

The first record of *Xeropicta mesopotamica* (Mousson, 1874) from Hareer region, southern marshes of Iraq

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Abstract Specimens of the land snail *Xeropicta mesopotamica* were collected from Hareer region, southern marshes of Iraq (30°34'43.52"N 47°44'3.93"E), north of Basrah on December 2007 and March 2008. It is widely distributed in Iraq. The present article represents the first record of the species from Basrah, Iraq.

Introduction

Little had been published on the land snails of Iraq. The most important contribution on the land snails of Mesopotamia was that of Pallary (1939). Germain (1921) made occasional reference to Iraq in his work on the Mollusca of Syria. In the 19th Century, Mousson (1874) described *Xeropicta mesopotamica* as a new species from Mesopotamia. Recent reports indicated that this species is widely distributed in Baghdad, Tekrit, Samaw, Wasit, and Ninawa (Neubert, 1998). Biggs (1959) listed many land snails from north Iraq and reported *X. derbentina* (Krynicky) from different parts of north of Iraq: Aqra, Rawanduz, Gorge, Zara Touka, Chemchamal, Halabcha, Nimrod, Mosul, Dohak, and Kirkuk. Neubert (1998) reported *X. mesopotamica* as a new record from Yemen and Arabian Peninsula. Recently, much attention was paid to identify land snails of Basrah city. Previously, *Monacha obstructa* was also recorded for the first time from Basrah (Abdul-Sahib, 2005).

X. mesopotamica is widely distributed species in the middle-east, Syria, Island Ghaes in the Arabian Gulf, Yemen and Arabian Peninsula (Neubert, 1998). Unfortunately, there is no information available about its distribution in adjacent countries like Iran or even outside North Asia. The present report reveals the first finding of *X. mesopotamica* in Basrah city.

Materials

Twenty five specimens of the land snail *X. mesopotamica* were collected from Hareer region (30°34'43.52"N 47°44'3.93"E) (Fig. 1), near Garimat Ali canal which is a side branch of the Shatt Al-Arab river during December 2007 and March 2008. The specimens were collected from the soil and grass (Fig. 2) and preserved in 75 % ethanol.

Diagnosis

X. mesopotamica (Mousson, 1874); *Helix* (*Xerophila*) *mesopotamica* Mousson. – J. Conchyl. 1874, 22: 22 ("dans toute la vallee de la Mesopotamie".)



Figure 1. Distribution of *X. mesopotamica* in Iraq



Figure 2. Habitat where the first specimens of *X. mesopotamica* were collected at Hareer village, Basrah.

The shell (Fig. 3) is small to medium-sized with an elevated spire creamy coloured with slightly glossy surface. Brown spirally arranged, spots may occur in some specimens, rudiments of subsutural spiral bands may be visible. Only the narrow peripheral brown spiral band is always present.

The protoconch consists of two smooth and brown whorls. The teleconch whorls are rounded to often bluntly shouldered. The subsurface of the shell is flat. The surface is covered by densely packed fine ribs. The suture is of medium depth

and slightly indented. The aperture is subcircular. The umbilicus is open and somewhat eccentric. Maximum height of the shell is 6.0mm and dimension is 8.75mm.



Figure 3. Dorsal and ventral view of *X. mesopotamica* (scale bar 1 mm)

Distribution and Habitat

The *X. mesopotamica* is the second new record of land snails molluscs in Basrah, after *Monacha abstructa*, (Abdul-Sahib, 2005). *X. mesopotamica* was collected from the north of Basrah city, Hareer village, which is a rural area that lies at Garmat Ali river. This river represent the last part of Euphrates that flow out from Al-Hammar marshes. *X. mesopotamica* lives on the soil of the farms and grasses, close to the Garmat Ali river. Neubert (1998) listed this species from Yemen and Arabian Peninsula, Syria and Island Ghaes in the Arabian Gulf (Fig. 4).

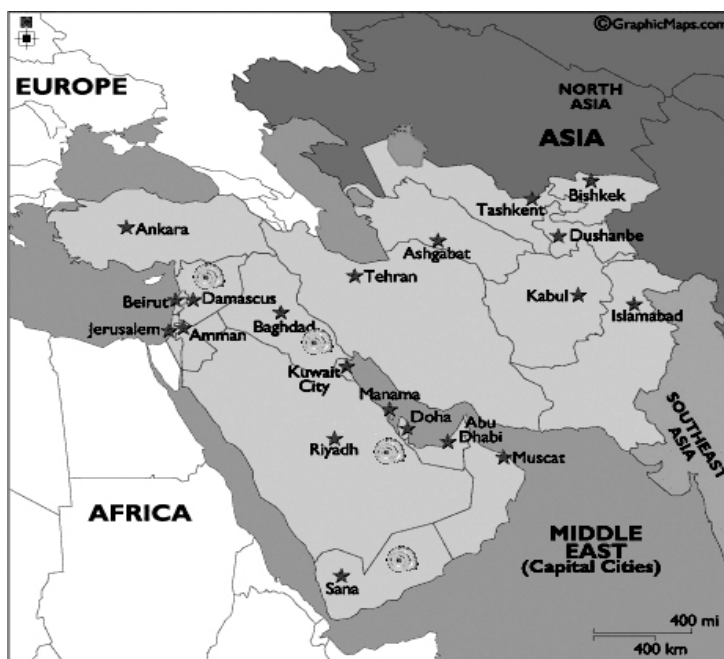


Figure 4. Distribution of *Xeropicta mesopotamica* in the Middle East (Neubert, 1998)

Unfortunately, there is no information available about its distribution in adjacent countries like Iran and Turkey.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my thanks to Prof. Dr. E. Neubert (Forschungsinstitut enckenberg Sektion Malakologie, Germany) for confirming the identity of *X. mesopotamica*.

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التسجيل الأول للقوقع *Xeropicta mesopotamica* (Mousson, 1874) من منطقة حرير، أهوار جنوب العراق

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المستخلص جمعت عينات من القوقع البري *Xeropicta mesopotamica* من منطقة حرير جنوب العراق عند (30°34'43.52"N 47°44'3.93"E) شمال مدينة البصرة خلال شهر ديسمبر 2007 ومارس 2008. يعتبر هذا النوع من الأنواع الواسعة الانتشار في العراق وعلى الرغم من ذلك فإنه يمثل التسجيل الأول في مدينة البصرة.