephalopods, whereas pelagic crustaceans are more commonly found in the stomachs of oceanic forms. Various fishes, polychaetes, cephalopods (and, in the stomachs of octopods, bivalves or gastropods) have also been recognized. Occasionally, chopped seaweed is also present in the stomach (Bidder, 1966; Lane, 1974; E. Boucaud-Camou, unpublished data). It is still difficult to decide whether the seaweed is accidentally caught with the prey and remains undigested due to lack of suitable enzymes, or if it represents a correction of the carnivorous diet, as suggested by Bidder (1966). As the cephalopods grow, the nature of their prey changes: small crustaceans first, then larger crustaceans, fish, etc. However, throughout their lives, small mesopelagic oegopsids feed mainly on copepods and some large oegopsids also feed on planktonic crustaceans in subadult and adult stages (N. M. Erhardt, P. S. Jacquemin, B. F. Garcia, D. G. Gonzales, B. J. M. Lopez, C. J. Ortiz, and N. A. Solis, unpublished observations, 1981).

2. Diets in Captivity

Boletzky and Hanlon (1983) compiled all the diets that have been used for feeding cephalopods maintained in captivity. Captive cephalopods are usually

fed the same prey they hunt in the wild (living crabs, shrimps, fishes, and for the younger ones, mysids and copepods). They can also be fed organisms they do not encounter in their natural habitat, such as *Artemia salina* for very young animals, or prey they do not preferentially attack, such as *Gammarus* for young *Sepia* or bivalves for *Octopus*.

Moreover, captive cephalopods may accept dead food. *Octopus* and *Eledone* can easily be fed pieces of crabs, fishes, or molluscs. *Nautilus* seems to accept almost all sorts of food, even of nonmarine origin, such as pieces of chicken or dog meat (Bidder, 1966; Boletzky, and Hanlon, 1983). Nevertheless, this species also eats live Crustacea (Ward and Wickstein, 1980).

Decapods, which commonly hunt very mobile prey, are more reluctant to accept dead food. However, it has been reported that frozen shrimps, freshly killed fishes, or even pieces of fish have been captured by squid or cuttlefishes (Boucaud-Camou, 1973; Boletzky and Hanlon, 1983). This is also the case for *Illex illecebrosus* which, when fed in aquaria with dead capelins thrown in the tank, attack them before they reach the bottom (Bradbury and Aldrich, 1969; Boucher-Rodoni, 1975). All cephalopods, however, although occasional scavengers, feed preferentially on live prey in the wild as well as in laboratory tanks.

B. Feeding Habits

Cephalopods inhabit all levels of the seawater column, some species being benthonic, some nectobenthonic, and some pelagic. In spite of these ecological differences, their feeding ethology is almost the same throughout the class. All of them (young as well as adults) feed mainly on live Crustacea, molluscs (cephalopods included), and fishes of adequate size inhabiting their normal ranges. They swim in pursuit of their prey, which they capture with their arms and/or tentacles. Some benthic species, such as *Sepia* buried in the sand, or octopuses in their home, or cirrate octopods in *open umbrella-like* posture, can occasionally catch prey without pursuit.

Traditionally, cephalopods are considered dim-light feeders. Octopus vulgaris and Sepia officinalis are reported to be more active at night (Denton and Gilpin-Brown, 1960; Wells, 1965; Altman, 1967). Teuthoids will attack bait and are caught by squid-jigging at dusk or dawn, or when attracted by lights during the night hours. In Octopus, nevertheless, Nixon (1969a), using an automatic food dispenser, recorded a majority of responses between 0900 and 2100, and only some attacks during darkness. Wells (1978) points out that this species seems to be an opportunist, prepared to feed at any time. We also found that various species of cephalopods will accept food at any time of day (O. vulgaris, O. cyanea, Eledone cirrhosa, S. officinalis, I. illecebrosus, Loligo vulgaris, L. forbesi). As far as teuthoids are concerned, Vovk (1972) reported seasonal and diel variations in feeding of Loligo pealei, a species that was found to feed most

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intensely during daylight hours (maximum at about 1600) and less during the night. Such is also the case for *Loligo opalescens* (Karpov and Cailliet, 1978).

C. Prey Capture

In coleoid cephalopods, which are mostly active hunters, the attack is visually initiated (Young, 1961; Messenger, 1968), although touch is important in *Octopus* (Wells, 1978). In all cases the prey is captured with the aid of arms and tentacles, if present. *Nautilus* seems to hunt chiefly by smell and touch.

1. Arms and Tentacles

In all cephalopods, "those who bear their feet on their head," the arms encircle the buccal orifice.

Nautilus has 19 pairs of digital tentacles, without suckers but ridged so that they can adhere to the prey. These tentacles can be completely retracted into a muscular sheath (Bidder, 1966).

Octopods have eight slender and mobile subequal arms connected at their base by a web and provided with one or two rows of sessile suckers. The arms on each side are numbered from one to four (from dorsal to ventral) (Robson, 1929–1932). The cirrate octopods, which have a very deep web, possess two rows of *cirri* as well as suckers.

Decapods have eight arms, generally shorter than those of octopods, provided with two rows of stalked suckers. In addition they have two extensible tentacles with suckers concentrated on a terminal club.

The suckers of various cephalopods have been well studied by Nixon and Dilly (1977). The sucker has a chamber, the acetabulum (Fig. 1), lined by a chitinous, firm ring (Hunt and Nixon, 1981). Above the acetabulum lies the infundibulum, covered with cuticular polygonal processes, each provided with a peg. Actually, the processes are formed by aggregations of rods making numerous minute pores (Nixon and Dilly, 1977). The infundibulum is encircled by a rim, particularly well developed in octopods. Muscles are attached to the acetabulum. Sensory cells (probably mechano- and chemoreceptors) are present in the infundibulum (Graziadei, 1962, 1964; Nixon and Dilly, 1977). In many squid the inner ring of the suckers is provided with sharp teeth, which are presumably used to adhere to gelatinous animals or to retain food particles (Nixon and Dilly, 1977).

The suckers are indeed powerful organs of attachment. Nixon and Dilly (1977) proposed the following stages in the functioning of the sucker:

- 1. In the initial impact upon the prey, a hermetic seal is formed by the rim of the sucker.
- 2. The infundibular surface comes into contact with the prey. The fine pores may act either by adhesion and/or suction.

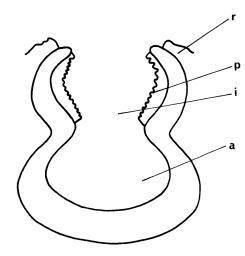


Fig. 1. Sagittal section through a small sucker of *Octopus*. a, acetabulum; i, infundibulum; p, peg; r, rim. (Drawing made from a photography of Nixon and Dilly, 1977.)

3. The suction effect is produced by the contraction of the muscles of the sucker.

2. Modes of Prey Capture

- **a. Decapoda.** Sepia officinalis captures fast-moving prey with its two long tentacles. Messenger (1968) distinguished three components in the attack process, which is visually initiated:
 - 1. Attention: marked by color changes, erection of the first and second pair of arms, movement of eyes and head. The animal positions itself in the axis of the prey.
 - 2. Positioning: the animal swims until it is about one mantle length away from the prey (the *attacking distance*).
 - 3. Seizure: the tentacles are ejected very quickly, prey being seized within 30 msec. The prey is then carried further away from the animal for another 30 msec before being brought back to the mouth in about 150 to 300 msec.

Little is known about prey capture in other decapods. Whereas it seems clear that some loliginids and the ommastrephids behave like *Sepia*, others may capture prey in different ways (Messenger, 1977). In the ommastrephid *I. illecebrosus*, for instance, the sessile arms are used for initial prey capture (Bradbury and Aldrich, 1969).

In Octopus, too, the attack is determined by a moving object, perception of which is generally monocular and accidental (Messenger, 1968). Wells (1978)

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The odontoph which lies the ra The radular sac octopods to deca has described how an octopus catches moving prey. First, the head is raised, and the animal faces the disturbance. There is a smooth approach to the prey, together with color changes, followed by a jet-propelled forward leap on the prey. Crabs are trapped in the interbranchial web, covered by arms, and gathered in the web until the octopus returns home to eat.

In cirrate octopods the cirri are thought to be tactile organs. Photographs often show octopods with the cirri erected, the arms and web being expanded (Roper and Brundage, 1972). This open umbrella-like posture is interpreted as a form of hunting by passive drifting, the cirri acting as receptors to detect water movements. Indeed, the tactile sense must be dominant in the search for prey in such deep-sea animals. Argonauta is a pelagic octopod that swims slowly among the plankton. Its arms bring to the mouth any small prey touching them. Only the tactile sense seems to be involved (Lacaze–Duthiers, 1892; Young, 1960).

In *Nautilus* swimming in search of food, a group of tentacles are spread to form a *cone of search*. The food is then brought to the mouth by another set of tentacles (Bidder, 1962). In the aquarium both chemical (first) and tactile (second) senses are involved in the food search (Haven, 1972).

D. Feeding Organs

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1. Anatomy of the Buccal Mass

The first part of the digestive tract consists of the buccal mass, which lies within the circle of the arms. Bathed in a blood sinus, it is very mobile and can rotate or protrude to bite. The buccal orifice is surrounded by two lips (Fig. 2) lined with a glandular epithelium. In decapods a buccal membrane encircles the lips and in some genera is developed in the females into a copulatory pouch. From the buccal opening protrude the hard extremities of a pair of beaks that, with their muscles, form the buccal mass (Fig. 3): The lateral wings of the beaks support strong muscles, which form the wall of the buccal mass (Fig. 2).

Within the space made by the jaws, three organs are found from the ventral side to the dorsal side (Fig. 2): the salivary papilla, the odontophore, and the lateral lobes.

The salivary papilla is a muscular organ. In its axis runs the posterior salivary glands' duct, which opens at the extremity of the salivary papilla, close to the buccal orifice. In *Octopus* the papilla is covered by a thin cuticle forming very small teeth; larger teeth are present at the extremity of the salivary duct, which can be everted in order to drill shells (Nixon, 1980).

The odontophore, supported by two cartilages, is folded in an axial groove, in which lies the radular sac, containing the odontoblasts and the radula (Fig. 3). The radular sac, well developed in *Nautilus*, shows a trend to reduction from octopods to decapods, decreasing in size from *Loligo* to *Sepia* and *Sepiola* (Gabe

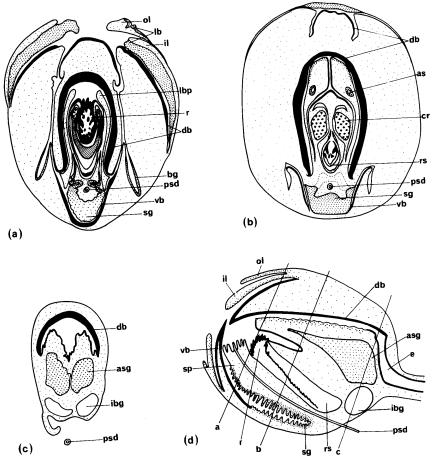


Fig. 2. Buccal mass of Sepia officinalis. (a), (b), (c) Transverse sections through the plates a, b, and c, (d) Sagittal section. asg, anterior salivary gland; as, anterior salivary gland duct; bg, buccal glands; cr, radular cartilage; db, upper (dorsal) beak; ibg, inferior buccal ganglia; il, inner lip; lb, labial gland; lbp, lateral lobe; e, esophagus; ol, outer lip; psd, posterior salivary gland duct; r, radula; rs, radular sac; sg, submandibular gland; sp, salivary papilla; vb, lower (ventral) beak. (After Boucaud-Camou, 1973, modified.)

and Prenant, 1957). However, the radula is totally absent in cirrate octopods (Robson, 1929-1932).

The lateral lobes are paired muscular organs, forming between them a narrow passage for food. On the inner face of each lobe is the opening of one of the paired anterior salivary glands.

The esophagus leaves the buccal mass dorsally. Ventrally lie the inferior

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Fig. 3. Beaks and Bending plane; de, dis rostrum; w, wing.

buccal ganglia and the anterior salivary glands, which are more or less embedded in the buccal mass in decapods, whereas they are external in octopods (Fig. 2).

2. Beaks and Radula

Both the beak and the radula are chitinous sclerotized structures (Jeuniaux, 1963; Ducros, 1966; Hunt and Nixon, 1981) secreted by specialized cells: The odontoblasts produce the radula (Gabe and Prenant, 1957) and the beccublasts produce the beaks (Dilly and Nixon, 1976).

These hard parts resist digestion and remain intact in the stomachs of predators, and both have been used for systematic identification. Clarke (1962) gave a

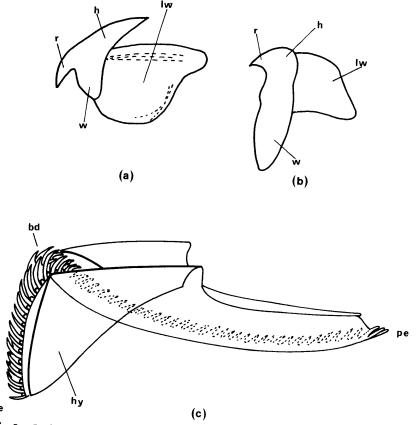


Fig. 3. Beaks and radula of *Sepia officinalis:* (a) upper beak (b) lower beak, (c) radula. bd, Bending plane; de, distal end; h, hook; hy, hyaline shield; lw, lateral wall; pe, proximal end; r, rostrum; w, wing.

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b. Enzymes. are related to amine teolytic enzymes (manini, 1952) have

determination key to the family or genera; Mangold and Fioroni (1966) set up a key including all Mediterranean species; Aldrich et al. (1971) determined the families and sometimes the genera by examining the structure of the radula.

The beaks have been used to estimate animal size, weight, and sex (Clarke, 1962; Mangold and Fioroni, 1966). In Octopus Nixon (1969b, 1973) found a correlation between several radular parameters (weight, teeth) and total body weight.

3. Glands of the Foregut

Two categories of glands discharge their secretion into the buccal cavity:

- 1. Diffuse glands within the buccal mass, consisting of single gland cells or of small groups of cells. In Octopus (Capurro, 1961) and in Sepia and Sepiola (Boucaud-Camou, 1968), they are on the lips (labial glands), on the salivary papilla (lingual glands), and in the buccal epithelium (buccal glands).
- 2. Conspicuous tubular glands: the submandibular gland, lying beneath the salivary papilla (Fig. 2), the anterior salivary glands (Fig. 2), and the posterior salivary glands. The latter are actually within the visceral mass close to the digestive gland, but their common duct opens in the buccal cavity through the salivary papilla (Fig. 2).

In Sepia and Sepiola, three cell types have been recognized in labial, buccal, submandibular, and anterior salivary glands: mucous cells (A) with acid polysaccharidic secretion, salivary cells (B) with glycoprotein secretion and enterochromaffin cells (C). Mucous cells are predominant in labial and buccal glands, A, B, and C cells are present in submandibular glands, whereas the anterior salivary glands contain only B and C cells (Boucaud-Camou, 1968). In Octopus the histochemical nature of the secretion seems to be very similar (Capurro, 1961).

On the contrary, the posterior salivary glands of octopods are very different from those of decapods, at least of sepioids. In octopods the glands have various types of mucous cells and enterochromaffin cells. In Sepia and Sepiola only one type of cell, which has a tryptophan-rich proteinaceous secretion exists, and no enterochromaffin cells occur (Boucaud-Camou, 1968). No data on histology are available for teuthoids.

E. Killing the Prey

1. Methods of Killing

The cephalopods, feeding almost exclusively on living animals, paralyze or kill them before eating. Although the immobilization of the prey is not a prerequisite of its ingestion (Altman and Nixon, 1970; Young, 1965a), it is a real advantage in the case of very voluminous or mobile prey.

Very active hunters such as teuthoids, which feed on fishes, kill their prey by severing the spinal cord (Bidder, 1950; Fields, 1965; Bradbury and Aldrich, 1969); other prey such as crustaceans are cut into pieces. There is no evidence for poisoning.

On the other hand, in *Sepia* and in octopods, the prey is poisoned before eating. It has long been demonstrated that the posterior salivary glands are actually poison glands. Extracts have been shown to be toxic to crustaceans and to some fishes (Romijn, 1935; Ghiretti, 1960; Nicol, 1966). Moreover, octopuses that have their posterior salivary gland nerve sectioned are unable to poison a crab after catching it (Young, 1965a).

Sepia bites its prey, thus introducing the poison. In Octopus and in Eledone, the prey is often paralyzed without any detectable wound, the poison being discharged in a closed compartment formed by the interbrachial web (Ghiretti, 1960).

2. Poisons of the Posterior Salivary Glands

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As is usually the case for venoms, the secretion of the posterior salivary glands of cephalopods appears to be a mixture of several substances: biologically active amines, enzymes, and nonenzymatic polypeptides.

a. Biologically Active Amines. A number of biologically active amines have been detected in the posterior salivary glands of some octopods (*Octopus* and *Eledone*): octopamine, 5-hydroxytryptamine, tyramine, noradrenaline, histamine, and acetylcholine (Endean, 1972). For at least some of them, their presence has been related to the secretory activity of the chromaffin cells (Verne, 1922; Vialli and Erspamer, 1938; Matus, 1971; Ducros, 1971). Actually, a high concentration of the amines occurs in the secretory nerve trunks (Arluison and Ducros, 1976). However, it seems established that the amines have an excitatory action upon crabs but are not responsible for the death or paralysis (Ghiretti, 1953).

Few data are available for decapods. Attempts to detect 5-hydroxytryptamine, octopamine, and tyramine in *Sepia* and *Loligo* were unsuccessful, although dopamine and noradrenaline have been detected in both species (Juorio and Killick, 1973). Actually, there are no chromaffin cells in the posterior salivary glands of *Sepia* (Boucaud-Camou, 1968).

b. Enzymes. Some of the enzymes detected in octopods' salivary glands are related to amine metabolism (Endean, 1972). Other enzymes are lytic: proteolytic enzymes (Ghiretti, 1950; Morishita, 1974a,d) and hyaluronidase (Romanini, 1952) have been found in octopus glands. These enzymes are probably

involved in diffusion of poison, but their possible role in digestion is still disputed (Arvy, 1960) (see Section II,B).

c. Toxins. Eledoisin, a polypeptide with a vasodilatatory and hypotensive effect upon mammals, has been found in *Eledone* (Erspamer and Anastasi, 1962), but the significance of this substance in the salivary glands is obscure (Endean, 1972).

Cephalotoxin, a glycoprotein, has been demonstrated to be responsible for the paralysis and killing of crabs by *Octopus* and *Sepia* (Ghiretti, 1959, 1960). Actually, at least two cephalotoxins, α and β , occur in *Octopus* glands. They have a high carbohydrate content and act on synapses by inhibiting transmission (Cariello and Zanetti, 1977). Indeed, it has become more and more evident that all cephalotoxins from various cephalopods are not identical in their chemical composition, even though they show the same properties against crustaceans (Songdahl and Shapiro, 1974).

Tetrodotoxin has been identified as the toxin (maculotoxin) occurring in the venom of the blue-ringed octopus, *Hapalochlaena maculosa*, whose bite is lethal to man (Sheumack et al., 1978).

F. Food Intake

1. Parts Played by the Different Feeding Organs

The prey, captured with the arms and/or tentacles, eventually paralyzed by cephalotoxin secretion, is kept in front of the mouth by the arms during the whole duration of the meal. The food is swallowed by cephalopods with the help of different mouthparts, mainly the beaks and radula.

The arms are used by *Octopus* in dismembering the crab, but the removal of tissue from inside the skeleton and the swallowing of food are the result of the interaction between the beaks and radula (Altman and Nixon, 1970). A detailed study of the movements of the *Octopus* isolated buccal mass during the *bite* cycle confirms that the beak mechanism is responsible for chopping the flesh of the prey into small pieces (Boyle et al., 1979). The upper beak and the radula work together in the more delicate phases of the cleaning process; the lower beak is more important than the upper one in breaking the food into small pieces (Altman and Nixon, 1970). The functions of the radula may differ according to the prey and the feeding procedure, whether boring holes in shells or eating crabs (Altman and Nixon, 1970). However, the radula is not essential for feeding normally, because after ablation octopuses can still feed both by drilling into shellfish and by cleaning out crabs' exoskeletons (Nixon, 1980). *Sepia* has quite powerful jaws, probably related to its predatory activity, but the radula is not very impor-

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Rasping is mor during the first 2 n burst of rapid rasp.

tant and probably here also nonessential for food ingestion (Boucaud-Camou, 1973). Bidder (1950) indicated, as far as *Loligo* and *Alloteuthis* are concerned, that the food is bitten by the beaks and swallowed without any rasping action by the radula, which is ". . . a tongue, used in swallowing like the rough tongue of a cat [p. 12]." The lateral palps, with their irregularly set teeth, play an important part in the passage of the food towards the esophagus (Young, 1965b), lubricated by the mucous secretion from the glands of the buccal mass.

What is swallowed by cephalopods is mainly flesh for *Octopus* and *Eledone*; only a very small amount of skeletal material is to be found in the gut. Other cephalopods (sepioids and teuthoids) swallow not only flesh, but also at least part of the exoskeleton of crab, the backbone of fish, and the pen of squid.

Octopods are known for two particular alternative (optional) feeding habits: hole boring into shellfish, and partial external digestion of crab flesh inside the exoskeleton before ingestion.

2. Shell Drilling by Octopus

When feeding upon shelled gastropods and bivalves, the octopus does not always succeed in forcing the body of the prey out of the shell. In such a case the animal can use the alternative feeding procedure of drilling a hole (or more than one in some cases) through the calcareous shell, secreting mucus into the hole, then pulling out the body of the prey and eating it (Fujita, 1916; Pilson and Taylor, 1961; Arnold and Arnold, 1969; Wodinsky, 1969, 1973; Nixon, 1977, 1979a,b, 1980). This behavior was well established for Atlantic and Pacific species of *Octopus*. For the Mediterranean *Octopus* Wells (1978) indicated that there were no records of shell drilling until Nixon (1977) found that *Mytilus* and *Murex* shells could be drilled by *O. vulgaris* in the Mediterranean (Naples). The octopod *E. cirrhosa* has also been reported to be able to bore holes through crustacean prey (Boyle and Knobloch, 1981).

Each animal seems to have a tendency to drill in some particular area of the shell in relation to its lip (Arnold and Arnold, 1969). The existence of inter- and intraindividual preferences in the placing of the holes leads Wodinsky (1969) to suggest the influence of learning.

The hole-boring gastropods are known to achieve regularly shaped holes, using chemical secretion to dissolve the shell. With *Octopus* the shape of the hole drilled is quite irregular, and its size varies with the thickness and hardness of the shell and with the size of the octopus. The mechanism of boring is a mechanical rasping action. Some softening chemical secretion from the salivary glands might exist and facilitate the drilling procedure (Nixon et al., 1980).

Rasping is more or less continuous, rapid at the beginning (10 rasps/min during the first 2 min), then the rate decreases rapidly (2–4 rasps/min). Another burst of rapid rasping occurs at the end. Each individual rasp is 0.3 to 0.4 sec in

duration (Wodinsky, 1969). The total time necessary to penetrate the calcium carbonate shell varies from 20 to 120 min according to the prey, which is a much faster rate of drilling than in other shell-boring molluscs.

Nixon (1979b, 1980) found that the small teeth on the salivary papilla of Octopus function as a "second radula." She has shown that the radula is too large to reach the bottom of the holes made. Alternatively, she suggests that the radula is responsible for the initial rapid boring and that the salivary papilla is used for reaching into the depths of the shell, penetrating it and wounding the skin of the prey to introduce the paralyzing secretion. Using the salivary papilla, animals can still dig holes even if the radula is removed but cannot do so with the radula alone if the salivary papilla is removed (Nixon, 1980).

After the hole is completed, the octopus injects a mucous secretion (1.65 to more than 4 ml) in order to paralyze or weaken the prey before pulling out the body to ingest it (Wodinsky, 1969). We report that the hole boring and secretion are not dependent on the presence of a live mollusc; octopuses drill holes and secrete into empty shells with blocked apertures. However, drilling is not necessarily always followed by secreting, and vice versa. When fed on crabs, for instance, octopuses produce secretions from the posterior salivary gland that are not preceded by drilling.

3. External Digestion in Octopods

Octopods remove the flesh from the exoskeleton of crabs with a remarkable neatness. This is thought by many authors to be the result of a partial external predigestion of the crab meat while the prey is hidden within the bag formed by the interbrachial web. The extent to which the prey is predigested is still a question. Wilson (1951) suggested that digestion proceeds until the crab flesh is reduced to a fluid or predigested soup that can be sucked up by the octopus. Nevertheless, lumps of recognizable tissues, such as gills, muscle fragments, hepatic caeca, and eggs may be identified in the crop of recently crab-fed Octopus or Eledone (Bidder, 1957; Altman and Nixon, 1970; R. Boucher-Rodoni, personal observation). Predigestion might thus be limited to loosening muscle attachments (Altman and Nixon, 1970; Best, 1981).

The proteolytic enzymes responsible for external digestion are thought to come from the posterior salivary glands (Bidder, 1966). In Sepia, where no predigestion takes place, Romijn (1935) and Boucaud-Camou (1969) found no such enzymes. A large set of enzymes, proteolytic in particular, exists in the posterior salivary glands of Octopus (Sawano, 1935; Ghiretti, 1950, 1953; Morishita, 1974a,b,c,d). Morishita identified, after chromatographic purification. eight types of proteolytic enzymes in the posterior salivary gland extract, six of chymotrypsin type, one of trypsin type and one carboxypeptidase A. Some of these enzymes are also present in the digestive juice, but not all of them. The author concludes that posterior salivary glands largely contribute to protein digestion in octopus, the possibility of th

Although predige is concerned, there molluscs are fed to jected into the holes could, to some exte meal.

4. Control of Food

Food intake is th sometimes digging predigesting the foo procedure is achiev and buccal mass a neural control exis described the neura the superior bucca series of compleme superior buccal lob inferior buccal an sary for eating wit

In Octopus and secretion from the Octopus by many a 1971, 1972a,b,c; N tions directly from tubules and projec fibres surrounding of the poison, is co al., 1979). The m buccal ganglion al ments of octopuse

A regulation of been studied so far food, to overfeed 1966), in octopuse stopping to feed " brain receives info sympathetic nerve of the process. Per either by direct m gestion in octopus, but the summaries of these Japanese papers do not mention the possibility of these enzymes being used for external digestion.

Although predigestion seems to be an accepted procedure as far as a crab meal is concerned, there are still no indications that such a process is used when fish or molluscs are fed to the animals. Wells (1978) suggested that the secretion injected into the holes drilled through the calcareous shell of bivalves or gastropods could, to some extent, loosen the attachment of the columella muscle as in a crab meal.

4. Control of Food Intake

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Food intake is the result of a complex procedure involving capture of prey, sometimes digging holes through shells, eventually poisoning and sometimes predigesting the food, biting, and rasping before swallowing a meal. The whole procedure is achieved by the combination of the mechanical action of the arms and buccal mass and the chemical action of the salivary glands. A complex neural control exists for all the sequences of events. Young (1965a,b, 1971) described the neural control of eating in octopuses by a series of neural centers: the superior buccal lobe, the inferior buccal and the subradular ganglia. By a series of complementary surgical experiments, Young (1965b) showed that the superior buccal lobe is the initiator of the whole feeding sequence, and that the inferior buccal and subradular ganglia cannot mediate the responses necessary for eating without connections to the superior buccal lobe.

In *Octopus* and *Sepia* the whole procedure of eating prey is initiated by secretion from the posterior salivary glands. Their innervation was studied in *Octopus* by many authors (Bogoraze and Cazal, 1946; Young, 1965a,b; Ducros, 1971, 1972a,b,c; Martin and Barlow, 1972). These glands receive axonal projections directly from the superior buccal lobe to the epithelium of the secretory tubules and projections from the subradular ganglion to the circular muscular fibres surrounding the tubules. The salivary papilla, responsible for the injection of the poison, is controlled by the subradular ganglia (Young, 1965a,b; Boyle et al., 1979). The mechanical actions of the beaks are controlled by the inferior buccal ganglion alone, as shown by an *in vitro* study of the mandibular movements of octopuses (Boyle et al., 1979).

A regulation of the quantity of food eaten exists in all cephalopods that have been studied so far. They all reject any excess food: it is impossible, by offering food, to overfeed experimentally a cephalopod. According to Nixon (1965, 1966), in octopuses the signal of repletion might come from the crop, the animal stopping to feed "just before the crop is filled to its functional maximum." The brain receives information from the anterior part of the digestive tract via the sympathetic nerves. Nevertheless, little is known about the initiation and control of the process. Peristaltic movements of the esophagus and crop can be initiated either by direct mechanical stimulus (Bidder, 1957) or by electrical stimulation

of the sympathetic nerves (Young, 1971). In the females of some species, a relationship seems to exist between gonad maturation and food intake, the animals decreasing their rate of feeding at the approach of mating and spawning. According to Wodinsky (1977) food intake might be under the hormonal control of optic glands' secretion, which in the drilling octopus (O. hummelincki) seems also to be responsible for the shift from the boring to the pulling mode of feeding after egg laying in females.

IV. Digestion

A. Structure of the Digestive Organs

1. Digestive Tract

In the cephalopods, the digestive tract is U-shaped (Fig. 4). The descending branch (or anterior part), lined with a chitinous cuticle, includes the esophagus and the stomach. The esophagus of Nautilus is not lined by a cuticle (Fukada, 1980). In Nautilus and in the octopods, the esophagus is distended into a crop (Fig. 4). The ascending branch (or posterior part) includes the caecum and the rather short intestine, which have their folded mucosa lined with a ciliated and glandular epithelium. The caecum has a spiral form, and the lumen is largely filled with leaflets, permanent folds of the mucosa. Each face of a leaflet is covered with ridges and grooves running parallel to the free edge. In some teuthoid families (including the Loliginidae), the caecum may be enlarged by a simple sac (Fig. 4). The anus lies just posterior to the funnel in the Coleoidea, but at the posterior end of the mantle cavity in Nautilus (Bidder, 1966). The ink sac discharges its secretion by a duct opening in the intestine not far from the

The esophagus ends and the intestine begins at the bend of the U, in the anus. vestibule where the stomach and the caecum open. Sphincters enable both the caecum and the stomach to be isolated from the rest of the digestive tract. The two digestive ducts1 that is, the ducts originating from the digestive gland, join together just before reaching the axis of the spire in the caecum. A groove, the digestive groove1 leads from this opening to the vestibule, thus making a free passage from the midgut gland to the stomach (Bidder, 1966). The groove and sphincter systems enable the substances present in the stomach to enter the digestive ducts or the intestine and the reverse flow from the digestive ducts to reach the stomach directly, thus bypassing the caecum. This anatomical layout must be kept in mind in order to understand the digestive processes of the cephalopods.

¹We follow Bidder's nomenclature (Bidder, 1976).

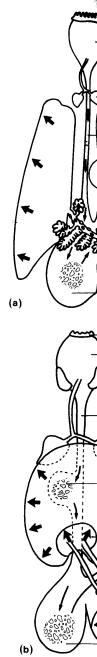


Fig. 4. The digestive vulgaris. (The ink sac is no c, caecum; cr, crop; cs, o digestive gland; i, intestin arrow, course of solid pa

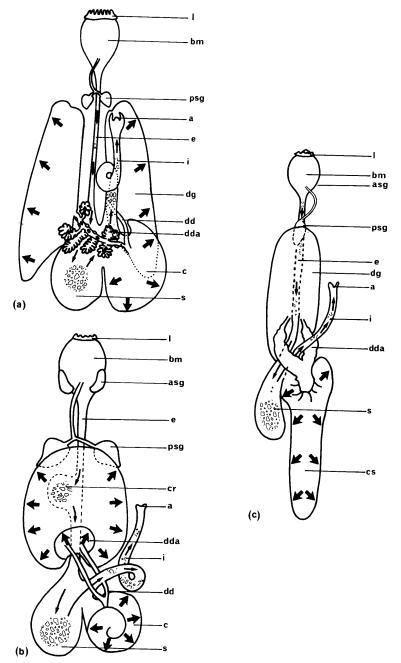


Fig. 4. The digestive organs of (a) Sepia officinalis, (b) Octopus vulgaris, and (c) Loligo vulgaris. (The ink sac is not represented.) a, Anus; asg, anterior salivary gland; bm, buccal mass; c, caecum; cr, crop; cs, caecal sac; dd, digestive duct; dda, digestive ducts' appendages; dg, digestive gland; i, intestine; l, lips; e, esophagus; psg, posterior salivary gland; s, stomach; thin arrow, course of solid particles in the digestive tract; thick arrow, sites of absorption.

The embryological origin is ectodermic for the buccal mass, the anterior part of the esophagus, and the salivary glands. The digestive duct from the crop (if present) and posterior part of the esophagus to the anus, the midgut gland, and the ink sac are of meso- and endodermic origin, except for the anus itself, which is ectodermic (Boletzky, 1967, 1978).

2. Midgut Gland

In the Coleoidea the midgut gland is divided into two unequal parts connected in series: The anterior one is the large brown digestive gland (liver) and the posterior one, the so-called pancreas, which actually consists of appendages developed from the paired digestive ducts. For this reason their proposed name is digestive ducts' appendages (Bidder, 1976). In the octopods they are enclosed in the digestive gland capsule (Fig. 4). In the decapods they lie within the kidney sac, thus covered with a coelomic epithelium, enclosing only the outer layer of the gland in the loliginids. In the sepioids each tubule is covered with the coelomic epithelium. Actually, the two epithelia, the inner endodermal as well as the outer coelomic one, are very similar to each other and to the renal appendages' epithelium.

The internal epithelium serves in both excretion and digestive absorption; the external one seems involved in ion regulation and urine formation (Boucaud-Camou, 1972, 1973; Schipp and Boletzky, 1975, 1976; Donaubauer and Schipp,

In Nautilus the complex midgut gland is not divided into two parts (Bidder, 1976).

a. Structure of the Digestive Gland. The digestive gland, in addition to its digestive functions, is also the site of storage of fuel reserves. Its color is often brownish due to the presence of carotenoid pigments of dietary origin (Fox, 1966; Altman and Nixon, 1970). The digestive gland of squid, which feed mainly on fish, is not as rich in carotenoids as that of the preferentially crustacean eaters Eledone, Octopus, and Sepia (Fisher et al., 1956). The digestive gland of octopuses fed exclusively on fish becomes greenish (Altman and Nixon,

Of paired embryological origin, the digestive gland is often a single organ in the adult, except in some species where the two lobes are still distinct (Sepia). In Nautilus the midgut gland is divided into three to five lobes. The digestive gland is covered by a thin muscular and connective tissue envelope, often transparent. The gland itself consists of tubules, the largest of which end in a pair of wide lumina, which in turn open into the digestive ducts. The tubules are lined with a glandular epithelium that lies on a thin sheath of well-vascularized and innervated muscular and connective tissue. Several cell types have been described in the digestive gland of the cephalopods (Cuénot, 1907; Bidder, 1957; BoucaudCamou, 1968; Box species (Sepia, Elec if not all, of the var digestive cell (bour 1981). The mature teinaceous inclusio masses containing

b. Histological rhythmic activities individual cells. changes of the dig and their relative a

The digestive gl ed to digestion. B digestive gland ce Camou (1973), Bo Boucaud-Camou a case, by electron n the size of the box brown bodies. The chemical character (Boucaud-Camou, slighter fluctuation Rodoni and Mange the boules, follow

3. Innervation

Young (1971) p two centers of the superior buccal ga important peripher lobes (ganglia) ser inferior buccal ga interbuccal connec and the radula. F nerves, which arr crop wall an impo

The gastric gan ducts, and the int CNS not only by represents the only Camou, 1968; Boucher-Rodoni, 1976; Schipp and Pfeiffer, 1980). In some species (*Sepia, Eledone, Octopus*) and probably in all coleoid cephalopods, most, if not all, of the various cell forms are functional stages of a single cell type, the digestive cell (*boules cell*) (Boucaud-Camou and Yim, 1980; Boucher-Rodoni, 1981). The mature digestive cell is characterized by the *boules*, large proteinaceous inclusions, and by the frequent occurrence of *brown bodies*, large masses containing crystals, often included in a vacuole (Fig. 5).

b. Histological Changes Related to Digestion. The digestive gland shows rhythmic activities as a whole, but these are not closely synchronized within individual cells. This explains the difficulty in understanding the structural changes of the digestive gland, in that different types of inclusions are present and their relative abundance is quite variable.

The digestive gland cells undergo some histological changes that can be related to digestion. Bidder (1950, 1957) was the first to notice the changes in the digestive gland cell during digestion. Further studies were made by Boucaud-Camou (1973), Boucher-Rodoni (1976), Boucher-Rodoni and Mangold (1977), Boucaud-Camou and Yim (1980), often on a numerical basis and, in the last case, by electron microscopy. From these studies, it appears that the number and the size of the boules are related to digestion, but such is not the case for the brown bodies. The rhythmicity of the boules' secretion as well as their histochemical characters suggest that they could be the digestive enzymes' carrier (Boucaud-Camou, 1973). Later, the number of boules increases slowly, showing slighter fluctuations, which could be related to further enzyme release (Boucher-Rodoni and Mangold, 1977). The enzymes may be secreted by fragmentation of the boules, followed by exocytosis (Boucaud-Camou and Yim, 1980).

3. Innervation

Young (1971) pointed out that in octopods, the digestive tract is controlled by two centers of the central nervous system (CNS), the superior buccal lobes (or superior buccal ganglia in decapods) and the palliovisceral lobes, and by an important peripheral ganglion, the gastric ganglion (Fig. 6). The superior buccal lobes (ganglia) send nerves directly to the posterior salivary glands and, via the inferior buccal ganglia (which are connected to the superior buccal lobes by interbuccal connectives) to the anterior salivary glands, the muscles of the jaws, and the radula. From the inferior buccal ganglia also issue the sympathetic nerves, which arrive in the gastric ganglion. They form in the esophagus and crop wall an important plexus including nuclei (Alexandrowicz, 1928).

The gastric ganglion sends nerves to the stomach, the caecum, the digestive ducts, and the intestine. In *Octopus* the gastric ganglion is connected with the CNS not only by the sympathetic nerves, but also by the visceral nerves. This represents the only direct connection between CNS and gastric ganglion in *Sepia*,

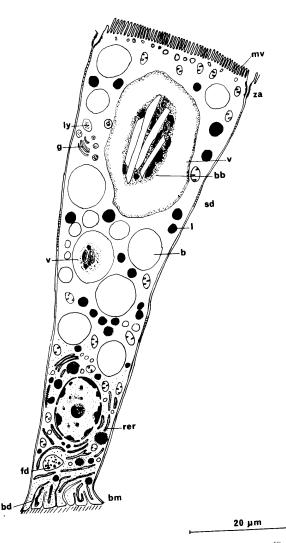


Fig. 5. Digestive cell (or *boule cell*) from the digestive gland of *Sepia officinalis*. bb, Brown body; b, boule; bd, basal infoldings; bm, basal membrane; fd, ferric deposit; g, Golgi apparatus; l, lipids; ly, lysosome; mv, microvilli; rer, rough endoplasmic reticulum; sd, septate junction; v, vacuole; za, *zonula adhaerens* (apical belt desmosome). (After Boucaud-Camou, 1973.)

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Fig. 6. Diagram of the in The brain is figured as seen in not all represented in the san possible. (After Best, 1981.) A single structures. The digestive and the intestine plexus are PVL, palliovisceral lobe; ponerves; asg, anterior salivary GG, gastric ganglion; DDN nerves of the rectum; AN, all

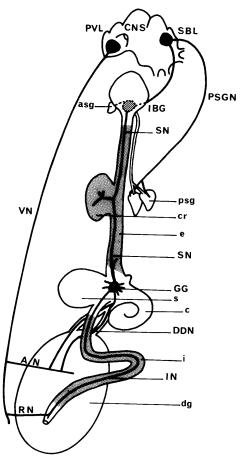


Fig. 6. Diagram of the innervation of the gut of *Octopus*. (After Boucher-Rodoni, 1981.) The brain is figured as seen from the right side. (After Young, 1971.) The digestive organs are not all represented in the same perspective but are distributed to make the drawing as clear as possible. (After Best, 1981.) All the nerves, even if some are paired in reality, are represented as single structures. The digestive organs are indicated as in Fig. 4. The esophagus and crop plexus and the intestine plexus are dotted. CNS, central nervous system; SBL, superior buccal lobe; PVL, palliovisceral lobe; psg, posterior salivary glands; PSGN, posterior salivary glands' nerves; asg, anterior salivary glands; IBG, inferior buccal ganglion; SN, sympathetic nerves; GG, gastric ganglion; DDN, digestive ducts' nerves; i, intestine; IN, intestinal nerves; RN, nerves of the rectum; AN, abdominal nerves; VN, visceral nerves.

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although an indirect link also exists, through the superior buccal ganglion (Graziadei, 1960). The visceral nerves are associated with the nerves of the intestine via the nerves of the rectum, and with the nerves of the digestive ducts via the abdominal nerves (Fig. 6). Thus the two innervations of the gut, visceral and sympathetic, meet in the gastric ganglion.

B. Physiology of Digestion

1. Digestive Enzymes

Proteolytic, amylasic, and lipolytic enzymes exist in different organs of the gut, and their activity varies according to the organ and the stage of digestion.

Although enzyme activities have been found at all levels of the gut lumina, only a few organs display such activities at the epithelial level. The main organs that have been thought to be concerned with secretion of digestive enzymes are the glands of the foregut, the digestive gland, the digestive ducts' appendages, and the caecum. No enzyme secretion occurs at the level of the esophagus and stomach epithelia. Food is digested there by enzymes from other sources (mainly salivary glands and the digestive gland).

a. Protein Digestion. A proteolytic activity exists in the lumen of the gut, from the esophagus to the intestine, generally more important near the epithelium than towards the center of the cavity (Boucaud-Camou, 1973). This activity originates in various secreting organs: the salivary glands, digestive gland, caecum, and intestine. Sawano (1935) found only a dipeptidase in the anterior salivary glands of *O. vulgaris*. Some proteolytic activity was reported by Boucaud-Camou (1973) in the anterior salivary glands of *S. officinalis*. In the posterior salivary glands of *Sepia*, Romijn (1935) and Boucaud-Camou (1969) found no proteolytic enzymes, whereas a strong proteolytic activity exists in the posterior salivary glands of *Octopus* (Sawano, 1935; Ghiretti, 1950; Sakaguchi, 1968; Morishita, 1974a,b,c,d, 1978), probably involved with external digestion. Morishita (1978) concluded that the posterior salivary glands play a very important role in protein digestion. Moreover, Best (1981) provided very good evidence for such a role in *Octopus*.

On the other hand, in *Todarodes*, in which the posterior salivary glands are small, Takahashi (1960) estimates that because of its mass the digestive gland is responsible for the largest part (89%) of the total proteolytic activity in the gut, in spite of a unit activity more important in caecum and intestine extracts than in digestive gland extract. Boucaud-Camou (1969, 1974) agreed with these views as far as *Sepia* is concerned. Kozlovskaya and Vaskovsky (1970), in a comparative study on the proteinases of invertebrates, showed a rather important proteolytic activity in the digestive gland of cephalopods. In *Todarodes* (Takahashi, 1963).

Loligo (Pignero proteolytic activity with a high electro 1981).

Morishita (1978 of Octopus, origin found a chymotry Camou (1974) loca in the digestive gl activity seems to 1981). A tryptic a and Rocca, 1969). the digestive juice most species inves sin-like enzymes. Loligo (Pignero a carboxypeptidase (Pignero and Roc glands extract of found in most of th

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Loligo (Pignero and Rocca, 1969), and *Sepia* (Boucher-Rodoni, 1981), the proteolytic activity is partially thiol dependent. It is located among the proteins with a high electrophoretic $R_{\rm f}$ and a medium molecular weight (Boucher-Rodoni, 1981).

Morishita (1978) identified a chymotrypsin-like enzyme in the digestive juice of Octopus, originating from the posterior salivary glands. Rothe et al. (1970) found a chymotrypsin-like activity in the Magensaft of Sepia, and Boucaud-Camou (1974) located such an activity inside the vacuoles and at the boules level in the digestive gland cells of the same species. A slight, occasional, similar activity seems to exist in the digestive gland of Eledone (Boucher-Rodoni, 1981). A tryptic activity was recorded in the digestive gland of Loligo (Pignero and Rocca, 1969). A strong proteolytic activity with optimum acid pH exists in the digestive juice, in the digestive gland, and in the posterior salivary glands of most species investigated. This activity can be related to the presence of cathepsin-like enzymes. Such enzymes were identified in the digestive gland extract of Loligo (Pignero and Rocca, 1969) and of Octopus (Morishita, 1972a,b,c). A carboxypeptidase A-like activity was found in the digestive gland of Loligo (Pignero and Rocca, 1969) and in the digestive juice and posterior salivary glands extract of Octopus (Morishita, 1978). Dipeptidase activities have been found in most of the digestive organs investigated (Sawano, 1935; Romijn, 1935; Bidder, 1966 for review).

Sawano (1935) and Takahashi (1960) have found proteolytic activity at acidic and basic pH in the digestive ducts' appendages extract of *Octopus* and *Todarodes*, respectively. These results are, however, probably due to contamination of the gland by digestive gland secretion. The caecum extract has been found to display a proteolytic activity at pH 8 in *Sepia* (Boucaud-Camou, 1973) and in *Todarodes* (Takahashi, 1960).

The differences recorded by the authors in enzyme composition might to some extent be the result of different stages of digestion or of life cycle at the sampling time. The influence of digestion on enzymatic activities is shown by the important variations recorded in the total proteolytic activity of the digestive gland of *Eledone* and *Sepia* during one digestive cycle (Boucher-Rodoni, 1981). As for the importance of the life cycle, Sakaguchi (1968) reported a strong activity in the digestive gland and in the posterior salivary glands of *Octopus*. After spawning in females, enzymatic activity decreases considerably in both organs.

b. Carbohydrate Digestion. Goddard (1968) found an increase in the blood glucose concentration after a meal, more or less steep according to the carbohydrate content of the food. An amylasic activity exists at almost the same locations as the proteolytic activity: gut lumina (Boucaud-Camou, 1969, 1973 in *Sepia*), digestive gland (Romijn, 1935 in *Sepia* and *Eledone*; Takahashi, 1960, 1963 in *Todarodes*; Boucaud-Camou, 1969, 1973, 1974 in *Sepia*; Boucher-

Rodoni, 1981 in *Sepia* and *Eledone*), caecum contents, and tissue extract, (Takahashi, 1960, 1963 in *Todarodes*; Romijn, 1935 in *Sepia* and *Loligo*; Boucaud-Camou, 1969, 1973, 1974 in *Sepia*). Again no activity can be detected in the cuticularized esophagus and stomach epithelia. Such is also the case in the anterior and posterior salivary glands of *Sepia* (Boucaud-Camou, 1973). Romanini (1949, 1951, 1952) identified hyaluronasic and amylolytic activities in the posterior salivary glands of octopods.

The digestive gland here again displays a strong activity. In *Sepia* an amylase has been histochemically localized in the lumina of the tubules and in the boules cells, mainly in the distal and middle region of the cell (Boucaud-Camou, 1973). Cellulase is present in digestive gland extract of *Octopus* (d'Aniello and Scardi, 1971). Oshima et al. (1930) and Okutani and Kimata (1964) found an important chitinolytic activity in the digestive gland and in the stomach of *Todarodes pacificus* and *Octopus dofleini*.

Positive results in digestive ducts' appendages were obtained by Romijn (1935), but they were not entirely confirmed by Boucaud-Camou (1974) who noted some occasional activity, but only in the lumina of the tubules of *Sepia*. This activity is probably due to contamination by digestive gland secretion.

c. Lipid Digestion. There is not much information available about lipid digestion in cephalopods. As far as gut content is concerned, caecal fluid has been investigated and has given positive results (Romijn, 1935). Digestive gland and caecum are again the main organs concerned with this activity in the different species (Romijn, 1935; Takahashi, 1960, 1963; Boucaud-Camou, 1973, 1974; Boucher-Rodoni, 1981). A lipolytic activity was noted by both Takahashi (1960) and Romijn (1935) in the digestive ducts' appendages due probably here also to contamination by digestive gland secretion. Boucaud-Camou (1974) identified nonspecific esterasic activities in the digestive gland, which probably correspond to the lipasic activities found by the different authors. The sites of esterasic activity often surround the lipid inclusions of the boules cells. Such an enzymatic film surrounding lipid droplets is known in other groups such as bivalves (Reid, 1966, 1968) and phoronidians (Vandermeulen and Reid, 1969). These enzymes might be more involved in the utilization of reserves than in food digestion (Boucaud-Camou, 1973).

Lipid digestion requires emulsifiers to be efficient. Very little is known so far on the subject, except the negative results obtained by Vonk (1947) in the intestine and digestive gland of *Loligo*.

2. Absorption

a. Sites of Absorption. The caecum has long been considered the main absorptive organ in cephalopods, on the basis of microscopic anatomy and cytol-

ogy. The surface of the mucosa, and the apical part of the cel 1950).

Indeed, by using place in the caecum Péquignat, 1973; B (1977) has shown th top of the leaflet ridg (Fig. 7). In *Octopus* in *Sepia* (Boucaud-Cand intestine are pro-

On the contrary, t a long time by auth results (Falloise, 190

Bidder (1957) she enters the digestive



Fig. 7. A stylized di of the caecum of *Sepia* ridges are marked by chymotrypsin) are dotte particles into mucous mucous cells are figure

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ogy. The surface of the caecal epithelium is enlarged by the numerous folds of the mucosa, and the occurrence, related to digestion, of lipid droplets in the apical part of the cell suggests an absorptive function (Enriques, 1902; Bidder, 1950).

Indeed, by using radiolabeled food, it has been shown that absorption takes place in the caecum, at least in *Sepia* and in *Octopus* (Boucaud-Camou and Péquignat, 1973; Boucaud-Camou et al., 1976). In *Sepia* Boucaud-Camou (1977) has shown the polarity of the mucosa. Absorption actually occurs at the top of the leaflet ridges, whereas digestive enzymes are active within the grooves (Fig. 7). In *Octopus* the absorptive role of the caecum seems more important than in *Sepia* (Boucaud-Camou et al., 1976). In the Loliginidae the large caecal sac and intestine are probably the main organs of absorption (Bidder, 1950).

On the contrary, the role of the digestive gland in absorption was disputed for a long time by authors who used carmine suspension and obtained conflicting results (Falloise, 1906; Cuénot, 1907; Gariaeff, 1915).

Bidder (1957) showed by the same method (carmine suspension) that food enters the digestive gland and that the digestive cells can actually perform an

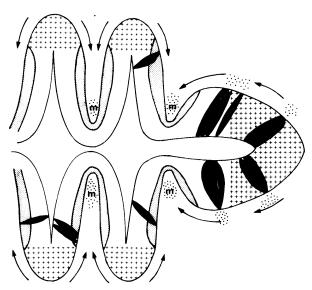


Fig. 7. A stylized drawing of the extremity of a primary leaflet, summarizing the functions of the caecum of *Sepia officinalis* L. The absorption sites, situated on the top of the leaflet's ridges are marked by crosses, the areas of lytic activities (acid phosphatase, esterase, chymotrypsin) are dotted. The arrows represent the ciliary currents which gather the undigested particles into mucous strings (m), further eliminated by the intestine (Bidder, 1950). The mucous cells are figured in black. (From Boucaud-Camou, 1977.)

absorptive function, at least in *Octopus* and in *Sepia*. Later, Boucaud–Camou and Péquignat (1973), using radiolabeled food, demonstrated that food was absorbed by the digestive gland in *Sepia*, and this occurs very early during digestion. Moreover, the digestive gland, which retains 80% of the labeled food, thus appeared as the main absorptive organ. Further studies on *Octopus* gave results very similar to those obtained with *Sepia* (Boucaud–Camou et al., 1976). In *Loligo* no absorption has been shown to take place in the digestive gland (Bidder, 1950, 1966). Nevertheless, A. M. Bidder (personal communication) thinks that it is not impossible that absorption may still be found, but only at the very end of digestion.

Most surprising was the finding of the absorptive function of the digestive ducts' appendages. In *Sepia* they are always the most labeled organ, thus showing the highest specific activity (Boucaud–Camou and Péquignat, 1973). It is indeed the internal epithelium that retains the larger part of the radioactivity.

In *Octopus* and *Sepia* the intestine does not seem to play a noticeable role in digestive absorption. However, its histological structure is very close to that of the caecum, and it has been shown that some absorption may occur in its epithelium in *Eledone* (Tritar, 1970a). In *Loligo* the intestine plays an important part in fat absorption (Bidder, 1950), and this might also be true for some other teuthoids.

b. Absorption of Small Molecules. Tritar (1970a, 1971) studied the absorption of amino acids in the intestine of *Eledone moschata* and Tritar and Peres (1974), the absorption of glucose in the intestine of *S. officinalis*. They found a weak absorption of these substances in both species. Indeed, Tritar (1970b) found a better absorption of glycine in the caecum of *Eledone*.

Boucaud-Camou and Péquignat (1973), and Boucaud-Camou et al. (1976) followed the absorption of [³H]glycine in the digestive system of *Sepia* and *Octopus* by scintillation counting and autoradiography. The results showed that glycine is absorbed mainly by the digestive ducts' appendages, the digestive gland, and the caecum.

c. Absorption of Large Molecules and Particles: Intracellular Digestion in the Digestive Gland. Bidder (1957), using carmine, found that food penetrates the digestive gland of *Octopus* and *Sepia*. In order to determine whether particles are actually absorbed by the digestive cells, ferritin was used as a tracer by Boucaud-Camou and Yim (1980) and followed both by electron and light microscopy. It was thus demonstrated that the digestive cells can capture large molecules by pinocytosis and digest them intracellularly in heterolysosomes. In *E. cirrhosa*, ferritin appears to be absorbed by a similar process (Boucher-Rodoni, 1981). In *Nautilus* small fragments of food are digested in the digestive gland (Bidder, 1966).

3. Excretion Related

The labeling of ingeresidues of the intracel body vacuoles (Bidder, Camou et al., 1976).

Boucaud-Camou and of the brown-body vacu deposits from the meta boules in the cytoplasm larger, collecting the re and of heterogenous ori into the digestive tubule off, the brown body is passes to the caecum as strings. The formation a of feeding.

Some metallic eleme vanadium, are known (Miramand and Guary, that some heavy metals Miramand, personal cor act as a means of detox

4. Digestive Processes

a. Movement of Foothe esophagus by peristantials, food can be a partially broken down by gland and perhaps the satisfied and, through the digest Sepia and in octopods, digestion is achieved evolution where the larger part of the caecum undergoes of the Loligo food does not see take place chiefly in the

b. Duration of Digestrom one species of cephighly influenced by the longer in benthonic species.

3. Excretion Related to Digestion

The labeling of ingested food by radioelements or by carmine shows that the residues of the intracellular digestion are finally collected in the large brownbody vacuoles (Bidder, 1957; Boucaud-Camou and Péquignat, 1973; Boucaud-Camou et al., 1976).

Boucaud-Camou and Yim (1980) have made a detailed study of the formation of the brown-body vacuole. The crystals of the brown body (probably uric acid deposits from the metabolism of the digestive gland) appear directly in small boules in the cytoplasm and are later included in a vacuole that grows larger and larger, collecting the residues of the intracellular digestion, both of endogenous and of heterogenous origin. When the brown-body vacuole is mature it protrudes into the digestive tubule, swelling the apical part of the cell. The vacuole bursts off, the brown body is liberated within the lumen of the digestive tubule and passes to the caecum and intestine, from which it is eliminated among mucous strings. The formation and excretion of brown bodies also occurs in the absence of feeding.

Some metallic elements that can occur as pollutants, cadmium, mercury, and vanadium, are known to be concentrated in the digestive gland of *Octopus* (Miramand and Guary, 1980). Further, from autoradiographic studies, it appears that some heavy metals such as americium are concentrated in brown bodies (P. Miramand, personal communication). It is thus clear that the brown body could act as a means of detoxification.

4. Digestive Processes

- **a. Movement of Food.** From the buccal cavity the food is passed through the esophagus by peristaltic muscular action to the stomach. In octopods and in *Nautilus*, food can be stored in the crop. In the stomach the food is at least partially broken down by the action of enzymes originating from the digestive gland and perhaps the salivary glands. The digestive fluid then enters the caecum and, through the digestive ducts' appendages, the digestive gland, at least in *Sepia* and in octopods. In Nautilus it enters the midgut gland. In these species digestion is achieved eventually by intracellular processes in the digestive gland, where the larger part of the digested food is absorbed. The food that has entered the caecum undergoes final stages of digestion and is then absorbed there. In *Loligo* food does not seem to reach the digestive gland, and absorptive processes take place chiefly in the large caecal sac and intestine (Bidder, 1966).
- **b.** Duration of Digestion. The total time necessary to digest a meal varies from one species of cephalopod to the other, and within the same species it is highly influenced by the temperature. At a given temperature digestion lasts longer in benthonic species than in pelagic. The size of the meal seems to have

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meal is not too small.

For a similar mode of life and at the same temperature, digestion seems to be more rapid and more efficient in cephalopods than in fishes (Boucher–Rodoni, 1973b, 1975). The rate of digestion, that is, the quantity of food digested per hour, depends on the total duration of digestion (hence on the temperature) and on the size of the meal. The food intake of a small animal is larger relative to its size than that of a large animal (Nixon, 1966; Mangold and Boletzky, 1973; Van Heukelem, 1976; Joll, 1977; Boyle and Knobloch, 1982), but the quantity digested at a given hour always represents a fairly constant percentage of the quantity ingested (Boucher-Rodoni, 1975).

In all cephalopods in which digestion was studied experimentally by following the quantitative evolution of the food in the gut, the rate of digestion appears to be very high during the first few hours and to slow down later (Fig. 8). Thus digestion is particularly efficient in cephalopods during the first few hours. This initial rapid digestion lasts, in octopods, as long as there is food in the crop.

It has been noted that animals can, and often do, take a new meal before the digestion of the previous one is completed (Bidder, 1966; Boucher–Rodoni, 1973b). It might be that it is at the end of the rapid stage of digestion that animals can feed anew. This is in agreement with Nixon (1966), who suggests that the signal of repletion, in *Octopus*, might come from the crop. When the organ is full, the animal stops eating, and when the organ is empty, the animal can eat again. Such a role might be played by the stomach in decapods (Boucaud-Camou, 1973). Moreover, digestion proceeds in successive phases, in stomach, caecum, and (at least in the octopods and sepioids) in the digestive gland. This possibility of the digestion of two meals in parallel makes the digestive process of cephalopods potentially of remarkable efficiency.

c. Control of Digestive Processes. In Octopus Best (1981) shows that there is neural control of the digestive gland secretion during feeding, via the sympathetic nerves. This does not seem to be the case for the abdominal and rectal nerves, which are branches of the visceral nerves, other connections between gastric ganglion and CNS (Fig. 6).

As far as hormonal control of digestion is concerned, only one study is known so far (Ledrut and Ungar, 1937). They isolated a secretin-like substance from the caecum of *Octopus*, which induces hypersecretion by the midgut gland. A hormonal link is not excluded by the work of Best (1981), in which it was shown that the activity of the digestive gland of about half of artificially fed octopuses, with the organ isolated from all nervous input, resembled that of normally fed controls.

d. Food Conversion. Cephalopods are rapidly growing animals (Nixon, 1966, 1969a; Choe, 1966; Wells and Wells, 1970; Richard, 1971; Mangold and

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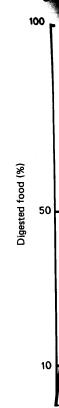


Fig. 8. Quantitative digestive cycle. The diges is empty 12 h after the be

Boletzky, 1973; Van sorption, and convers food into animal tissu temperature and in s Borer, 1971; Mango (Bidder, 1966; Boudtissue is also a remark that of fish, for insta 1973a; Mangold and ship between food in period, shows that 25 1966). The food con

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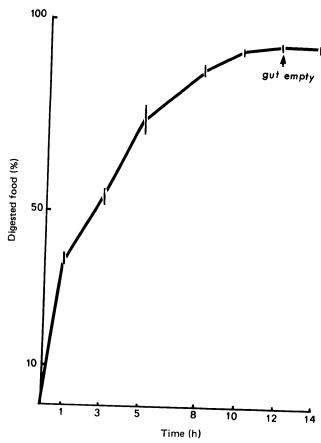


Fig. 8. Quantitative evolution of the food in the gut of *Octopus cyanea* during one digestive cycle. The digested food is expressed as a percentage of the quantity ingested. The gut is empty 12 h after the beginning of the meal. (After Boucher-Rodoni, 1973b.)

Boletzky, 1973; Van Heukelem, 1973). During growth, feeding, digestion, absorption, and conversion are the successive stages leading to transformation of food into animal tissue. The food intake in most cephalopods is determined by temperature and in some by density of food available (Richard, 1966, 1971; Borer, 1971; Mangold and Boletzky, 1973). Digestion is rapid and efficient (Bidder, 1966; Boucher-Rodoni, 1973b, 1975). Food conversion into body tissue is also a remarkably efficient procedure in cephalopods in comparison with that of fish, for instance (Choe, 1966; Nixon, 1966, 1969a; Boucher-Rodoni, 1973a; Mangold and Boletzky, 1973; Mangold, 1983). In *Octopus* the relationship between food intake and changes in body weight, over a 1 to 7.5 month period, shows that 25 to 55% of the food is incorporated into body tissue (Nixon, 1966). The food conversion efficiency, that is

$\frac{\text{final body weight } - \text{ initial body weight}}{\text{total food intake}} \times 100$

can vary considerably from one species to another, within the same species from one animal to the other, and within the same animal from one period to the other. In *Sepia esculenta*, for instance, Choe (1966) recorded conversion rates ranging from 9 to 71% of the ingested food, with a mean value of 38.7%.

A first attempt was made to try to go into more detail concerning assimilation and conversion efficiencies in two species: *E. cirrhosa* and *I. illecebrosus* (Boucher-Rodoni, 1973a), using total nitrogen and caloric content energy budgets. The results, despite some inherent, inevitable errors (sacrifice method, mucous strings in feces, parasites, etc.) show that absorption efficiency (or coefficient of digestibility) is nearly always above 90%. When nitrogen was used as a criterion, conversion efficiency was higher in the crab-fed octopods than in the fish-fed (capelins) teuthoids, and when caloric content was considered, it was higher in *Illex*. The figures for conversion, maintenance, and unabsorbed food in *Octopus cyanea*, on a caloric basis, are respectively 60, 36, and 4% (Van Heukelem, 1976).

One would expect that these high food conversion rates are probably biased values, in that they are drawn from experimental conditions, and do not reflect the real life conditions in nature, which might be important for animals with such elaborate behavior. However, recapture of branded animals after a few weeks in the wild shows that laboratory growth results are reasonably close to those in nature, at least as far as *Octopus* is concerned (Itami, 1964; Van Heukelem, 1973). Boyle and Knobloch (1982) showed for *Eledone* a growth rate similar in the aquarium and *in situ*. *Illex* seems to grow even faster in captivity than in nature, especially at the end of the life cycle (O'Dor et al., 1980).

5. Evolution of Digestive Processes

Cephalopods may be considered to have evolved from a molluscan ancestor, a crawling form inhabiting shallow waters and probably feeding on detritus. The radula would be important in feeding, the jaws scarcely developed. The midgut would be simple and particulate food would penetrate the midgut gland, where extra- and intracellular digestion would take place. This action of the midgut gland persists in *Nautilus* (Table I).

Two important evolutionary steps led to the present cephalopod digestive system: the development of powerful jaws (correlated with acquisition of predatory habits) and the division of the midgut gland into a stomach, where extracellular digestion of large pieces of food takes place, and a caecum allowing further digestion and providing an important absorptive surface. The old molluscan alternate secretion—absorption phases in the digestive gland allow only a slow digestive process, even if the subdivisions of the gut increase the digestive

Evolution of Digestive Processes in Some Cephalopods

TABLE

Sites of absorption

on State of food entering Digestion in the the digestive gland digestive gland

Digestive duct's

appendages

Digestive gland

Duration of digestion
at a given

Life-style

temperature

pecies

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TABLE

Evolution of Digestive Processes in Some Cephalopods

	Duration of digestion	State of food		Site	Sites of absorption	
Life-style	at a given temperature	the	Digestion in the digestive gland	Digestive gland	Digestive duct's appendages	Caecum
Benthic		Pieces of food ^c	~.	++	~-	~-
Nectobenthic	20 h at 15°C	Fluid and fine	Intracellular ⁱ	+ +	++6	+
Benthic	15 h at 20°C" 30 h at 10°C 20 h at 15°C'	particles ⁵ Fluid juice and fine narticles ?	Intracellular?	· / + +	~.	~.
Benthic	15 h at 20°C 16 h at 14°Cs	Fluid juice ^b	~.	8'9++	86 +	86 + +
	12 h at 18–19°C ^h 14–15 h at 23°C ^b					
Pelagic	4-6 h at 18°Cª	Food does not enter	No digestion	a	~.	e + +
		the organ ^a				

^a Bidder, (1950).

^b Bidder, (1957).

c Bidder, (1966).

^d Boucaud-Camou, (1973).

e Boucaud-Camou and Péquignat, (1973).

^f Boucher-Rodoni (1975).

⁸ Boucaud-Camou et al., (1976).

h Boucher-Rodoni and Mangold, (1977).

' Boucaud-Camou and Yim, (1980).

i Boucher-Rodoni, (1981).

3. Feed

efficiency (Table I). In *Sepia* the digestive ducts' appendages are very well developed, and they act, as does the caecum, as an absorptive organ, but with no effect of shortening digestion (Table I). A rapid meal must necessarily free the digestive gland for enzyme secretion only, and this appears to have taken place in *Loligo*, a perpetually swimming predator in which rapid digestion could be clearly advantageous (Table I). This picture cannot, however, be applied to the oegopsid teuthoids in which the structure of the digestive gland is very close to that of *Sepia* and *Octopus* (A. M. Bidder, personal communication) How digestion takes place in these actively swimming predators is still unknown, and this opens an exciting new field for future research.

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