

ISOPODA: CALABOZOIDEA

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One of the most surprising findings of subterranean species during the last years has been the discovery of *Calabozoa pellucida* Van Lieshout (Van Lieshout, 1983). This is the type-species of the recently described suborder of Isopoda, the Calabozoidea. The Calabozoidea are aquatic, hypogean, ambulatory isopods, devoid of eyes. Their body (length of adult ♂: 2.5-3.2 mm; of ♀: up to 3.4 mm) is oblong-oval, transparent-whitish. It consists of the subtrapezoidal cephalon, of 7 pereionites, of 5 pleonites (apparently only 3) and of the pleotelson. The first and second pleonites are so strongly reduced, that they can be seen only with difficulty ventrally. The telson, including the completely fused sixth pleonite, is extremely large, nearly reaching 1/3 of the body length. The pereopods are all ambulatory. The pleopods 1 and 2 are modified and sexually dimorphic; the remainder are normal with a branchial, swimming and protective function. The uropods are small, with reduced rami, and laterally inserted in an excavation.

The Calabozoidea show a mixture of plesiomorphous and apomorphous characters. On account of the reduced first and second pleonites and of the male copulatory organ, derived from the exopodite of the first and the endopodite of the second pleopod, the Calabozoidea are considered to be closer related to the suborder Asellota than to any other known suborder of isopods.

Calabozoa pellucida was discovered in wells of the small town Calabozo, and in its neighbourhood. This town, in the Estado Guarico from Northern Venezuela, is situated in the llanos.

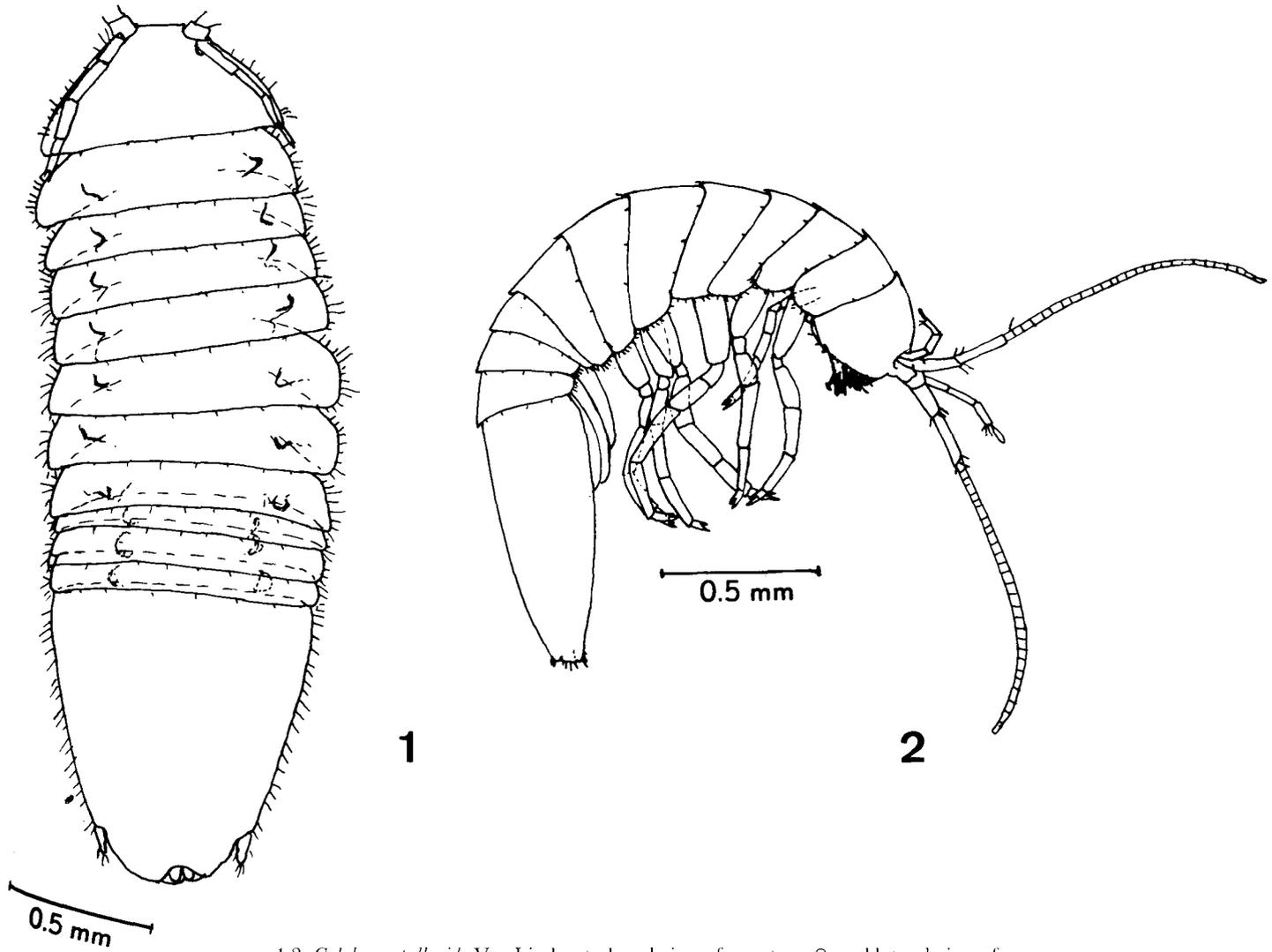
Large numbers of *Calabozoa pellucida* were caught in several wells, which can be considered as belonging all to the same phreatic system. The water depth ranged from 0.5 m to 4.0 m, the temperatures fluctuated from 27.5°C to 30.0°C, the chlorinities from less than 1 mg/l to 196 mg/l. The accompanying hypogean fauna consists of *Bogidiella neotropica* Ruffo (Amphipoda), *Daniellocandona lieshoutae* Broodbakker (Ostracoda) and harpacticoids.

Surprisingly enough, another specimen of *Calabozoa pellucida* was found in a hyporheal sondage in the upper course of the river Zuata, Estado Aragua, some 130 km NNE (in direct line) from Calabozo; this specimen does not completely deserve the name "*pellucida*"; as it is brown-transparent, probably due to the large quantity of detritus in its habitat.

KEY REFERENCE

- Van Lieshout, S. E. N., 1983. Calabozoidea, a new suborder of stygobiont Isopoda, discovered in Venezuela. — *Bijdr. Dierk.*, 53 (1): 165-177.

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1-2: *Calabozoa pellucida* Van Lieshout, dorsal view of a mature ♀ and lateral view of an immature ♂ (from Van Lieshout, 1983).