On the morphology of the digestive system of *Latiaxis* (*Babelomurex*) (Gastropoda, Coralliophiliidae) with notes on the phylogeny of the family

Yu.I. KANTOR

*A.N. Severtzov Institute of Problems of Evolution, Russian Academy of Sciences, Leninskij prosp. 33, Moscow 117071, RUSSIA*

Anatomy of the digestive system of two species of *Latiaxis* (*Babelomurex*), *L. naskensis* and *L. sentix*, was studied for the first time. Digestive system is similar in details to that of *Coralliophila*, described by Ward [1965] and possess several unusual and unique characters: absence of the radula and odontophore; joining the paired salivary ducts in their anterior portion in a single one, opening in buccal tube dorsally; passing of the salivary ducts outside the walls of oesophagus; structure of the gland of Leiblein. These characters delimitate Coralliophiliidae from Muricidae at least at familiar level. The hypothesis about secondary elongation of the proboscis has been proposed.

INTRODUCTION

Coralliophiliidae are a relatively small family, comprised of about 200 species [Kosuge, Suzuki, 1985]. The family has a remarkable association of its shallow-water representatives with living corals. Some of the genera are boring (e.g. *Leptoconchus, Magilus, Reliquiaeae- cava*), some free-living (*Coralliophila, Coral- liobia, Quoyula*, etc.). Ecology of deep-water species is unknown. Since the shells and general anatomy of unmodified members of the family closely resemble those of some Muricidae, both families were usually considered to be closely related [Ponder, 1973, Fig. 4]. In their classification of Caenogastropoda, Ponder and Warén [1988] considered Coralliophiliidae as a subfamily of Muricidae.

Although systematics and species composition of this family have been discussed in