

Description of a new species of Muricopsinae (Gastropoda: Muricidae) from the Andaman Islands.

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ABSTRACT. *Murexiella andamanensis* n.sp. is described. It is compared with *Murexiella interserratus* (Sowerby, 1879) and *?Muricopsis* (*?Murexsul*) *multispinosus* (Sowerby, 1904).

RESUME. *Murexiella andamanensis* n.sp. est décrit et comparé à *Murexiella interserratus* (Sowerby, 1879) et à *?Muricopsis* (*?Murexsul*) *multispinosus* (Sowerby, 1904).

INTRODUCTION

A shell which is illustrated as *Murexiella macgintyi* (M. Smith, 1938) in SUBBA RAO & SURYA RAO (1993: pl. 8, figs 1, 2, 3) caught the attention of one of the authors (RH). After careful examination of the specimens, it becomes evident that they belong to the genus *Murexiella*, although different from *Murexiella macgintyi*, a larger species (20-39 mm in length), from the western Atlantic, known from the Gulf of Mexico to southern Brazil (VOKES, 1994).

SYSTEMATICS

Genus *Murexiella*

Clench & Pérez Farfante, 1845

Type species, by original designation: *Murex hidalgoi* Crosse, 1869.

***Murexiella andamanensis* n.sp.**

Figs 1, 3-6

Murex (*Muricidea*) *cirrosus* -SMITH, 1878: 806; MELVILL & SYKES, 1897: 170 (not Hinds, 1844).

Murexiella macgintyi - SUBBA RAO & SURYA RAO, 1993: 59, pl. 8, figs 1, 2, 3 (not Smith, 1938)

Material examined

Holotype n° M23658/4 and 1 paratypes n° M23659/4, Zoological Survey, India, Andaman Islands, off Ross Island, Port Blair, 5-6 fms (9-

11 m); 4 paratypes n° M23659/4, Zoological Survey, India, 1 paratype R. Houart, Andaman Islands.

Type locality

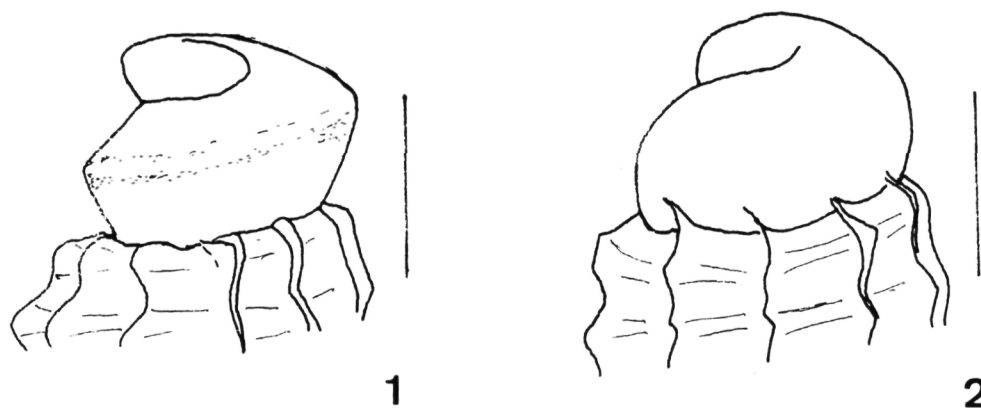
Andaman Islands, off Ross Id, Port Blair, 9-11 m.

Description

Shell up to 13.85 mm in length at maturity, frondose. Spire high, with 1.5-1.75 protoconch whorls, and up to 5 weakly shouldered teleoconch whorls. Last whorl broad. Suture obscured by small axial lamellae of following whorl. Protoconch strongly keeled, otherwise smooth (Fig. 1). Terminal varix heavy, raised.

Axial sculpture of teleoconch whorls consisting of high varices, each with short, frondose spines: 5 on varices of last whorl; 2 on early whorls. Shoulder spine longest. First teleoconch whorl with 9 varices, second with 11 or 12, third and fourth with 10 or 11, last whorl with 7 or 8. Spiral sculpture of low, broad, squamous cords, and numerous, narrow, squamous lirae. First whorls with 2 cords, last whorl with 5 cords.

Aperture small, roundly-ovate. Columellar lip flaring, smooth. Lip partially erect, adherent at adapical extremity. Anal notch shallow, broad. Outer lip weakly crenulate, with low, short lirae within. Siphonal canal relatively long, narrow, abaperturally recurved, open, with 2 rows of short spinelets.



Figures 1-2.

1. Protoconch of *Murexiella andamanensis* n.sp. (scale bar: 0.5 mm)
2. Protoconch of *Murexiella interserratus* (Sowerby, 1879) (scale bar: 0.5 mm).

Light tan, shoulder of last whorl weakly darker coloured.

Operculum and radula unknown.

Remarks

Murexiella interserratus (Sowerby, 1879), from Japan, is similar to *M. andamanensis*, but differs in its relatively larger shell with fewer axial ribs (8-10), globose, rounded protoconch (Fig. 2), and less fronded, longer varicial spines.

?*Muricopsis* (?*Murexsul*) *multispinosus* (Sowerby, 1904), a Japanese muricid, still of uncertain classification, also has a shell with long siphonal canal, but differs in having relatively, long, smooth, acute spines, 4 rows of numerous spines on the siphonal canal, and a rounded protoconch.

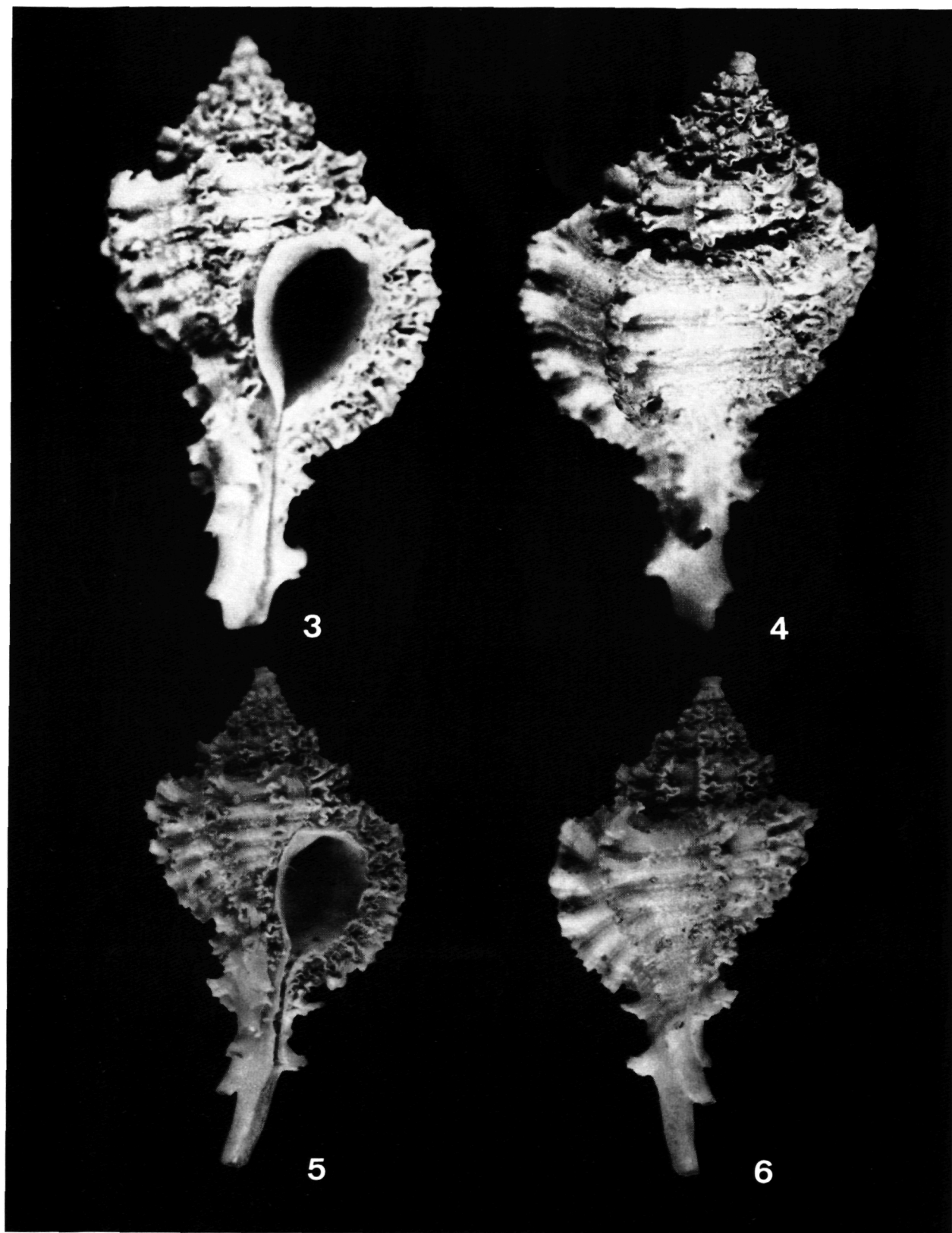
Murexiella andamanensis n.sp. also has been confused with *Murexiella cirrosa* (Hinds, 1844) by SMITH (1878), who noted that one of his specimens possessed an unusually long canal, and by MELVILL & SYKES (1897). *Murexiella cirrosa* is a different species, with large, elaborate axial varices, and a short siphonal canal.

Acknowledgements

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Figures 3-6. *Murexiella andamanensis* n.sp.

3-4. Holotype ZSI n° M23658/4, Andaman Islands, off Ross Island, Port Blair, 9-11 m, 13.12 mm.

5-6. Paratype R. Houart, Andaman Islands, 12.2 mm.