

PERIPATUS

The genus peripatus was first established in 1826 by Guilding who regarded it as molluscs due to slug like appearance. As an arthropod it was first established by Mosley in 1874 on the basis of the trachea.

Distribution:

It was subsequently obtained from others of neotropical region and from South Africa and Australia. There are about 70 species which are distributed in tropical and subtropical region.

Few species has also reported from Assam and Burma.

Habit and Habitat:

Peripatus is small, nocturnal, terrestrial shy creature live in the dark, moist place under rocks, stones, logs etc. Because of light avoiding habit they are rarely seen.

According to Hutton they suck the juice of plants which they have stuck on with their slim. The animal is carnivorous and predaceous.

External feature:

Body is cylindrical and vermiform. Body is segmented but not very clear. Anterior part is called head which bear 3 pairs of appendages, a pair of simple eye and a vertically placed mouth.

Each leg terminate in a pair of claws. Skin has waxy texture and the colour is more darker from the dorsal surface and reddish colour from the ventral surface.

Mouth is surrounded by large number of papillae ^{and papillae} ~~papillae~~ of which is almost fused to form a dorsal ventral and lateral lip. Within the buccal cavity there are two jaws which are short ~~stump like~~ muscular structure armed with a pair of cutting blades. are placed on each side of the mouth. In the median line of

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buccal cavity is placed thick muscular tongue attached to rostral wall of mouth. The tongue bears rows of small chitinous teeth. The salivary gland opens at the end of oral papillae. The Anus is at the posterior end of the body and the genital opening on ventral surface just in front of the anus.

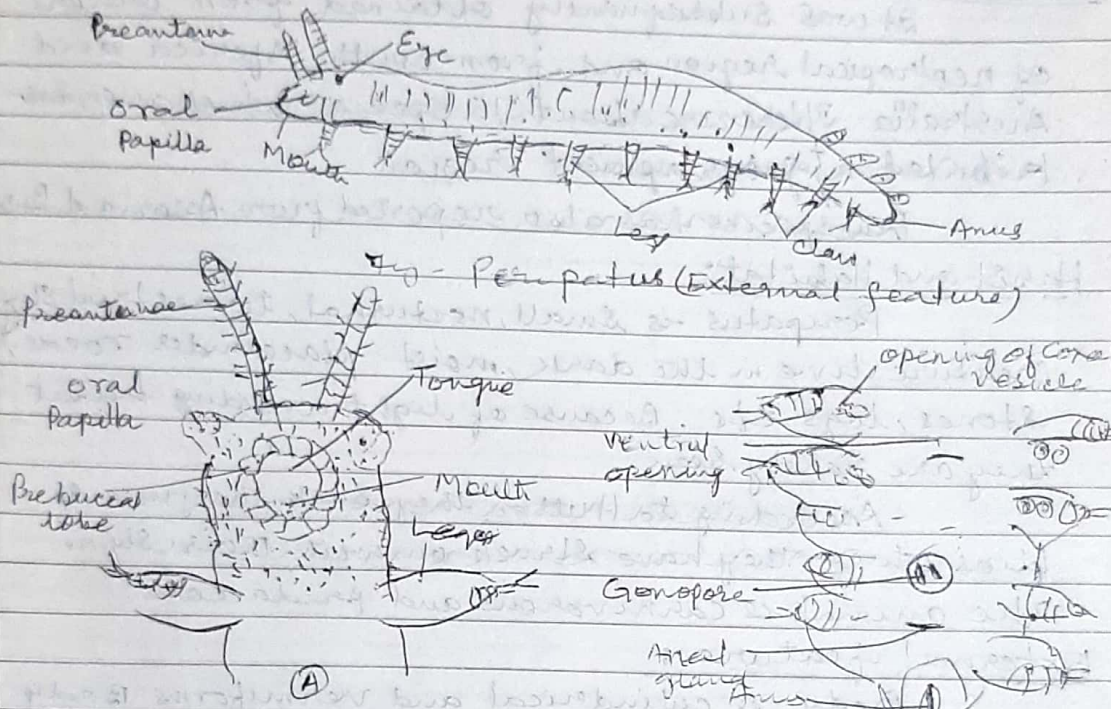


Fig Peripatus - ventral view (A) Anterior view (B) Posterior view (C) Anterior view

Body wall: - Body consists of thin cuticle, spines, jaws and claws as special development of setae. Layers of epidermis. Beneath the epidermis is muscular tissue layers which is composed of circular and longitudinal muscle. Lower most layer is coelomic epithelium. The body wall is dermomyocardial.

Digestive System:

Digestive system consists of -

- 1) Mouth: - It is situated on ventral surface of the body open posteriorly in small pharynx which communicates with small narrow oesophagus.