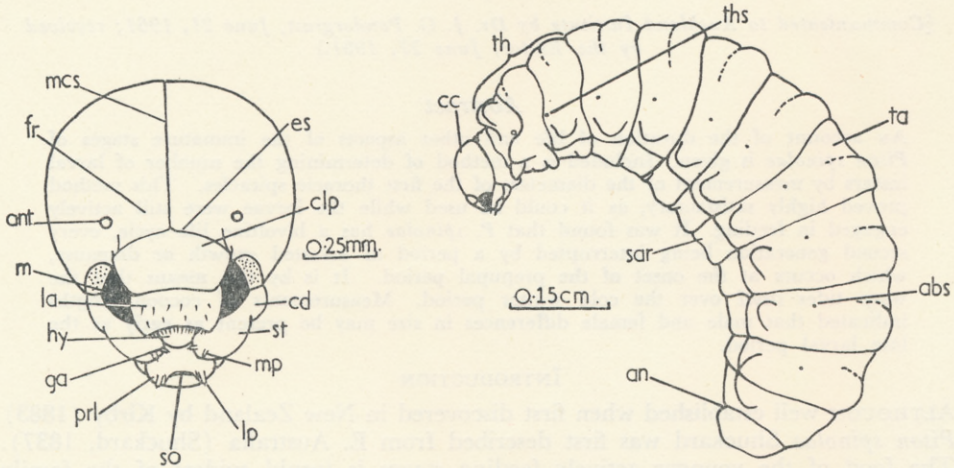


INCUBATION PERIOD

The average period of incubation in *Pison spinolae* is from 5–7 days. As is typical, the larva, 3–6 hours before hatching rotates inside the flexible chorion of the egg until its ventral surface faces directly toward the spider instead of away from it. High humidity is a prime factor in the development of the eggs and appears to be maintained by the evaporation of water from the freshly finished clay partitions. Many eggs subjected to room conditions collapsed if not supplied with sufficient moisture.

THE LARVA

Plate 1, figs. 1–3; Text-figs. 1 and 2. The newly hatched larva has an ill-defined head region with a pair of acutely pointed, pincer-like mandibles which have slightly incurved, finely dentate internal borders. It is with these mandibles that the larva pierces the elastic cuticle of the spider's opisthosoma soon after eclosion. The larva remains anchored in this position throughout the earlier instars of its life and ingests the body fluids of the spider by the sucking movements of its hypopharynx.



TEXT-FIG. 1.—Head of sixth instar larva, frontal view.

TEXT-FIG. 2.—Sixth instar larva, lateral view.

NUMBER OF LARVAL INSTARS

Because of the transparency of the cuticle it is very difficult to observe a larval ecdysis, and it is not uncommon for a larva to have more than one cuticle still partially covering it. The use of characters associated with the head for instar determination was avoided because these could not be examined without interrupting a larva engaged in feeding. The mandibles do, however, have distinct dentition which varies from instar to instar, and illustrations of these (Text-fig. 3) have been included to be used in conjunction with the following more satisfactory method.

The only features that could be clearly seen throughout the whole of the larval period were those of the spiracles. The number of larval instars was therefore determined by measurements of the diameters of the first thoracic spiracles (the largest). Because of the circular nature of the spiracles, an accurate measurement can be taken from any angle, as long as the maximum diameter of the apparent elliptical outline is considered.