

A new species of the genus *Merdigera* Held, 1837 (Gastropoda: Pulmonata: Enidae) from Northwest Caucasus

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ABSTRACT. A new species *Merdigera invis*a Kijashko sp. nov. from the high-mountainous part of Northwest Caucasus is described. Taking into account the characters of this species, the diagnosis of the subfamily *Merdigerinae* Schileyko, 1984 is defined more exactly.

There are discordant literature data on the distribution of molluscs of the genus *Merdigera* Held, 1837 (type species — *Helix obscura* Müller, 1774) on Caucasus. A. Schileyko [1984] excludes Caucasus from the range of the sole representative of this genus, believing that «Multiple mentions about the presence of the species “*Ena*” *obscura* on Caucasus are due to the fact that the shell of this species is extremely similar to caucasian *Akramovskiiella umbrosa* (Mousson, 1873)...» [Schileyko, 1984]. A. Kuznetsov [1999] published data that expanded the range of *Merdigera obscura* (Müller, 1774) from Europe eastward up to Dzungaria. Among other territories included into the range of this species, he mentioned northwest Caucasus. However, molluscs from Caucasian were not included in the list of material studied by him. In the “Catalogue of molluscs of Russia and adjacent countries” by Yu. Kantor and A. Sysoev [2005], the range of *M. obscura* is given according to Kuznetsov. It includes Western, Central and partially Southern Europe; Balkan Peninsula; northwest Africa; territories of Byelorussia (Vitebsk Region); Russia (the Tver, Smolensk, Yaroslavl regions, suburbs of St.-Petersburg and Moscow, northwest Caucasus); Ukraine (mountain Crimea); Uzbekistan (western Tien Shan) and Kazakhstan (Dzungaria). Taking into account the presence of *Merdigera* in Crimea, Central Asia and Kazakhstan, molluscs of this genus undoubtedly should live on Caucasus as well. However, I could not find information about specimens of *Merdigera* from Caucasus reliably identified by anatomic characters.

In summer 2001, eighteen specimens of terrestrial molluscs similar to *Merdigera obscura* have been collected by me in the expedition to Lagonaki

Mountains (Adygeja, Northwest Caucasus). All of them were identified as a new species of *Merdigera*. This species is described below.

Family Enidae Woodward, 1903

Subfamily Merdigerinae Schileyko, 1984

Genus *Merdigera* Held, 1837

Type species — *Helix obscura* Müller, 1774

*Merdigera invis*a Kijashko, sp. nov.

(Figs. 1 A, B, C)

Material. Northwest Caucasus, Adygeja, Lagonaki Mountains, southern foot of Lagonaki Ridge, right riverbank of Tsitse (right tributary of the river Psheha), (~1200 m above sea level), lime rocks. June 29, 2001; coll. P.V. Kijashko (holotype and paratypes). Holotype and 17 paratypes are stored in the Zoological Institute of Russian Academy of Sciences (St.-Petersburg, № 527-2006).

Diagnosis. The shell practically does not differ from that of *Merdigera obscura* and *Akramovskiiella umbrosa*. Epiphallus approximately twice longer than penis, without sharp flexures, flagellum very short. Border between penis and epiphallus not clear. Penis and penial appendix devoid inflations, verges and papillas, distal part of penis with thick walls, proximal rather thin-walled, inner surface smooth, with small blurred annular pillaster on border with epiphallus. Penial appendix weakly subdivided into sections. A₁ by its size and shape similar to proximal part of penis, inside with high annular pilaster on border between A₁ and A₂. A₂ — thin-walled, approximately twice as long as A₁. Diverticle of spermathecal stalk reaching albuminous gland. Penial retractor with two branches standing apart immediately near to male ducts, one branch attached to proximal part of penis, another to middle of A₁.

[**Диагноз.** Раковина практически не отличается от *Merdigera obscura* и *Akramovskiiella umbrosa*. Флагеллум очень короткий, иногда практически отсутствует. Эпифаллус примерно в два раза длиннее пениса, без резких изгибов. Граница между пенисом и эпифаллусом не выражена. Пенис и пениальный аппендикс лишены вздутий и папилл, дистальная часть пениса с