



Title	An Electron Microscope Study of Spermiogenesis in the Japanese Eel, <i>Anguilla japonica</i>
Author(s)	Çolak, Ahmet; YAMAMOTO, Kiichiro
Citation	北海道大學水産學部研究彙報, 25(1), 1-5
Issue Date	1974-07
Doc URL	http://hdl.handle.net/2115/23505
Type	bulletin (article)
File Information	25(1)_P1-5.pdf



[Instructions for use](#)

An Electron Microscope Study of Spermiogenesis in the Japanese Eel, *Anguilla japonica**

Ahmet COLAK** and Kiichiro YAMAMOTO**

Abstract

After injecting Synahorin, the fine structure of spermatid differentiation in the Japanese eel, *Anguilla japonica* is studied. In telophase of the last maturation division the chromatin material condenses to form the nucleus, followed by formation of nuclear envelope. The nucleus rapidly grows in size, and compared to early spermatid it increases about 28.9% in surface area by late spermatid stage, with the simultaneous transformation from oval to sickle shape. The nucleus of early and middle stage spermatid generally shows the presence of one wall-less vacuole, whereas late spermatid has more than one. The only mitochondrion, which is big and rounded, gradually moves down and encircles the flagellum to form middlepiece. Sperm head is devoid of any acrosome, and the tail shows 9+0 pattern.

In comparison to spermatogenesis and spermiogenesis more literature is available dealing with the ultrastructure of spermatozoa of teleost fishes. For instance, sperm of salmon¹⁾ and carp²⁾ has already been investigated. Reports on the fine structure of the sperms of *Jenynsia inicata*,³⁾ goldfish,⁴⁾ *Pantodon buchholzi*⁵⁾ are also available. Recently the authors have reported ultrastructure of Japanese eel spermatozoon.⁶⁾ So far, ultramicroscopic observations have only been made upon spermatogenesis of guppy⁷⁻⁹⁾ and a scorpaenous fish.¹⁰⁾

The information concerning the spermiogenesis is more scanty, and the phenomenon has been investigated in a few fish including *Porichthys notatus*,¹¹⁾ *Oligocottus maculosus*¹²⁾ and *Squalus suckleyi*.¹³⁾ Though attempts have been made to gather some informations about spermatogenesis in Japanese eel by light microscopy,¹⁴⁾ any ultramicroscopic study is not yet to appear. In the present study the spermiogenesis of the Japanese eel has been investigated by ultramicroscopic methods, with an aim to clarify the fine morphological changes during the process.

Materials and Methods

Two to three years old eels, brought from Yaizu, were kept in fresh water ponds for 24 hours. Synahorin (Teikoku Hormone Mfg. Co.) of 50 RU in 0.6% NaCl was, then injected to them intramuscularly, after being anesthetized by

* This work was partially supported by the Scientific Research Fund from the Ministry of Education.

** Laboratory of Fresh-Water Fish-Culture, Faculty of Fisheries, Hokkaido University
(北海道大学水産学部淡水増殖学講座)

1/5000 Tricaine methanesulphate (MS-222). They were, afterwards transferred to 1/3 sea water, kept there for one week, and one more Synahorin injection was given during this period. During next two weeks, they were kept successively in 1/2 and 3/4 sea water, with two injections of Synahorin per week. The final confinement in sea water lasted five weeks, with only two injections during the first seven days. The water temperature during those courses was kept 16 to 20°C.

Testes were removed after cutting open the viscera. Their pieces of approximately 1 mm³ were overnight kept in the 2.5% Glutaraldehyde in Millonig's buffer of pH 7.4, at +4°C, followed by fixation in 1% osmium tetroxide in the same buffer for two hours. Occasionally only osmium tetroxide was also used as fixative. After dehydration in the grades of increasing alcohol concentration, the tissue blocks were embedded in Epon 812. About 500 Å sections, cut with the help of glass knives on a Porter-Blum microtome, were placed on naked copper grids, followed by staining with uranyl acetate for 20 minutes and lead citrate for 10 minutes¹⁵⁾. The sections thus stained were, then, examined by a Hitachi HS-7 electron microscope.

Observations

As shown in Figure 1, during the telophase of the last maturation division of secondary spermatocyte chromatin condenses to a thick shapeless mass, surrounded by incomplete nuclear envelope. In their cytoplasm, which is rather dense are embedded ribosomes and a few small vacuoles. When nuclear envelope is fully formed, the chromatin mass assumes as oval shape. In the nucleus of early spermatid (Fig. 2), nuclear envelope is undulating with a few projections penetrating the cytoplasm. Nuclear pores are very few, congregating at a point where chromatin is lacking. Though, irregularly spaced, the two membranes of nuclear envelopes are altogether very close. Some flat vesicles, and ribosomes are distributed rather sparsely in the cytoplasm. The later usually clustered together to form polysome. The cell at this stage is spherical and measures about 1.60 μ in diameter. The spermatid shown in Figure 3 is nearly of the same stage as that of Figure 2. The very characteristic of early spermatid nucleus is the presence of one wall-less vacuole. The rest of the nucleus is composed of fine granules of high electron density. The average diameter of nucleus at this time measures about 1.10 μ.

Then, spermatids appear to become elongated and oval in shape. The nucleus itself is also elongated than that of the last stage and located at the end of one side of the cell, while in the opposite side of the nucleus there appears a large mitochondrion. Beside the mitochondrion, a few number of ribosomes, endoplasmic reticulum of vacuolar or tubular form are found dispersed in the cytoplasm of the spermatid (Fig. 4). The mitochondrion is in ball-shape and has

tubular cristae arranged irregularly. The matrix of the mitochondrion contains granules of various sizes and appears rather dark (Fig. 5). Its average diameter is 1.13μ . A little more advanced stage of spermatid, many microtubules are visible around the caudal portion of the nucleus (Fig. 6), particularly concentrating in the region of future middlepiece. As the elongation of nucleus is over, the microtubules disappear. At this stage early spermatid tail also makes its appearance. The tail starts from the caudal portion of the spermatids and expand almost straight. It's length is about 1.96μ and its diameter 0.08μ . The flagellum seems to be composed of peripheral fibers enclosed by the plasma membrane.

During middle phase, the nucleus continue to increases in size and takes a sickle-like shape (Fig. 7). The mitochondrion is seen descending towards the basal portion to form future middlepiece. At this stage also there is only one wall-less vacuole, but the undulation of nuclear membranes shows a marked decrease. Structures leading to the formation of acrosome are virtually absent.

In the late stage spermatid, the nucleus almost takes the form of sperm head, and more than one wall-less vacuole are visible in it (Fig. 8). This growth of nucleus brings its sheath so close to the plasma membrane, that it looks to be third membrane (Figs. 8, 11). But at some place a few cytoplasmic vesicles still maintain their presence between the plasma and nuclear membranes. The nucleus diameter now is about 1.41μ . In the posterior sleeve of cytoplasm surrounding the tail, lies the big mitochondrion (Fig. 9). The thin cytoplasmic layer closely conforms to the external surface of the mitochondrion, and comes down to its posterior side to form tubular sheath. It further extended to the junction of the basal body (distal centriole) and tail. The diameter of mitochondrion, at this stage, is reduced to 0.97μ . There is no trace of any implantation fossa (Fig. 10).

The tail joins the head consistently at an oblique angle (Figs. 9, 10). As shown in the transverse section, 9+0 axonemal complex is enclosed in the plasma membrane of cell (Fig. 12). The general appearance of flagellar transverse sections is circular, but the plasma membrane which is closely associated with axonemal doublets, is wavy occasionally, one or two peripheral doublets displace and can be seen taking a bit interior of central position (Fig. 12).

Discussion

The observed fact that in the early spermatid of eel, the nuclear membranes showed clear undulation and chromatin material condensed in the nuclear area, is consistent with the observations on the teleost.^{3,9,12} The same is true for the following events, when undulation of nuclear membranes were reduced, the nucleus grew to occupy almost whole of the sperm head during late spermatid stage. But the characteristic feature of present species is the presence of one wall-less vacuole and the absence of nucleoli in the early spermatid, whereas Daled,¹⁰

Daoust and Clermont¹⁷⁾ in mammals and Grönberg and Telkkä⁹⁾ in guppy, reported the presence of more than one nucleolus, which disappeared during elongation phase. The Japanese eel spermatid has also no intercellular bridge between two spermatids as found in *Oligocottus maculosus*.¹²⁾

During elongation of nucleus was marked the appearance of microtubules in its caudal portion, and their extension to the region of future middlepiece. This condition was similar to that of mammals. In both cases, the microtubules disappeared after the elongation was over, but their exact role, in either cases remained unknown.

Usually more than one mitochondrion are reported to unit to form middlepiece in fishes. For instance, in *Oligocottus maculosus* two mitochondria,¹²⁾ in goldfish 2-4 mitochondria⁴⁾ and in *Pantodon buchholzi*⁵⁾ 9 mitochondria have been reported to participate in the formation of the middlepiece. But in Japanese eel spermatid only one mitochondrion is involved. No submitochondrial net, like that of *Jenynsia lineata*³⁾ was discerned in the mitochondrial sleeve. Further, presence of acrosomal vesicles and acrosome has been reported in lungfish¹⁸⁾ and *Squalus suckleyi*¹³⁾, but the absence of these structures is more prevalent condition in the fishes²⁾⁷⁾⁴⁾. Japanese eel spermatid followed this general pattern and was devoid of acrosome.

Though the function of wall-less vacuoles is not yet known, their number increased in the late spermatid. Normal nuclear vacuoles, however, were reported in goldfish⁴⁾ and lamprey¹⁹⁾. The Japanese eel spermatid also deviated from the usual fish structural pattern in lacking implantation fossa. Like lamprey¹⁹⁾ and *Oligocottus maculosus*,¹²⁾ no Y-shape condensation of matrix between flagellar membrane and peripheral doublets, was noted in this species. The flagellum of the Japanese eel spermatid resembled that of *Lycodontis afer*²⁰⁾ in showing 9+0 flagellar pattern. If the central fibers is assumed to add to stiffness of the tail, then its absence may be one reason for the oblique angled juncture of the tail with the head. The other reason may be the pressure created by descent of a single mitochondrion at the time of middlepiece formation.

References

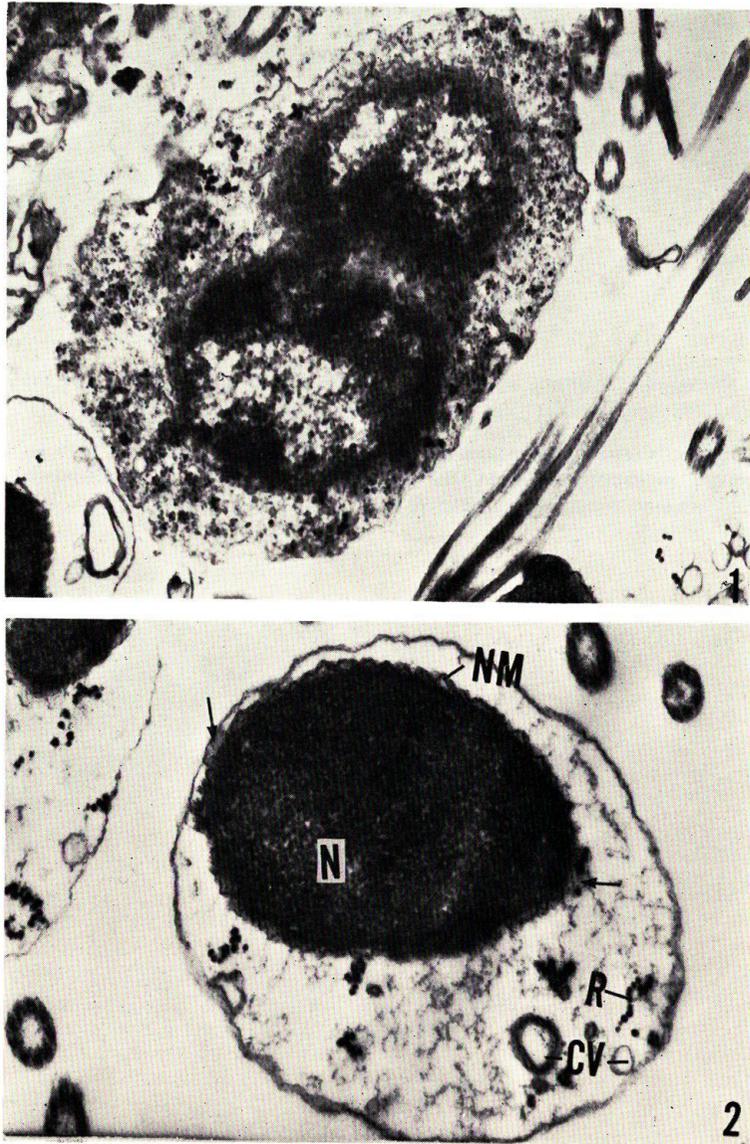
- 1) Hug, O., Lippert, W. and Fischer, H. (1953). Das elektronenoptische bild der salmonidenspermatozoon. *Protoplasma* 42, 94-99.
- 2) Fujimura, W., Harustugu, M., Nishi, J. and Ito, K. (1956). Electron microscope study of sections of carp sperms. *J. Nara Med. Assoc.* 7, 122-124. (In Japanese with English summary).
- 3) Dadone, L. and Narbaitz, R. (1967). Submicroscopic structure of spermatozoa of a cyprinodontiform teleost, *Jenynsia lineata*. *Zeit. Zellforsch.* 80, 214-219.
- 4) Fribough, H.J., McClendon, E.D. and Soloff, B.L. (1970). Ultrastructure of the goldfish, *Carassius auratus* (Cyprinidae), spermatozoon. *Copeia*, (2), 274-279.
- 5) Van Deurs, B. and Lastein, U. (1973). Ultrastructure of the spermatozoa of the teleost *Pantodon buchholzi* Peters, with particular reference to the midpiece. *J.*

- Ultrastruct. Res.* **42**, 517-533.
- 6) Çolak, A. and Yamamoto, K. (1974). Ultrastructure of the Japanese eel spermatozoon. *Annot. Zool. Japon.* **47**, 48-54.
 - 7) Porte, A. and Follenius, E. (1960). La spermiogenese chez *Lebistes reticulatus*. Etude au microscope electronique. *Bull. Soc. Zool. Fr.* **85**, 82-88.
 - 8) Mattei, X. and Boisson, C. (1966). Le complexe centriolaire du spermatozoide de *Lebistes reticulatus*. *C.R. Acad. Sci. Paris, Ser. D*, **262**, 2620-2622.
 - 9) Grönberg, R. and Telkkä, A. (1968). Juxtannuclear changes during the early spermatogenesis in *Lebistes reticulatus* (Guppy). *Zeit. Zellforsch.* **84**, 342-349.
 - 10) Mizue, K. (1968). Studies on a scorpaenous fish, *Sebastiscus marmoratus* Cuvier et Valenciennes. IV. *Bull. Fac. Fish. Nagasaki Univ.* **25**, 9-24.
 - 11) Stanley, H.P. (1965). Electron microscopic observations on the biflagellate spermatids of the teleost fish *Porichthys notatus*. *Anat. Rec.* **151**, 477.
 - 12) Stanley, H.P. (1969). An electron microscope study of spermiogenesis in the teleost fish *Oligocottus maculosus*. *J. Ultrastruct. Res.* **27**, 230-243.
 - 13) Stanley, H.P. (1971). Fine structure of spermiogenesis in the elasmobranch fish *Squalus suckleyi*. *Ibid.* **36**, 86-118.
 - 14) Yamamoto, K., Hiroi, O., Hirano, T. and Morioka, T. (1972). Artificial maturation of cultivated male Japanese eel by Synahorin injection. *Bull. Jap. Soc. Sci. Fish.* **38**, 1083-1090. (In Japanese with English summary).
 - 15) Reynolds, E.S. (1963). The use of lead citrate at high pH as an electron-opaque stain in electron microscopy. *J. Cell Biol.* **17**, 208-212.
 - 16) Daled, H.J. (1951). Etude cytochimique de l'évolution de l'acide ribonucleique dans la spermatogenese du rat. *Arch. Anat. Microscop. Morphol. Exptl.* **40**, 183.
 - 17) Daoust, R. and Clermont, Y. (1955). Distribution of nucleic acids in germ cells during the cycle of the seminiferous epithelium in the rat. *Am. J. Anat.* **96**, 225.
 - 18) Jespersen, A. (1971). Fine structure of the spermatozoon of the Australian lungfish, *Neoceratodus forsteri* (Krefft). *J. Ultrastruct. Res.* **37**, 178-185.
 - 19) Stanley, H.P. (1967). The fine structure of spermatozoa in the lamprey *Lampetra planeri*. *Ibid.* **19**, 84-99.
 - 20) Boisson, C., Mattei, X. and Mattei, C. (1967). Le flagelle de type 9+0 et la remarquable extension du centriole proximal dans les spermatides de *Lycodontis afer* (Bloch, 1795) (Poisson Muraenidae). *C.R. Acad. Sci. Paris, Ser. D*, **264**, 2909-2912.

Explanation of Figures

PLATE I

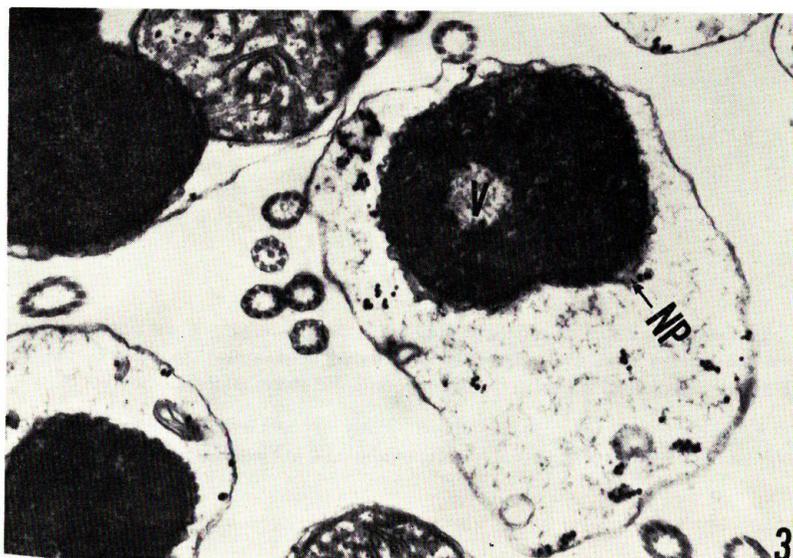
- Fig. 1. Secondary spermatocyte at telophase. Nuclear membranes are incomplete and cytoplasm contains many ribosomes and a few small vacuoles. $\times 20,000$.
- Fig. 2. An early spermatid. The nucleus has enlarged and the chromatin is more densely packed. A few nuclear pores are indicated by arrows. N=Nucleus, R=Ribosome, NM=Nuclear membrane, CV=Cytoplasmic vesicle. $\times 30,000$.



COLAK & YAMAMOTO: Spermiogenesis in the Japanese eel

PLATE II

- Fig. 3. Micrograph showing an early spermatid with a nuclear wall-less vacuole. NP= Nuclear pore, V=Vacuole. $\times 20,000$.
- Fig. 4. An early spermatid whose nuclear membranes are confluent with smooth membranes extending through the cytoplasm (Arrows). M=Mitochondrion, ER= Endoplasmic reticulum. $\times 26,250$.

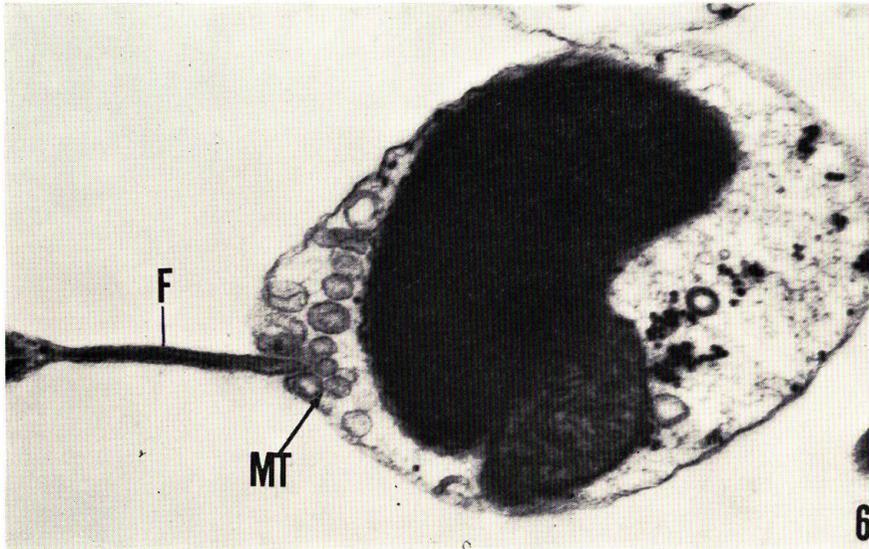
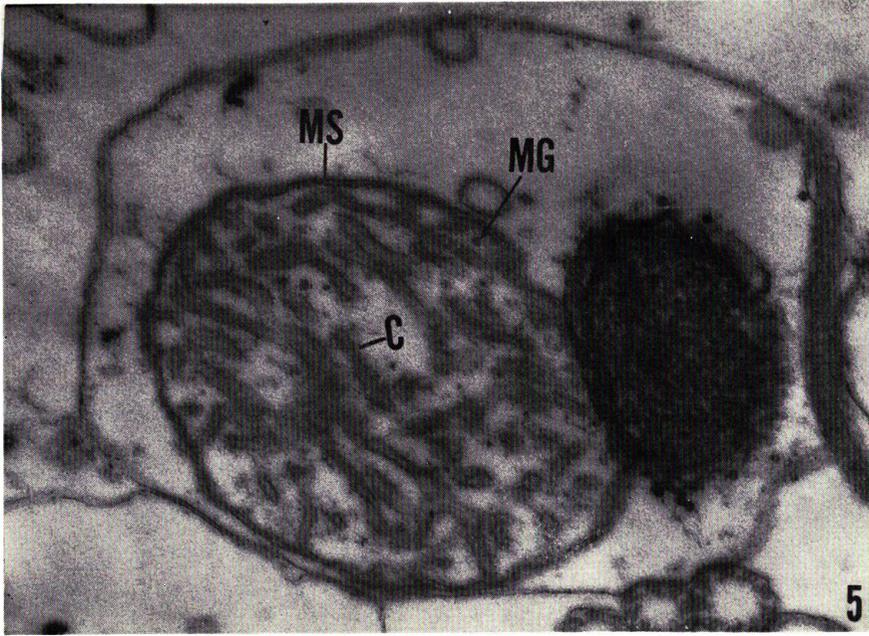


COLAK & YAMAMOTO: Spermiogenesis in the Japanese eel

PLATE III

Fig. 5. Transverse section of an early stage spermatid showing very large and ball-shape mitochondrion with many irregularly situated cristae and granules of various sizes. MS=Mitochondrial sheath, C=Cristae, MG=Matrix granule. $\times 45,000$.

Fig. 6. An early spermatid with flagellum. Many cytoplasmic microtubules are visible at the caudal region of cell. MT=Microtubule, F=Flagellum. $\times 22,500$.



COLAK & YAMAMOTO: Spermiogenesis in the Japanese eel

PLATE IV

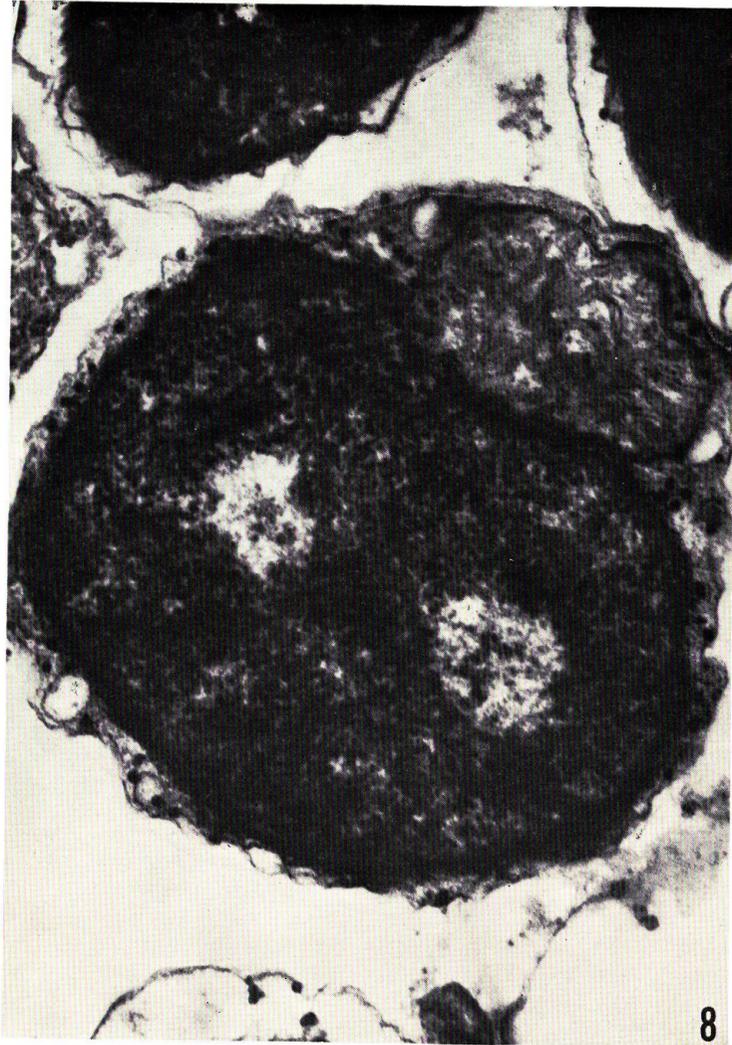
Fig. 7. Spermatid in middle phase of spermiogenesis. The nucleus shows almost sickle form. The mitochondrion already comes to basal portion to make future middle-piece. $\times 28,000$.



COLAK & YAMAMOTO: Spermiogenesis in the Japanese eel

PLATE V

Fig. 8. Transverse section of late spermatid. It is showing two nuclear wall-less vacuoles. Also some cytoplasmic vesicles are visible between plasma, nuclear membrane and mitochondrion. $\times 42,500$.

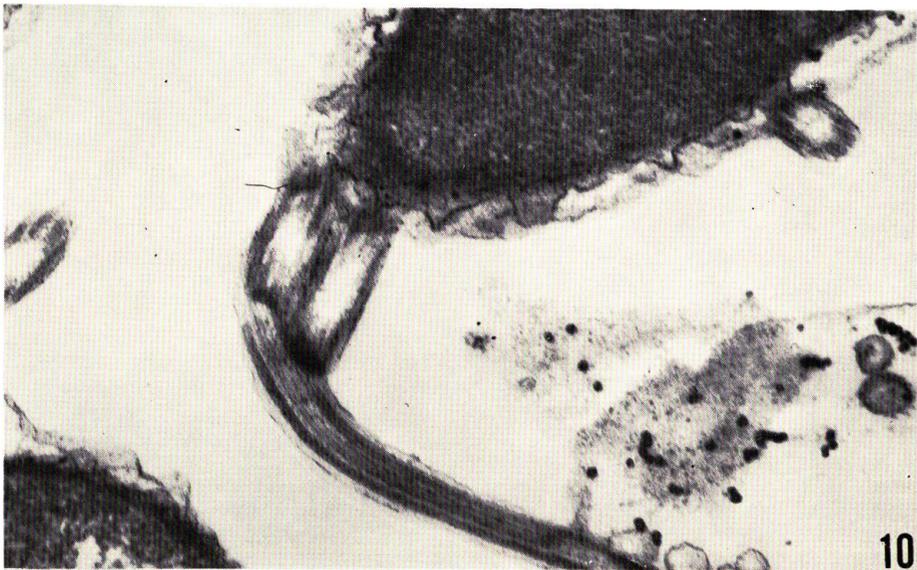
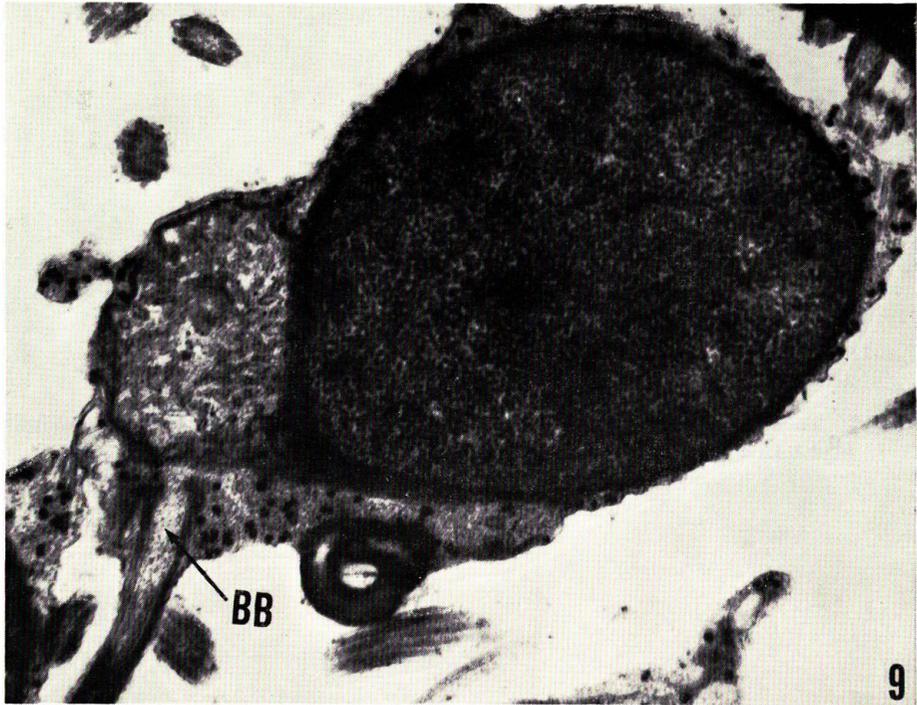


COLAK & YAMAMOTO: Spermiogenesis in the Japanese eel

PLATE VI

Fig. 9. Spermatid of late stage. The only large and ball-shaped mitochondrion is located in the posterior region of the cytoplasm. The flagellum show an oblique angle to the head. BB=Basal body. $\times 25,000$.

Fig. 10. Micrograph showing tail, middlepiece and posterior part of the head. There is no implantation fossa where flagellum enters the posterior part of the head. $\times 40,000$.

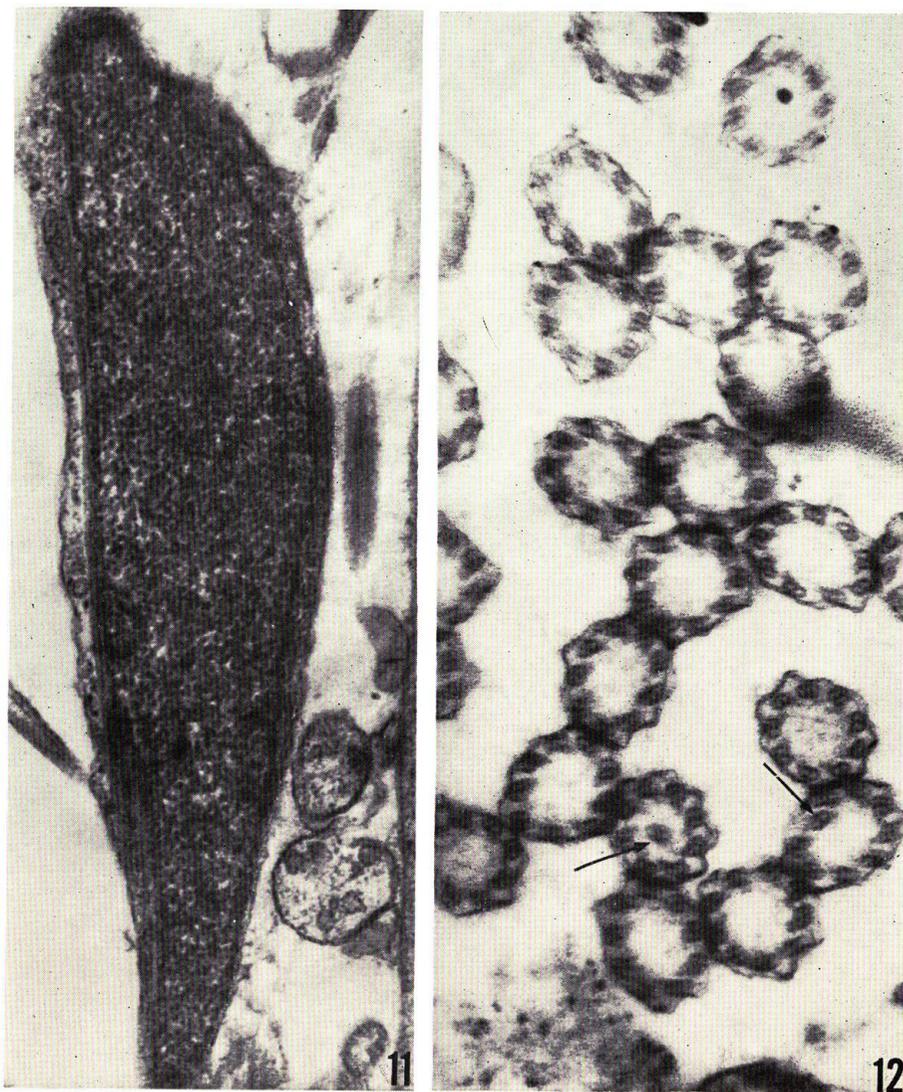


COLAK & YAMAMOTO: Spermiogenesis in the Japanese eel

PLATE VII

Fig. 11. Longitudinal section of late spermatid. The head has become sickle form. No acrosome is visible. $\times 40,000$.

Fig. 12. Transverse section of tail, showing nine double peripheral fibers and no central fiber. In a few displaced peripheral fibers are also visible (Arrows). $\times 67,500$.



COLAK & YAMAMOTO: Spermiogenesis in the Japanese eel