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Andy S. Gale

University of Portsmouth

Crispin T. S. Little

University of Leeds

Joel E. Johnson

University of New Hampshire - Main Campus, joel.johnson@unh.edu

Liviu Giosan

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

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A new neolepadid cirripede from a Pleistocene cold seep, Krishna-Godavari Basin, offshore India

Andy S. Gale, Crispin T.S. Little, Joel E. Johnson, and Liviu Giosan

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Valves of a thoracican cirripede belonging to a new species of the Neolepadidae, *Ashinkailepas indica* Gale sp. nov. are described from a Late Pleistocene cold seep (52.6 ka), cored in the Krishna-Godavari Basin, offshore from the eastern coast of India. This constitutes the first fossil record of the genus, and its first occurrence in the Indian Ocean. Other fossil records of the Neolepadidae (here elevated to full family status) are discussed, and it is concluded that only *Stipilepas molerensis* from the Eocene of Denmark, is correctly referred to the family. Cladistic analysis of the Neolepadidae supports a basal position for *Ashinkailepas*, as deduced independently from molecular studies, and the Lower Cretaceous brachylepadid genus *Pedupycnolepas* is identified as sister taxon to Neolepadidae. Neolepadids are not Mesozoic relics as claimed, preserved in association with the highly specialised environments of cold seeps and hydrothermal vents, but are rather an early Cenozoic offshoot from the clade which also gave rise to the sessile cirripedes.

Key words: Cirripedia, Thoracica, Neolepadidae, cold seep, Pleistocene, Indian Ocean.

Andy S. Gale [andy.gale@port.ac.uk], School of Earth, Environmental and Geographical Sciences, University of Portsmouth, Burnaby Building, Burnaby Road, Portsmouth PO13QL, UK. Crispin T.S. Little [C.T.S.Little@earth.leeds.ac.uk], School of Earth and Environment, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, UK. Joel E. Johnson [joel.johnson@unh.edu], Department of Earth Sciences, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824, USA. Liviu Giosan [lgiosan@whoi.edu], Geology & Geophysics, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Woods Hole, MA 02543, USA.

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