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THYASIRA ALLENI n. sp.[∞]

KEY WORDS: Bivalvia, Thyasiridae, New Species, Mediterranean, Atlantic.

Riassunto

Viene descritta una *Thyasira*, rinvenuta vivente a notevole profondità nel mar di Sardegna nord-orientale. Dall'esame comparativo con altre *Thyasiridae* sia mediterranee che atlantiche risulta che si tratta di una nuova specie, presente anche nelle acque europee dell'Atlantico nord-orientale.

Summary

The description is given of a new species of *Thyasira* from the deep sea of north-east Sardinia. This species has also been found in the north-eastern waters of Atlantic.

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The examination of fine grit collected in the summer of 1975 in the nets of fishing trawlers operating at 350/400 meters around Capo Comino, north-eastern Sardinia, on medium-fine, organic muddy sands, marked by the presence of *Gryphus vitreus*, revealed some interesting species of *Thyasira* spp.

Apart from a number of living and loose valves of *Thyasira succisa* (JEFFREYS, 1876) (= *Axinus incrassatus* var. *succisa*, JEFFREYS) (PAYNE & ALLEN m/s) some small loose valves, two small dead but intact specimens and a larger living specimen of an unknown species of *Thyasira* were also discovered. Their characteristics and morphology are not comparable to any known species.

The enclosed table shows the photograph of the following samples

- no. 1: living specimen, length 2,5 mm, breadth 2,1 mm
- no. 2: loose left valve, length 2 mm, breadth 1,8 mm
- no. 3: dead specimen, length 1,1 mm, breadth 1 mm

Description

Shell fragile, very inequilateral, somewhat flattened, the outline tending to be subquadrate, inequivalve.

Prosogyrate beaks, rather acute and protruding.

Posterior margin short, curved and, at about half its length, slightly undulate.

Anterior margin depressed, rather quadrate.

Ventral margin rounded.

Dorsal margin straight, with a small prominence on the right valve, the corresponding prominence on the left valve present along its entire length.

Glossy and semitransparent, sculpture of very fine, rather irregular and concentric growth lines, much more evident towards the region of the umbo.

A very small pseudocardinal tooth on right valve.

Lunule occupies about one half of the posterior side, is deep and marked by two distinct folds.

Ligament internal, opisthodontic along the dorsal posterior margin, inconspicuous, occupying one third of the lunule.

Muscle and pallial scars not evident in the dead specimen but slightly distinct in the living specimen.

Colour white-yellowish.

Discussion

The morphology of the shell corresponds to that of the genus *Thyasira* LEACH (in LAMARCK, 1818) but differs from those species known to be characteristic of the Mediterranean and Atlantic European waters.

At a first glimpse, the species might be identified as *Thyasira* (*Axinulus*) *croulinensis* (JEFFREYS, 1847) but is clearly different in that the latter is of a more roundish shape, the anterior margin is shorter and rounded, without the prominence of the right valve overlying the other one and the posterior margin is not undulated.

The shell morphology when compared to *Axinopsis orbiculata* G.O. SARS, 1878 differs in that the adductor muscle scars of the SARS species are ovately elongate and the pallial muscle scars are more removed from the ventral margin. Moreover, *A. orbiculata* has a strong, well defined, cardinal tooth.

It is worth noting that MOORE (1969) indicates that *A. orbiculata* also is present in Mediterranean waters.

The shell differs from that of *Leptaxinus eumyarius* M. SARS, 1870 — lately considered to be a synonym of *Leptaxinus intermedius* (MONTEROSATO, 1878) — also said to live in the Mediterranean off Palermo in 90-300 meters, and considered to be a « good » species by MONTEROSATO. *L. eumyarius* has acute beaks in the midline and the shell is more roundish in outline and has long and thick adductor muscles the scars of which are visible through the shell. In contrast, nothing specific is known of *Leptaxinus intermedius* (MONTEROSATO, 1878) because — as often occurred — the great malacologist never published his diagnosis and therefore the taxon should be considered *nomen nudum*. MONTEROSATO reported having found *L. intermedius* at Palermo 50-120 meters.

JEFFREYS considered the MONTEROSATO species as the young of a variety of *L. eumyarius* in which the muscular impressions are very slight and scarcely perceptible.

The holotype of this new species is in my private collection with two paratypes. Other paratypes are deposited with the Museum of Natural History of Milan.

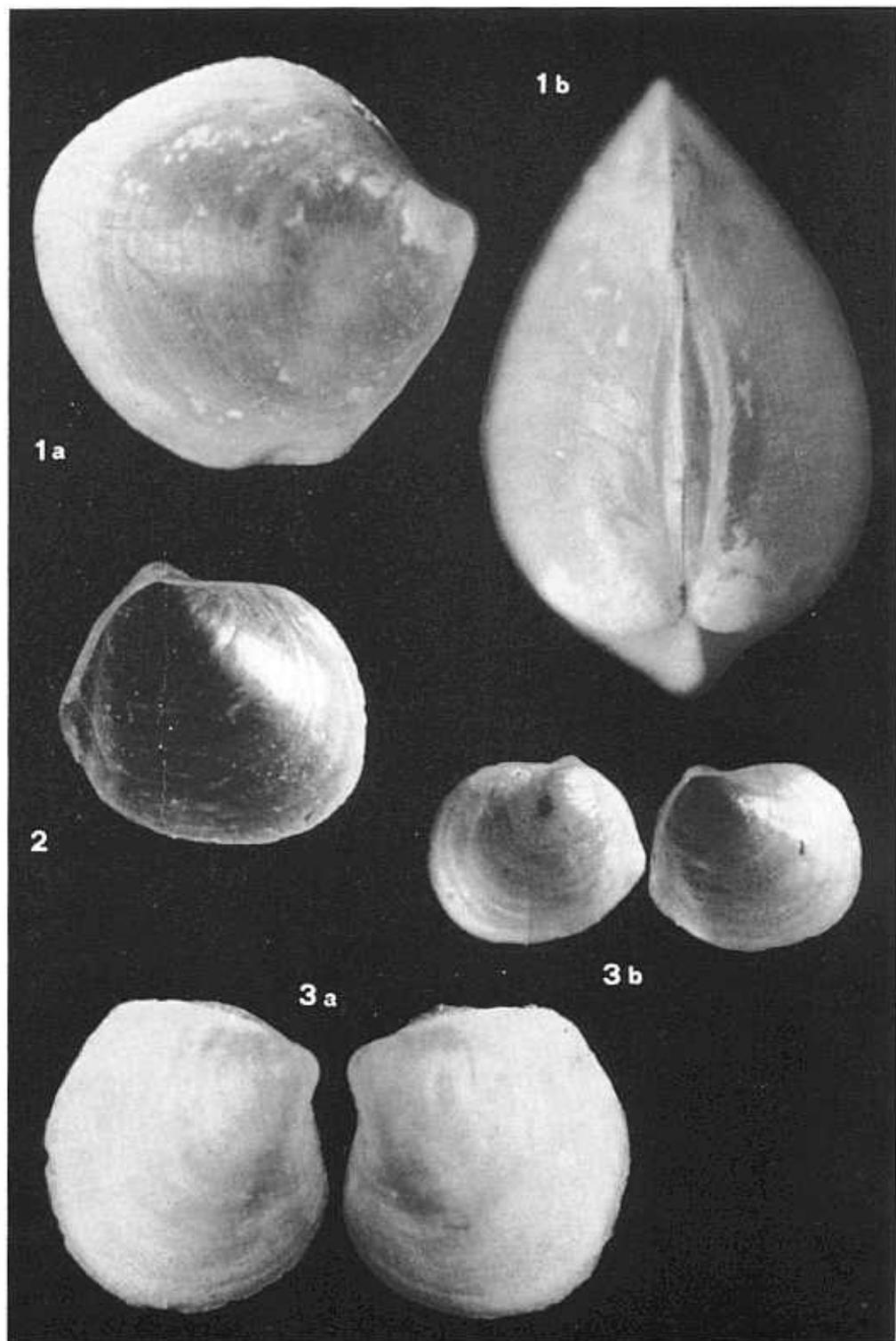
Origin of the specific name

This species is named after Prof. John A. ALLEN, ° a well known authority in the field of Thyasiridae, to whom I wish to express my gratitude for his assistance and co-operation in the writing of this manuscript.

° Prof. J.A. ALLEN (in litt. 13.7.81), who has examined the specimens of the Sardinian Sea, confirms to me that the new species is also present in north-eastern Atlantic waters.

TABLE 1

- Fig. 1a - *Thyasira alleni* n.sp. living specimen; length 2,5 mm, breadth 2,1 mm
- Fig. 1b - Idem; particular of the lunule
- Fig. 2 - *Thyasira alleni* n.sp. loose left valve; length 2 mm; breadth 1,8 mm
- Fig. 3a - *Thyasira alleni* n.sp. dead specimen; length 1,1 mm, breadth 1 mm; interior view
- Fig. 3b - Idem; exterior view



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