

**EVOLUTION OF *PALAEOCYTHERIDEA KALANDADZEI* (OSTRACODA, CRUSTACEA) CARAPACE FROM SARATOV DURING THE TERMINAL BAJOCIAN – EARLY BATHONIAN (MIDDLE JURASSIC)**

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Studies of the *Palaeocytheridea kalandadzei* ostracod from the *michalskii* and *besnosovi* zones (upper Bajocian – lower Bathonian, Middle Jurassic) of the Saratov region revealed differences in evolutionary plasticity of various carapace elements. The macrosulpture, consisting of three lateral ridges, is the most stable feature: it was appeared in early instars and was inherited during the subsequent moults. On the contrary, the hinge structure was changed during the ontogeny. Drastic developmental changes were observed in the mesosulpture, represented by various pits, – it was not constant either in the ontogeny, or in the phylogeny. The mesosulpture was reduced in the phylogeny but, in the ontogeny, it was changed from smooth, through pitted to reticulate. These unidirectional variations did not occur synchronously over the entire carapace, but embraced area by area of a valve. At first, the reticulation appeared in the posterodorsal, posteroventral, and ventral areas. Simultaneously, the anterodorsal and anteroventral areas became pitted, while the anterior one stayed usually smooth. Over time, the development of the mesosulpture shifted to later instars. The same trend in the mesosulpture reduction is observed in the phylogeny of mature individuals: in the *michalskii* phase, the reticulation covered all the carapace, except for the smooth anterior part. Starting from the following *besnosovi* phase, individuals with pitted anterodorsal and anteroventral areas appeared first, then, those with alike ventral area, and finally all the individuals were turned to be smooth. In due course, this mesosulpture type was becoming the dominant one. In summary, the species is evolved by the neoteny.