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Newly Recorded Species of Magelona (Annelida: Polychaeta: Magelonidae) from the Egyptian Waters

Faiza A. Abd Elnaby^{1*}, Mohamed F. Nour Eldeen¹ National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries, Alexandria, Egypt *Corresponding author: faiza_abdelnaby@yahoo

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INTRODUCTION

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BSTRACT

This article focuses on the study of polychaetes, particularly the species of *Magelona* along the eastern Mediterranean Egyptian coast. Samples were collected from 18 sites during September 2021 using a Van Veen grab. The following species were collected: *Magelona cf. falcifera* (Mortimer and Mackie, 2003), *Magelona equilamellae* (Harmelin, 1964) and *Magelona filiformis minuta* (Wilson, 1959) (Annelida: Polychaeta: Magelonidae), which were detected for the first time in the Egyptian Mediterranean waters. In the current study, these species were described in detail and provided with comprehensive data on their distributions; in addition, the presence of *M. cf. falcifera* was addressed, which is newly reported for the eastern Mediterranean waters.

Magelonidae (shovel head worms) contains 77 species worldwide (Mortimer et al., 2021; Parapar et al., 2021), all are currently included in the genus Magelona, Müller, 1858 (Mortimer et al., 2021), as the genera Meredithia, Hernández-Alcántara and Solís-Weiss, 2000 and Octomagelona, Aguirrezabalaga, Ceberio and Fiege, 2001 have been synonymized with Magelona by Mortimer et al. (2006) and Mortimer et al. (2021), respectively. Magelonids have a dorso-ventrally flattened prostomium and a pair of papillated palps. They are common in shallow water (<100 m), intertidal, subtidal muddy and sandy sediments, and sometimes they are found living inside tubes (Mortimer & Mackie, 2014; Mills & Mortimer, 2019; Mortimer, 2019) although there are also several deep-water species (e.g., occurring at 1,000–4,000 m deep) (Hartman, 1971; Aguirrezabalaga, Ceberio & Fiege, 2001). Most species have been described from temperate and tropical environments from the northern Pacific, northern Atlantic and western Indo-Pacific, and there are no species described from the Arctic or southern oceans (Parapar et al., 2021). Adult Magelona individuals are thin, cylindrical organisms, often measuring less than 1mm wide, 1cm or more in length, and having more than 100 chaetigers. They are very fragile and fragment easily, thus being often found as incomplete specimens in preserved samples. Their body is divided into two regions. The

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thorax includes the first 8–9 chaetigers bearing capillary chaetae; according to **Brasil** (2003) and **Mortimer** *et al.* (2021), some species have similar chaetigers from 1-9; some have similar chaetigers from 1-7; however, chaetigers 8 and 9 differ, and some have similar chaetigers from 1-8 while only 9 differs.

This species is much shorter and sometimes bearing modified chaetae. All remaining chaetigers belong to the abdomen (**Jones, 1968**), which has a non-fixed number of segments, bearing uni-, bi-, tri- or multi-dentate hooded hooks. Magelonid parapodia are characterized also by having evident lateral lamellae, which are most often lanceolate or sub- lanceolate, and many species have foliaceous lamellae, with smooth or crenulate margins, varying in shape along the body, and they suffer modifications depending on the degree of arrangement of the segments. The key characters allowing to define the species of *Magelona* include the prostomial dimensions, the presence or absence of prostomial horns, the morphology of lateral lamellae in all thoracic chaetigers, the presence or absence of lateral abdominal pouches.

Key contributions in the study of the taxonomy and systematics of the family are those of **Jones (1963, 1971, 1977, 1978)**, while **Fiege** *et al.* (2000) partially reviewed the history of the taxonomy of the European species of *Magelona*, and **Mortimer** *et al.* (2020) completed the review of the European magelonids, which is particularly relevant as it covers the Mediterranean. In addition, **Brasil (2003)** reviewed the terminology, which has recently been updated by **Mortimer** *et al.* (2021), **Parapar** *et al.* (2021) and **Rouse, Pleijel and Tilic (2022)**. Moreover, species of *Magelona* have been recorded in different seas and oceans **Rouse (2001)**. They were recorded in several previous studies (**Gravier 1906; Moore, 1907; Ehlers 1908; Okuda, 1937; Hartman, 1944; Wesenberg-Lund, 1949; Fauvel, 1953; Day, 1962; Kitamori, 1967; Gallardo, 1968; Mohammad, 1973; Amoureux, 1983; Buzhinskaja, 1985; Nateewathana** *et al.*, 1991; **Fiege** *et al.*, 2000; **Hernández-Alcántara and Solís-Weiss, 2000; Aguirrezabalaga** *et al.*, 2001; **Mortimer & Mackie, 2003, 2006**), with only one apparently Pacific Panamanian waters *Magelona papillicornis* Müller, 1858.

On the other hand, twelve species were described from the Gulf of México, without being formally named (**Uebelacker & Jones, 1984**). While, in the Eastern Mediterranean coast of Egypt, only two species have been reported to date, *M. mirabilis* and *Magelona* sp., both were found in El Tina Bay (**Abd Elnaby, 2008**). Hence, the current study is the second to deal with *Magelona* in the Egyptian waters.

The study of marine benthic communities to obtain a biological map of the Egyptian coastline is a priority for the Egyptian National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries of Alexandria (**NIOF**). Our study took advantage of this circumstance to analyze sediment samples at different sites along the eastern Mediterranean coast of Egypt looking for species of Magelona, which were morphologically described and illustrated by photos, while providing their updated geographical distributions and habitats.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Seabed samples were collected at 18 sites along the Egyptian coast (Fig. 1) in September 2021 during a scientific strategy cruise carried out by the NIOF on board the "AL Yarmouk" research vessel. Sediments were collected with a Van Veen grab (13×18 cm), partially sieved through a 100 µm sieve and preserved in containers with 10% formalin/seawater solution for later taxonomic identification and counting. Organisms were sorted and identified to species level under a stereomicroscope and Olympus CX2 microscope, photographed with an EOS 1300D Canon digital camera and preserved in 70% ethanol. Specimens are deposited at the Taxonomy and Biodiversity of Aquatic Biota Lab, Marine Environment Division, National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries (Alexandria Branch).



Fig. 1. Location of sampling stations

RESULTS

Systematics

Family: Magelonidae Cunningham and Ramage, 1888

Genus: Magelona F. Müller, 1858; emended by Fiege et al. (2000).

Magelona cf. falcifera Mortimer and Mackie, 2003.

Figs. (2–3)

Magelona falcifera Mortimer and Mackie 2003: 167–169, Fig. 3

Magelona cf. falcifera Mortimer et al. 2012: 26, Figs. 9–10, 13K

Material examined. One complete specimen collected at station C3, 32.250 N, 31.774 E, 51 m, sandy mud.

Description. Body slender, 11 mm long, 0.26 mm wide for 58 chaetigers, slightly constricted at chaetiger 9. Prostomium slightly longer than wide, subtriangular; anterior margin, blunt, smooth, slightly dorsally bent, with two pairs of longitudinal dorsal ridges. Burrowing organ everted. Eyes and prostomial horns absent. Palps not observed. Achaetous segment slightly longer than first segment (Fig. 2A). Pygidium small, with two small, slender lateral anal cirri (Fig. 2B).

Parapodia from chaetigers 1–8 similar, having indistinct notopodial prechaetal lamellae, lacking dorsal superior processes and ventral neuropodial lobes, with neuropodial postchaetal lamellae lanceolate, long, with short narrow tips (Fig. 2C–E). Chaetiger 9 slightly narrower and thinner than preceding ones, with shorter parapodia having broad triangular neuropodial postchaetal lamellae with short narrow tips (Fig. 2F). All thoracic chaetae uni- or bilimbate capillary (Fig. 2C–F).

Abdominal chaetigers lacking prechaetal lamellae and having basally constricted, small, foliaceous lateral lamellae in anterior abdomen, shortening and becoming filiform posteriorly (Fig. 3G). Chaetiger 10 with five small bidentate hooded hooks in both rami; chaetigers 11–22 with one large sickle-shaped hooded hook in both rami, with a smooth crest, lacking secondary teeth, shortening posteriorly, and several smaller bidentate hooded hooks at the base of the long, slender lateral lamellae (Fig. 3H–J); from chaetiger 23 to posterior end, each ramus with 6–8 bidentate hooded hooks in two groups face-to-face (Fig. 3K, L), decreasing to four in far posterior chaetigers (Fig. 3M).

Discussion. The Egyptian specimens resemble *Magelona* sp. C of **Uebelacker and Jones** (1984); it was later described as *M. magnahamata*, *M. cf. falcifera*, *M. falcifera*, (Aguado and San Martín, 2003), *Magelona uebelackerae* (Hernández-Alcántara & Solís-Weiss, 2000) and *Magelona spinifera* (Hernández-Alcántara & Solís-Weiss, 2000) in having strong, enlarged, curved hooded hooks in the anterior abdominal segment, although those in *M. spinifera* are clearly only weakly curved. *Magelona* sp. C. from the Gulf of Mexico differs in having the largest sickle-like hooded hooks bidentate, *M. uebelackerae* in having sickle-like hooded hooks present up to chaetiger 36, 1–2 large hooded curved spines close to lateral notopodial lamellae and well-defined frontal horns, and *M. magnahamata* from Panama , which lacks modified chaetae in chaetiger nine and frontal horns, differs in having sickle-like hooded hooks long apical secondary tooth present in each anterior abdominal parapodial ramus (Auguado and San Martín, 2003).

The Egyptian specimen most closely resembles the specimens of *M. falcifera* **Mortimer and Mackie (2003)** and *M. cf. falcifera* described in **Mortimer et al. (2012)**. However, they differ in having sickle-like hooded hooks present until chaetiger 24, which are clearly less curved and smaller (Fig. 3K in **Mortimer and Mackie, 2003** and Fig. 3 H-J in this paper). The drawing in Fig. (2) shows sickle-like hooded hooks for the present study and **Mortimer and Mackie (2003)** (Diagrammatic image, Fig. 2). It is likely that the current specimen is an undescribed species, but having found only one, we have decided not to formally describe it in the meantime. At present, we do not have enough information to decide whether it could represent a new record of *M. falcifera* for the Mediterranean Sea and the Egyptian Mediterranean waters, which could have been introduced by ballast waters, or a new still unnamed species.



Fig. 2. Diagrammatic image showing the difference between the two sickle-like hooded hooks of *Magelona falcifera* redrawn from Mortimer and Mackie (2003) on the left and the current study on the right.

Magelona filiformis minuta Wilson, 1959

Figs. (4–5)

Magelona minuta Mills and Mortimer (2018): pp. 543–555, Fig. (210).

Material examined. Six incomplete specimens, collected from station C3, 32.250 N, 31.774 E, 51 m deep, and E3, 32.750 N, 31.605 E, 52 m deep, sandy mud.

Description. A large incomplete specimen, 14 mm long, and 1 mm wide, with 32 chaetigers, other fragments less than 14 mm in length. Thin and cylindrical. Prostomium slightly longer than wide, sub-trapezoidal, with a smooth anterior margin; prostomial horns and eyes absent. Palps not observed (Fig. 4A). Notopodial and neuropodial postchaetal lamellae sublanceolate, with broad bases, triangular, similar in length in both

rami, smooth-edged; prechaetal lamellae indistinct (Figs. 4B–F, 5G). Thoracic parapodia lacking dorsal superior lobes and ventral neuropodial lobes. Parapodia of chaetiger 9 similar to those in 1–8 but with prechaetal lamellae more vertically positioned, notopodial lamellae longer than neuropodial and having only simple capillary chaetae (Figs. 4B–F, 5G–H). Lateral lamellae of abdominal parapodia large, slender foliaceous, with long constricted bases, gradually shortening towards posterior end (Fig 5H–J). Abdominal hooded hooks bidentate, variable in size, 6–8 in anterior parapodia (Fig. 5K) in two groups face-to-face, then two groups of 4–7 in most posterior abdominal chaetigers, also face-to-face; angle between main fang and shaft axis right-angles; accessory tooth rather slender, as a curved extension of shaft axis (Fig. 5L); hood transparent, fully surrounding hook tip, not leaving an opening through which hook tip might protrude. Pygidium not observed.

Discussion. Our specimens fully agree with the species redescription in **Mortimer and Mills (2018)**.

Magelona equilamellae Harmelin, 1964

Figs. (6–8)

Magelona equilamellae Mortimer et al. (2020): p. 91–99, Figs. 1-5, Table1.

Material examined. Two incomplete specimens, 0.6 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, 28 chaetigers. Collected from stations C3 (32.250 N, 31.774 E, 51 m depth) and E3 (32.750 N, 31.605 E, 52 m depth) in sandy mud.

Description. Body large, with pigmented dorsal band (anteriorly), thorax wider than abdomen in dorsal view, constriction at chaetiger 9 not obvious, and distinct glandular areas in abdomen, as accumulated broad, speckles on both sides (Fig. 6A). Prostomium wider than long, subtriangular, with smooth anterior margin, lacking horns, with one pair of longitudinal ridges closed medially, divergent at either end besides very faint indistinct lateral prostomial ridges (Fig. 6A). Palps long (one broken) reaching chaetiger 14, arising ventro-laterally from prostomium base, heavily papillated, with non-papillated region reaching chaetiger 2; papillate region with long digitiform papillae, giving palps a "feathery" appearance. Buccal region large, swollen. Achaetous region behind prostomium large, approximately twice as long as chaetiger 1 (Fig. 6A).

Chaetigers 1–9 with similar slender, smooth-edged, triangular lamellae. Chaetiger 1-8 with triangular notopodial prechaetal ridges and slender triangular postchaetal lamellae with pointed tips. Neuropodial postchaetal lamellae triangular, first ones in prechaetal position, becoming entirely postchaetal from chaetiger 7. (Figs. 6, 7). Chaetiger 9 with

similar notopodia from chaetigers 1–8, with neuropodial lamellae more triangular, distinctly lateral, with low inferior postchaetal ridges terminating in minute triangular processes (Fig. 7J). Thoracic capillary chaetae longer in neuropodia than in notopodia. Abdominal chaetigers with narrow-pointed triangular lateral lamellae, approximately equally sized in both rami, but longer than thoracic lamellae (Figs. 7K–L, 8M–O); hooded hooks tridentate, all similar in size, in two groups face-to-face (Fig. 8P–R), 8–10 in each ramus on median chaetigers.

Distribution. Originally described from the Mediterranean coasts of France, western and Eastern Mediterranean, Adriatic Sea and Greece (**Dando** *et al.*, **1995; Arvanitidis, 2000; Faulwetter, 2010; Koulouri** *et al.*, **2015**), Tunisia (**Ayari** *et al.*, **2009**), Turkey (**Çinar** *et al.*, **2014**) and Portugal (**Sousa, 2016**).

The description of *M. equilamellae* as a new species by **Harmelin** (1964) was based on the presence of a thoracic pigment band and tridentate abdominal hooks and the absence of specialized thoracic chaetae (**Brasil**, 2003). The species differs from *Magelona cincta* Ehlers, 1908, which has digitiform noto and neuropodial lamellae (**Mortimer & Mackie**, 2009). It also differs from *Magelona alleni* Wilson, 1958, which has sub-equal abdominal lamellae (equal in *M. equilamellae*) and a prostomium with a narrower distal end (broader, with lateral margins much thicker than the anterior margins in *M. equilamellae*) (Mortimer *et al.*, 2020). *Magelona japonica* Okuda, 1937 has a distinct thoracic pigmented band similar to *M. equilamellae*, but has a prostomium bearing horns. Prostomial horns are absent in *M. equilamellae* like in *Magelona variolamellata* Bolívar and Lana, 1986, but this species differs in the shape of the lamellae of chaetiger 9 and in lacking dorsal and ventral processes in abdominal chaetigers (present in *M. variolamellata*). Our finding represents the first report of the species for the Egyptian Mediterranean waters.

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Fig. 2. *Magelona cf. falcifera* A. Anterior end (ventro-lateral view). B. Posterior end (dorsal view). C–E. The same neuropodial postchaetal lamellae of chaetigers 1–8 (anterior views). F. Neuropodial postchaetal lamellae of chaetiger 9.



Fig. 3. *Magelona cf. falcifera* G. Anterior abdominal parapodia 10. H– J. Abdominal hooded hooks from chaetigers 11–22. K. Hooded hooks in the same direction. L. Hooded hooks face-to-face. M. Hooded hooks from a posterior abdominal chaetiger.



Fig. 4. Magelona filiformis minuta A. Anterior end. B–F. Notopodial lamellae from chaetiger 1-7.



Fig. 5. *Magelona filiformis minuta* Wilson, 1959 (G) Lamellae from chaetiger.8, (H) Lamellae from chaetigers. 9-10, (I) Same from chaetiger 11, (J) Same from chaetiger 17, (K) Bidentate abdominal hooded hooks, face-to-face orientation, (L) Bidentate abdominal hooded hooks.



Fig.6. *Magelona equilamellae* A. Anterior end (dorsal view). B. Palp with papillae. C–F. Thoracic lamellae, with capillary chaetigers.



Fig. 7. *Magelona equilamellae* G–J. Same thoracic notopodial lamellae. K–L. Abdominal parapodia with neuropodial lamellae.



Fig. 8. *Magelona equilamellae* M–O. Same abdominal parapodia with long lamellae. P–R. Anterior view of abdominal tridentate hooded hooks.