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Molecular studies on the genus *Muticaria* (Pulmonata: Clausiliidae) from the Maltese Islands

Maria Stella COLOMBA^{1*}, Armando GREGORINI¹, David CILIA², Fabio LIBERTO³,
Agatino REITANO⁴ & Ignazio SPARACIO⁵

The genus *Muticaria* Lindholm, 1925 (Pulmonata: Clausiliidae) represent xerotolerant and calcicolous mollusks, widespread in central-eastern and southern-eastern parts of Sicily and the Maltese Islands with eight taxa of species or sub-species rank.

Muticaria macrostoma (Cantraine, 1835) is endemic to the Maltese Islands where it occurs with four subspecies, *M. macrostoma macrostoma*, *M. macrostoma scalaris* (L. Pfeiffer, 1850), *M. macrostoma oscitans* (Charpentier, 1852) and *M. macrostoma mamotica* (Gulia, 1861). The results of a molecular study on the populations of *Muticaria* from the Maltese Islands that was carried out on partial sequences of the mitochondrial genes 16S rDNA and cytochrome oxidase subunit I (COI) will be presented in this communication.

The present work shows a considerable diversification, even at species level, in populations of *Muticaria* from Sicily and Malta. A good differentiation at species level was also found in the genus *Lampedusa* Boettger, 1877, present in Malta and the island of Lampedusa (205Km south of Sicily), and this was used for comparison with results obtained for the genus *Muticaria*.

¹ Università di Urbino “Carlo Bo”, Dipartimento di Scienze Biomolecolari, via Maggetti 22 (loc. Sasso), 61029 Urbino (PU), Italy

² 29, Triqil-Palazz I-Ahmar, Santa Venera, Malta

³ Via del Giubileo Magno 93, 90015 Cefalù, Italy

⁴ Museo Civico di Storia Naturale di Comiso, via degli Studi 9, 97013 Comiso, Italy

⁵ Via Principe di Paternò 3, 90144 Palermo, Italy

* Corresponding author. E-mail: mariastella.colomba@uniurb.it