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PROVISIONAL KEY TO BRITISH CAPITELLIDS (Adults only)

- 1. 9 thoracic chaetigers 2
 more than 9 thoracic chaetigers 4

- 2. Capillaries restricted to chaetigers 1-3/4; genital hooks present Captiomastus minimus

 capillaries extending further back, usually reaching segment 6-7 (varied according to age. These numbers are true for adults. Younger specimens may only have capillaries 1-3; genital hooks present in some individuals. Capitella 3.

- 3. Genital hooks present only in male worms; peristomial ring usually not apparent Capitella capitata

 Genital hooks present in all adults; peristomial ring may be faintly visible dorsally (variable in preserved material) Capitella (=Capitellides) giardi

- 4. 10 thoracic chaetigers; chaetigers 1-4 with capillaries Mediomastus fragilis

 more than 10 thoracic chaetigers, at least 5 with capillaries 5

- 5. 11 thoracic chaetigers 6

 13 thoracic chaetigers, all with capillaries Dasybranchus cauducus

- 6. All thoracic chaetigers with capillaries Notomastus latericeus

 Chaetigers 1-5 with capillaries; 6-11 with hooks Heteromastus filiformis

(Lynda Haven)

- 1. 9 thoracic chaetigers 2
- more than 9 thoracic chaetigers 4

- 2. capillaries restricted to chaetigers 1-3/4; genital hooks present ~~(in all)~~ Capitomastus minimus
 - capillaries extending further back, usually reaching segment 6 or 7; genital hooks present Capitella 3.
 - in some or all individuals. *V. varied according to age. These Nos in adult. Younger specimens may only have capillaries 1-3 or 1-2.

- 3. genital hooks only in ♂ worms; peristomial ring usually not apparent Capitella capitata
- genital hooks present in all adults; peristomial ring may be faintly visible ~~in~~ dorsally (variable in preserved material) Capitella (=Capitellide) giardi

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med. chaetigers
small capillaries

Doubtful exist

Capitomastus minimus

Capitella 3.

Capitella capitata

Capitella (=Capitellide) giardi

Mediomastus fragilis

Dasybranchus caducus

Notomastus latericeus

Heteromastus filiformis

7 ? J. Hunter come up with Capitellid with crotchets on 3rd chaetiger segment. Distinca spp.??

Identification of capitellids - some basic features.

- A difficult group!
- interspecific differences small
 - intraspecific differences often large.

Main features used:-

1. Presence of cretans 1st segment / peristome etc.

Forget it! Fusion of peristome with prostomium occurs to varying degrees within the Capitella group of species. The inclusion - or otherwise - of this "segment" in thoracic setal counts has led to many errors in numbering. Always go for chaetigo numbers. And always check keys / description / diagrams - they are frequently inconsistent.

2. Number of thoracic chaetigos.

Thorax / abdomen boundary not always clear but this is not too much of a problem with Bv. spp.

Thoracic setal formula

THE DIAGNOSTIC FEATURE

- a. beware confusion between chaetigo / segment. Always think in chaetigos and adapt keys accordingly - read carefully.
- b. juvenile capitellids have capillaries restricted to first few chaetigos. With increasing size the capillaries gradually replace hooks back along the thorax. Can lead to great confusion. Means specimens are often indeterminate.
- c. look for genital hooks first.
- d. look at rear end of abdomen - I am interested in any oddities here.

Body shape - especially anterior end.

see diagrams. The general "gizz" of a worm is often a very good diagnostic character.

Caudal appendage - beware, this may disappear without trace.

Branchiae - beware, one man's branchia is another man's slightly swollen parapodia.

Avoid reliance on nuchal slits, skin texture, hook structure, nephridial pores. Difficult and often wrongly described.

Keep a reference collection - put in as much material as possible to me & to BM(NH)

Capitella capitata

peristomium indistinct.

1-6/7C 8-9H with GH in 8-9 notopodia ♂

immatures 1-3C ~~4~~ 4-9H and all variations between.

proboscis seldom used

th / abd. distinct

few mms - several cms.

organically rich mud → muddy gravel; often associated with rotting vegetation

probably several spp. - Don't gather with those yet.



Capitella giardi

peristomium may be visible - especially in living worms.

1-6C 7H ~ H 8-9H with GH in 8-9 notopodia of all adults

GH less

G less in number and more delicate than in C. capitata

th / abd. distinct

up to about 1cm.

help holdfast; coralline algae; ? fine muds.

probably more common than records suggest.



Capitomasius minimus

in some respects v. like Capitella but general body shape more like Mediomastus

caps restricted to 1-3/4. GHs present in all adults.

needs revision.

peristomium quite distinct although v. small, especially ventrally.

no sample available ∴ description uncertain. - more please!



b. Capitella is an opportunist ie occurs in great numbers wherever there is a favorable - usually transient - habitat. This implies enormous genetic variability and probably accounts for proliferation of species in the literature.

Mediomastus fragilis

istomium distinct or indistinct.

1-4C ; 5-10H.

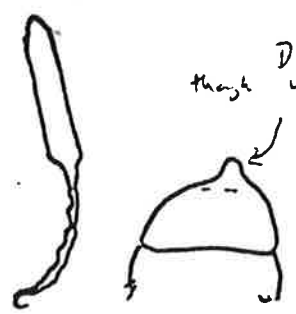
th. (add) may be indistinct.

caudal appendage - may be missing without a trace.

up to 2cms.

v. common offshore in enriched muds.

cf. Heteromastus.



Heteromastus biflexus

v. similar to, but probably distinct from, Mediomastus

1-5C ; 6-11H.

I am v. interested in any specimen with 1-4C 5 mixed 6-11 H)

thoracic hooks supposedly long-handled compared with abdomen.

? semi-enriched muds - sp. common? intertidal.

Notomastus latericeus

v. Red when alive and very active proboscis

quite distinct.

proboscis frequently everted in living worms.

1-11C.

large - up to 10cm.

inw. adal. common in small numbers.



Dasybranchus caducus

1-13C.

light Br. capitellid.

rare. ?

- C Capillary Chetae
- H Headed Chetae