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The freshwater ribbon-worm *Prostoma graecense* (Hoplonemertea: Monostilifera) in South America (Argentina)

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Abstract

The morphological species *Prostoma graecense* (Böhmig, 1892) is reported for the first time from Argentina and South America. Some diagnostic characters, such as the ciliated epithelium of the non-rhynchodaeal oesophagus and the backward extension of the cephalic glands up to the brain commisure, were confirmed for the Argentine material; the rhynchodaeal longitudinal muscles were present, but did not form a thick layer as expected from some previous descriptions. Adding South America to its distribution range supports the hypothesis that this morphotype *Prostoma graecense* actually has a cosmopolitan distribution.

Key words: *Cosmopolitan distribution, Enopla, Nemertea, taxonomy, Tetrastemmidae*

Introduction

Only two species of *Prostoma* have been recorded from South America, and only one, *Prostoma eilhardi* (Montgomery, 1894), was identified in Argentina and Brazil (Moretto & Durquet 1978; Corrêa 1986).

Prostoma graecense (Böhmig, 1892), a very widespread morphospecies, is deemed to be cosmopolitan (Corrêa 1986; Pennak 1989; Weidenbach 1995). However, while it was identified from North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and New Zealand (Gibson & Moore 1976, 1978; Crandall et al. 2002; Gibson 2002), its presence in South America has not been factually established. Corrêa (1951) has mentioned it as inhabiting South America, but her statement was only based on the opinion that the nemerteans found in Venezuela by Cordero (1943) were *Prostoma graecense*, although that author had described and identified his material as *P. asensoriatum* (Montgomery, 1896). At present, the latter species is not considered a synonym of *Prostoma graecense* (Gibson & Moore 1976), and recent studies even show that *P. asensoriatum* may not be a member of the

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