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MERCEDULOIDES SINEVI GEN. ET SP. N. (LEPIDOPTERA: GELECHIIDAE) FROM ISLAND OF SUMATRA

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Summary. New genus *Merceduloides* **gen. n.** with type species *M. sinevi* **sp. n.** is described from Sumatra Island, Indonesia. The taxonomic position of the new genus within the family Gelechiidae is discussed.

Key words: Gelechiidae, Anomologini, *Merceduloides*, new genus, new species, Indonesia, Oriental region.

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Резюме. Новый род *Merceduloides* **gen. n.** (Lepidoptera: Gelechiidae) с типовым видом *M. sinevi* **sp. n.** описан из Индонезии, с острова Суматра. Обсуждается таксономическое положение нового рода в семействе Gelechiidae.

INTRODUCTION

The taxonomic diversity of moths of the family Gelechiidae in Indonesia remains poorly studied, although studies of the fauna of this region began almost two centuries

ago. The first species of gelechiids (*Atasthalistis concinnalis* (Feisthamel, 1839) (orig. comb. with *Crambus*) from the Moluccas was described after a round-the-world voyage on the French corvette “La Fortuna” in 1830–1832 (Feisthamel, 1839). Later, a number of gelechiid species were described on the base of materials collected during the round-the-world voyage on the Austrian frigate “Novara” in 1857–1859: *Dichomeris gnophrina* (C. Felder, R. Felder et Rogenhofer, 1875) (orig. comb. with *Ethmia*) from the Moluccas; *Stomylia erosella* Snellen, 1878 (= *Tituacia deviellea* Walker, 1864) and *Dichomeris tricolor* (C. Felder, R. Felder et Rogenhofer, 1875) (orig. comb. with *Ypsolophus*) from Java; *Adelomorpha ritsemae* Snellen, 1885 and *Dichomeris bisignellus* (Snellen, 1885) (orig. comb. with *Ypsolophus*) from Sulawesi (Felder *et al.*, 1864–1875; Snellen, 1878, 1885).

Considerable contributions to the study of microlepidoptera in Indonesia were made by the Dutch entomologist and lawyer Mr. M.C. Piepers, who lived and worked in the Dutch East Indies from 1863 for about three decades, and Mr. W. van Deventer, who collected moths and studied their life cycles in Pekalongan, Java, in the early 20th century. Based on the material they collected, papers containing data on the taxonomic diversity and biology of lepidopterans, including gelechiids, were published by both the researchers themselves and by their colleagues (Piepers & Snellen, 1878, 1909–1918; Snellen, 1885, 1901, 1903; van Deventer, 1904; Meyrick, 1921).

The most significant entomological material was collected during the American-Dutch expedition under leadership by Mr. Richard Archbold (The third Archbold's expedition) to the interior of Dutch New Guinea (Western New Guinea) in 1938–1939. The purpose of the expedition was to collect materials and data on the fauna and flora of the very poorly studied mountainous region of Central New Guinea. The collecting of invertebrates was led by the Dutch entomologist and lepidopterist Dr. L.J. Toxopeus, who had lived and worked primarily in Indonesia and collected insects, including lepidopterans, in Java, Sumatra, the Maluku Islands and in Western New Guinea (Syamsudin *et al.*, 2025). The list of collection sites published by him after third Archbold's expedition (Toxopeus, 1940), makes it possible to clarify the type localities of the species described on the basis of that material. A. Diakonoff made a significant contribution to the processing of moths collected during the third Archbold expedition. He examined more than 1,400 specimens and identified almost 600 species micromoths from 30 families, of which 516 species were described by as new to science, including 115 species from the gelechioid complex (Diakonoff, 1954).

Most of the species currently known in Indonesia were described or recorded from material collected in mentioned expeditions and is stored mainly in the Rijksmuseum voor Natuurlijke Historie (National Museum of Natural History) in Leiden (Netherlands) and the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) in Washington (USA).

At the beginning of the 21st century, 88 species from 39 genera of the family Gelechiidae were known in Indonesia (Meyrick, 1912–1916, 1916–1923, 1921, 1922, 1923–1930, 1925, 1930–1936; Gaede, 1937; Diakonoff, 1954), which indicates that

the fauna of this region is still insufficiently studied. Furthermore, the taxonomic diversity of gelechiid moths is studied fragmentarily in the territory of Indonesia. Thus, 67 species have been described or recorded from Java, which is more than three-quarters of the total list of Indonesian species, while 15 species are known in West New Guinea, 5 ones in Sulawesi, and only 3 species each in Sumatra and the Maluku Islands. After a 70-year break, studies of the taxonomic diversity of gelechiids in Indonesia have resumed thanks to the active collection of moths in the region by the second author. In the current century, the list of Indonesian gelechiids was replenished with 9 species from 4 genera, of which 6 species and 1 genus are described as new for science (Omelko & Omelko, 2024a; 2024b; 2024c; Ponomarenko & Omelko, 2025). The present work continues a series of papers devoted to the study of Indonesian gelechiid moths and includes the description of new taxa from island of Sumatra.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study is based on the material collected in the Bukit Lawang village in North Sumatra, Indonesia, by the second author. The moths were attracted to mercury-vapor lamps. The specimens were examined using the standard lepidopterological technique (Falkovitsh & Stekolnikov 1978), which included maceration of the soft tissues of abdomen in a 10–15 % KOH solution. The membranous parts of the genitalia were stained with chlorazol black. After their examination, the genitalia were slide-mounted using Euparal following the technique by Robinson (1976). Photographs of adults were taken using an Olympus SZX16 microscope with an incorporated digital camera DP74 Nikon. Photographs of slide-mounted genitalia were made with Zeiss Axioskop 40 microscope equipped with an AxioCam HRC digital camera. In description the genital morphological terminology follows Klots (1970) with modifications by Ponomarenko (2005, 2009). The holotype and paratypes of the new species are deposited in the Bioresource collection (registration number P2797657) of the Federal Scientific Center of the East Asia Terrestrial Biodiversity, Far Eastern Branch of Russian Academy of Sciences (Vladivostok).

The following abbreviations were used in the text: BC FSCB – Bioresource collection in Federal Scientific Center of the East Asia Terrestrial Biodiversity, abbreviation of the Center where the material is stored; GS – genital slide; MP – M.G. Ponomarenko, who prepared the slide.

DESCRIPTION OF NEW TAXA

Genus *Merceduloides* Ponomarenko et M. Omelko, gen. n.

<https://zoobank.org/NomenclaturalActs/073A082B-DE67-4B59-B435-FBDE67A4116D>

Type species: *Merceduloides sinevi* Ponomarenko et M. Omelko, **sp. n.**

DIAGNOSIS. In appearance the moths of the new taxon are very similar to those of the recently described genus *Mercedula* Ponomarenko et M. Omelko, 2025

from the tribe Gelechiini (Ponomarenko & Omelko, 2025). The new genus can be reliably distinguished from the latter by the male and female genitalia. In the male genitalia uncus and gnathos absent, tegumen with expanded anterolateral parts; valva wide basally, divided into cucullus and sacculus and articulated with tegumen by dorsobasal angle; sacculi widened in ventral part and envelope aedeagus laterally, juxta joined with medial side of sacculi and forms distal hook-like processes and sclerotised rods supported aedeagus ventrally. In the female genitalia 8th segment with lateral spiked lobes and sharp processes posteriorly, vaginal sinus cup-shaped and sclerotised, corpus bursae with two signa.

DISTRIBUTION. Indonesia (Sumatra).

ETYMOLOGY. The genus name is composed from the name of the recently described genus *Mercedula* Ponomarenko et Omelko, moths of which have similar pattern of forewings, with the addition of the suffix – *oides*; generic name is masculine.

***Merceduloides sinevi* Ponomarenko et M. Omelko, sp. n.**

<https://zoobank.org/NomenclaturalActs/AD63469A-BFF2-4F10-B7C8-35912FB57D9D>

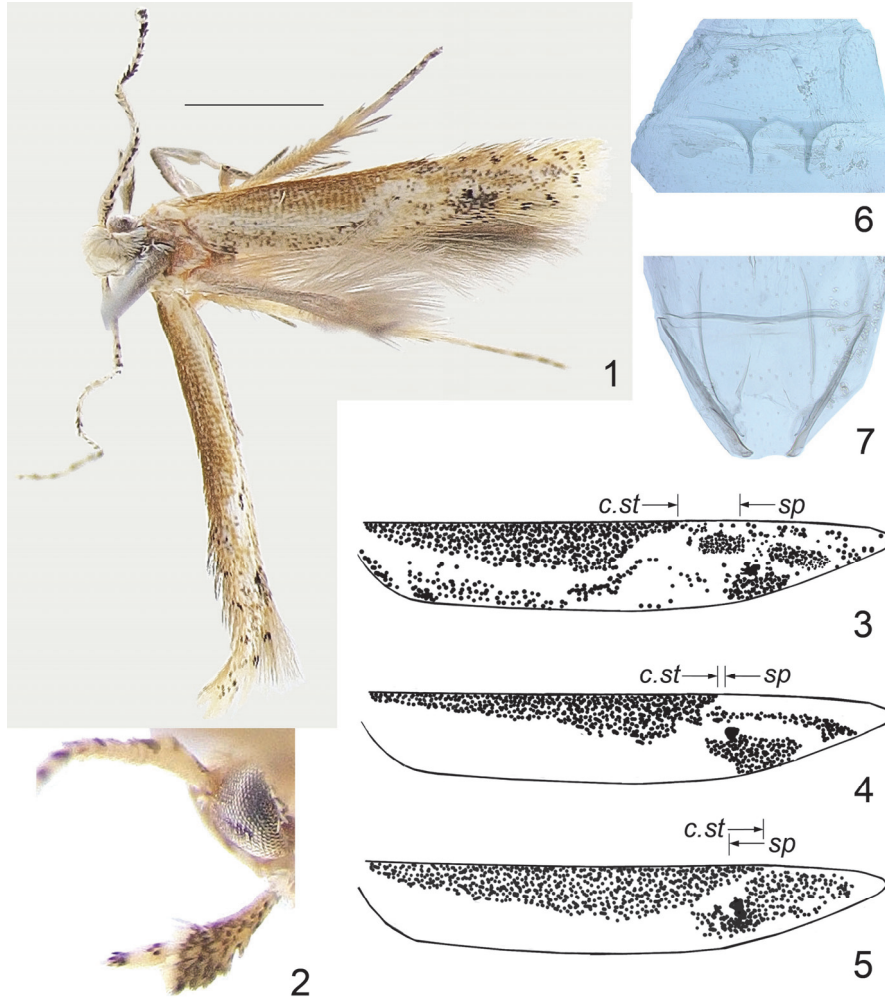
Figs 1–16

TYPE MATERIAL. Holotype – ♂, Indonesia: North Sumatra, Bukit Lawang village, 22.II 2023 (leg. M. Омелько), GS 352 MP, BC FSCB. Paratypes – 2 ♀, same locality and collector, 18, 21.II 2023, BC FSCB.

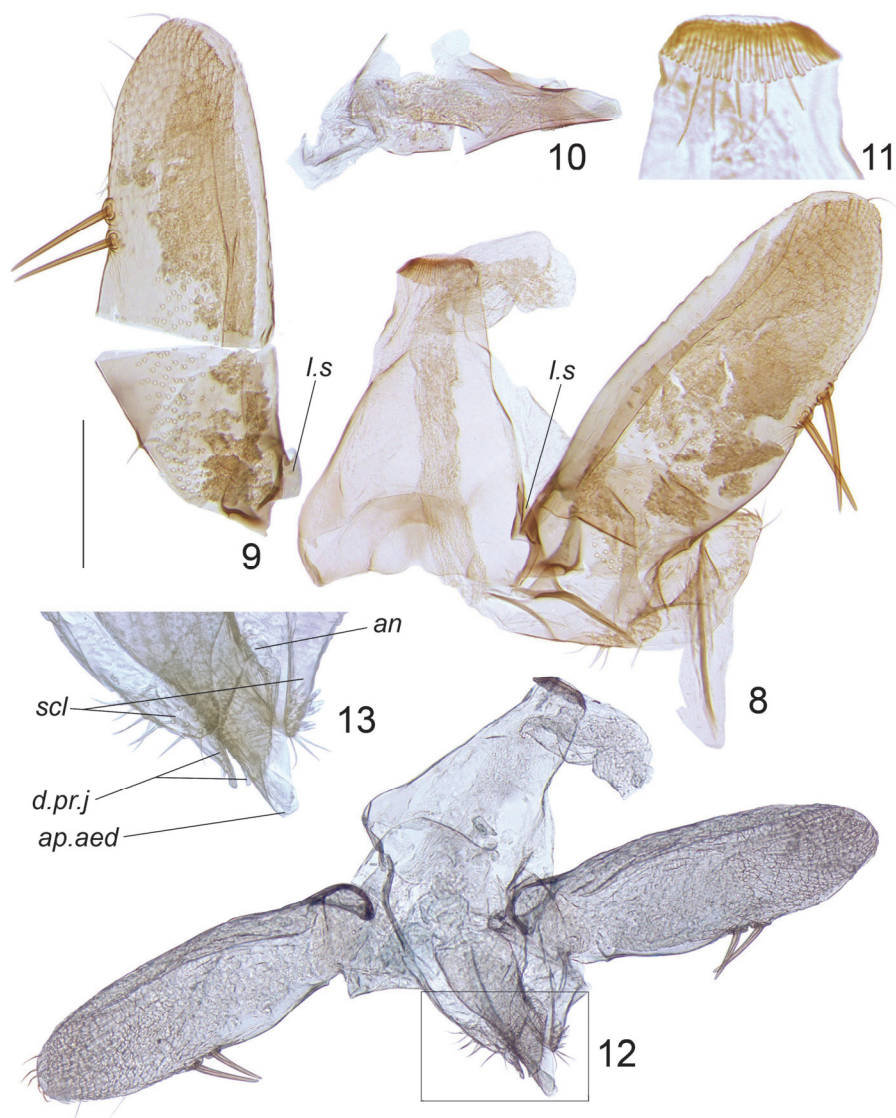
DIAGNOSIS. New species is very similar in appearance to *Mercedula fuscomarginata* Ponomarenko et Omelko, 2025 and *M. storozhenkoi* Ponomarenko et Omelko, 2025. It can be identified by forewing with costal stripe relatively shorter than in habitually similar species, the distal end of the costal stripe is located long before the level of the proximal edge of black spot placed near cell end (Fig. 3). The *M. fuscomarginata* with costal stripe shortly does not reach the level of proximal edge of black spot, while *M. storozhenkoi* with costal stripe extends beyond level of proximal edge of black spot (Figs 4, 5). Besides, the new species differs by cucullus with two strong needle-like spines on the ventral margin, strongly widened sacculus enveloped aedeagus and juxta with hook-like processes and sclerotised rods in the male genitalia. In the female genitalia it differs by spiked lobes and long awl-shaped processes in posterior part of 8th sternite and two arched signa each with two spiny outgrowths in corpus bursae.

DESCRIPTION. **Adult** (Figs 1–3, 6, 7). Head mainly white with appressed large scales and slightly yellowish blurry longitudinal line along the vertex. Basal antennal segment (scapus) and flagellum white on underside; upper side of scape with scattered greyish-brown scales; each flagellar segment in proximal part with distal dark-brown semi-ring; distal part of flagellum with 6 more wide dark-brown semi-rings. Labial palpi with very short whitish first segment, about 1/4 length of second segment; second segment 1.6 times longer than third segment, greyish brown on outer side with white scales distally and white on inner side, with trapezoidal tuft on ventral edge; third segment white with two greyish brown semi-rings on outer side

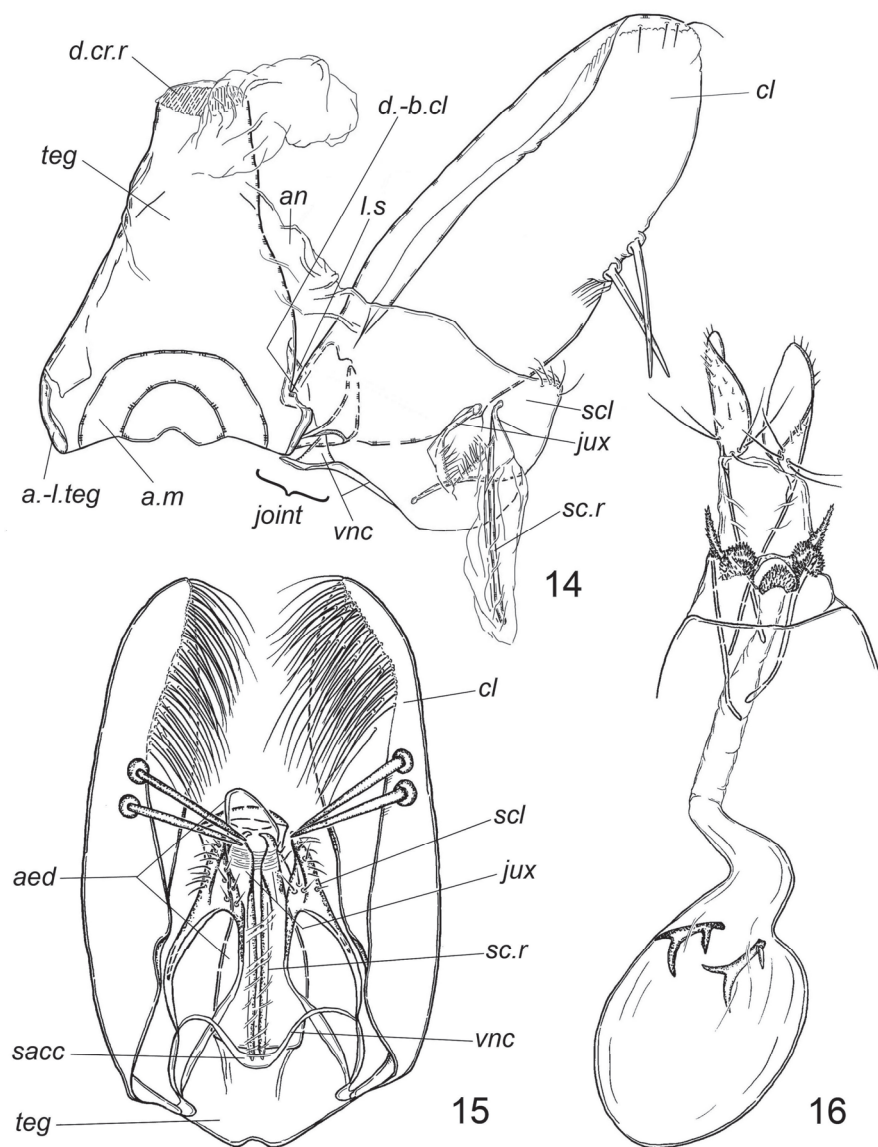
at basal third and before white apex (Fig. 2). Thorax whitish, tegula white with yellowish anterior margin. Forewings length 3.0–3.2 mm; white with scattered greyish brown scales, with yellowish brown stripe along costal margin from base to 3/5 of wing length, which widened distally and two oval yellowish spots on distal



Figs 1–7. *Merceduloides sinevi* sp. n. (1–3, 6, 7) and *Mercedula* spp. (4, 5), external morphology. 1 – male, holotype; 2 – *ditto*, labial palpus; 3–5 – schemes of forewing pattern: 3 – *Merceduloides sinevi* sp. n., 4 – *Mercedula fuscomarginata*, 5 – *M. storozhenkoï*; 6 – 8th abdominal sternite; 7 – 2nd abdominal sternite. *ap.stern* – apodemes of 8th sternite; *c.st* – level of distal end of costal stripe, *sp* – level of proximal edge of black spot placed near cell end, both levels are shown by arrows. Scale bar for figure 1 – 1 mm, figures 2, 6, and 7 – enlarged.



Figs 8–13. *Merceduloides sinevi* sp. n., male genitalia, holotype, GS 352 MP (8–11). 8 – tegumen, valva, vinculum and juxta, medial view; 9 – left cucullus; 10 – aedeagus and saccus; 11 – distal end of tegumen with crown-shaped row of modified scales, dorsal view; 12 – undissected male genitalia in glycerin, rectangle shows enlarged part in the following figure; 13 – distal part of aedeagus, surrounding by anellus, enveloped laterally by sacculi and supported ventrally by juxta with distal hook-like processes. *an* – anellus, *ap.aed* – apex of aedeagus, *d.pr.j* – distal processes of juxta, *l.s* – ligamentous sclerotisation, *scl* – sacculi. Scale bar for figures 8–10 – 0.2 mm; figures 11 and 13 – enlarged.



Figs 14–16. *Merceduloides sinevi* sp. n., genitalia. 14 – male genitalia, unrolled, medial view; 15 – ditto, ventral view; female genitalia, ventral view. *a.-l.teg* – anterolateral part of tegumen, *a.m* – apodeme for tegminal and valvar muscles, *aed* – aedeagus, *an* – anellus, *cl* – cucullus, *d.-b.cl* – dorsobasal angle of cucullus, *d.cr.r* – dorsal crown-shaped row of modified setae, *joint* – joint, where tegumen, vinculum and cucullus articulate, *jux* – juxta, *l.s* – ligamentous sclerotisation, *sacc* – saccus, *sc.r* – sclerotised rods of juxta, *scl* – sacculus, *teg* – tegumen, *vnc* – vinculum.

third; distinct small black spot near cell end formed by raised scales and large greyish brown spot posteriad the latter (Figs 1, 3); fringe yellowish grey with 9–10 sparse dark-brown dots around distal third of wing. Hindwings and fringe dark grey. Fore-legs and middle legs light beige with brownish darkening on outer side; hind legs light beige with brush of hair-like scales of same colour on upper and under sides of tibia, with light beige inner spurs and dark brown outer spurs.

Second abdominal sternite with well-developed claw-shaped apodemes curved medially and long arched venulae; eight sternite with two apodemes for muscles which, when contracted, probably flex terminal part of abdomen (Figs 6, 7).

Male genitalia (Figs 8–15). Uncus and gnathos absent. Tegumen elongated, broadened towards the base and with expanded anterolateral angles, which articulated with cucullus and vinculum; its posterior end with dorsal crown-shaped row of relatively long modified setae (Fig. 11), its anterior part with an arcuate sclerotisation, probably serving as an apodeme for tegminal and valvar muscles (Fig. 14); its anterior margin is shaped like a curly bracket with a rounded notch in the middle. Valva divided into separated cucullus and sacculus; cucullus elongated and oval, with two long and strong needle-like spines on the ventral margin, with sclerotised dorsobasal angle, forming a joint with tegumen and vinculum; besides cucullus joined with lateral edge of tegumen by ligamentous sclerotisation (Figs 8, 9, 14). Sacculi strongly widened ventrally into large trapezoidal setaceous lobes, that envelope aedeagus laterally (Figs 8, 12–15). Vinculum narrow and sclerotised laterally, its arms articulated with anterolateral angles of tegumen; slightly expanded ventrally into small saccus (Figs 10, 15). Juxta joined with medial side of sacculi, forms two distal hook-like processes and sclerotised rods supported aedeagus ventrally. Aedeagus widened in basal two thirds, with truncated apex, its left side with lobe-shaped sclerotisation (Fig. 10).

Female genitalia (Fig. 16). Ovipositor relatively short, membrane between 9th and 8th abdominal segments approximately equal to length of papillae anales. The latter weakly sclerotised. Apophyses posteriors slightly longer than apophyses anteriores. Vaginal sinus cup-shaped, sclerotised and spiked. Posterior margin of 8th segment with rounded setaceous lobe and long awl-shaped process on each side of preostial area. Ductus bursae membranous, dilated towards the corpus bursae. Corpus bursae oval, membranous, with two relatively large arched signa, each with two spiny outgrowths.

DISTRIBUTION. Indonesia (North Sumatra).

ETYMOLOGY. The species is named after Dr. Sergei Yuryevich Sinev (Zoological Institute of RAS, Sankt-Petersburg), a famous entomologist who made a great contribution to the study of lepidopteran insects.

DISCUSSION

The new genus *Merceduloides* **gen. n.** possesses characters that are considered as synapomorphies of genera belonging to the subfamily Anomologinae (Ponomarenko, 2005, 2009): tegumen with expanded anterolateral parts, cuculli (valvae)

articulated with anterolateral parts of the tegumen by the dorsobasal angle, and an aedeagus not fused with the structures of the phallic complex (Ponomarenko 2005, 2009). Almost all genera of this subfamily have a paired muscle m_{22} in the male genitalia, with the exception of genera from the tribe Apatetrini only. These muscles, attached to the anterior part of the tegumen dorsally and to the lateral arms of the vinculum, raise tegumen dorsally, when contracted. Unfortunately, the functional morphology of the male genitalia of the new genus has not been studied, and this feature cannot be included in its characteristics. Of the features listed above, in the new genus the cuculli joined with tegumen not only by the dorsobasal angle, but also with ligamentous sclerotisation (Figs 8, 9), which provides the functioning of the tegumen+cuculli as a single structure, that is considered as more specialised state. Besides, *Merceduloides* **gen. n.** possesses characters in the male genitalia shared by genera from different tribes of the subfamily. The character "uncus and gnathos absent" was found in representatives of Anomologini and Apatetrini, in which at least one of these structures is reduced or absent. The characters "valva more or less deeply divided into a dorsal part (cucullus) and a ventral part (sacculus)" and "valva joined with tegumen" are shared by genera from four tribes of the subfamily – Anomologini, Apatetrini, Aristoteliini, and Pexicopiini (with the exception of *Sitotroga* Heinemann). All representatives of them have more or less deeply split valva with varying degree of sacculus reduction and a articulated dorsal part of the valva (or cucullus) with the tegumen. The character "aedeagus sacciform and widened in basal two thirds" is recognised in many genera of the subfamily. The female genitalia of the new genus have a cup-shaped vaginal sinus, similar to that of the representatives from Pexicopiini. Regarding the presence of two signa in the corpus bursae, this character was found not only in most taxa from the subfamily Anomologinae: Apatetrini, Aristoteliini (*Bryotropha* Heinemann and *Ornativulva* Gozmány), and Pexicopiini, but also in the subfamilies Gelechiinae: Gelechiini (*Stegasta* Meyrick), Litini (*Stenolechia* Meyrick) and Anacampsinae: Anacampsini (*Prolita* Leraut and *Stomopteryx* Heinemann). Moreover, the gelechiid taxa not only have a different number of signa, but also an intermediate state of double signum (two connected, like those in *Bryotropha* or as in the process of division), which is similar to that in other groups of Lepidoptera. This makes it impossible to identify the primary (plesiomorphic) or secondary (apomorphic) state of this character and does not allow its use in determining the taxonomic position of a new taxon. *Merceduloides* **gen. n.** differs from all genera of the subfamily Anomologinae by a complex of unique characters (a dorsal crown-shaped row of modified setae at the end of tegumen, strongly widened sacculi enveloped aedeagus laterally, well-developed juxta with distal hook-like processes and two sclerotised rods), which are considered as its autapomorphies.

As a result of generalisation of morphological characters, mainly of the male genitalia, the genus *Merceduloides* **gen. n.** is included in the nominative tribe of the subfamily Anomologinae.

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