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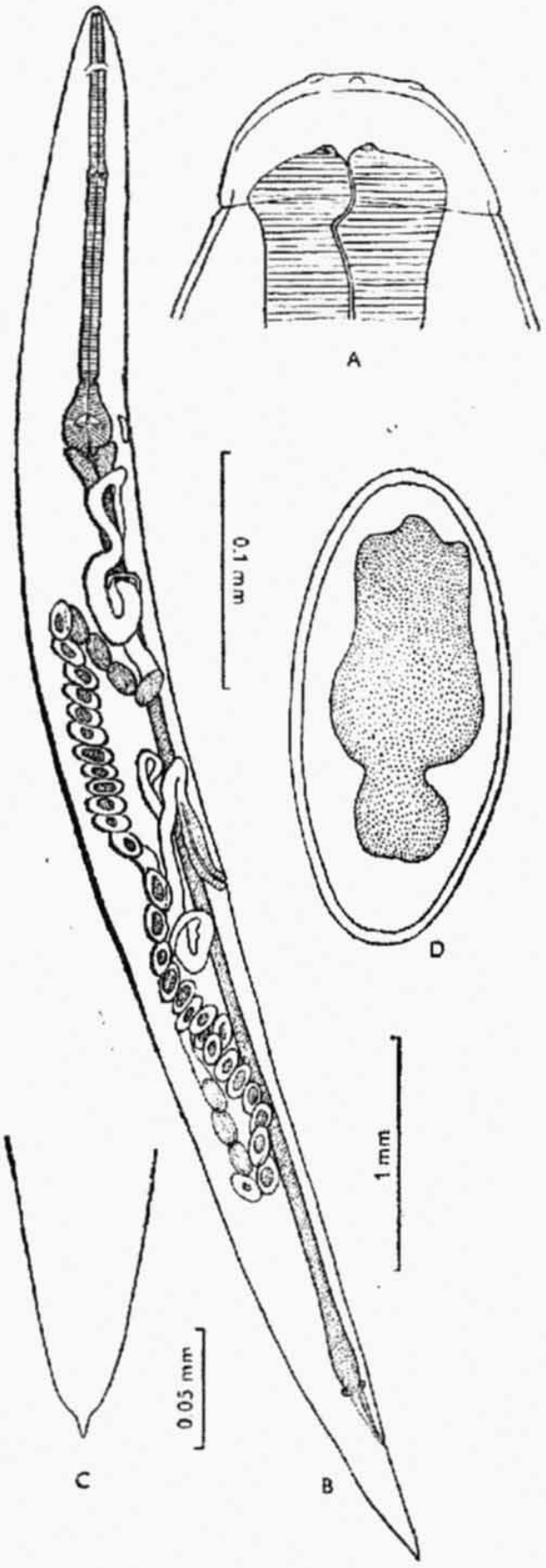
Notes on *Mehdiella microstoma* (Drasche, 1884) from *Testudo hermanni* Gmelin, 1788

In a nematode collection from the host *Testudo hermanni* from Albania (the hosts were captured during the Czechoslovak parasitological expedition to Albania in 1958 and the material provided by courtesy of Professor B. Ryšavý, DSc.), we found also the species *Mehdiella microstoma*. According to data in the literature, this helminth species is distributed mainly in the Palaearctic region (Petter A. J., Mém. Mus. National Hist. Nat. 39: 1—252, 1966); its definitive hosts are members of the genus *Testudo* (*T. graeca graeca*, *T. graeca ibera*, *T. horsfieldii* and *T. hermanni*). The finding of *M. microstoma* in *T. hermanni* has been reported by Petter only (1966) from Roumania.

This author (Petter A. J., Ann. parasit. 36: 648—671, 1961) pointed out several interesting morphological signs of this taxon, which is, in fact the typus generis of the genus *Mehdiella* Seurat, 1918. These are, particularly, differences in the topography of the lips of the males and females. In the male, the lips are arranged in a typical triangle (as in most oxyurids), in the females the division of the ventro-lateral lips is indistinct and the lips are situated at one level opposite the dorsal lip. Viewed sideways it appears that only two lips are present on the cephalic end of this species. An exceptional feature is the length of the female's oesophagus occupying approximately one third of its overall



body length. In addition to these diagnostic signs which are consistent with those described by Peter (1961, 1966), we observed a transverse division of the oesophagus in worms from our material. All diagnostic signs indicate a possible relationship of species of the genus *Mehdiella* (parasitizing herbivorous tortoises), and *Ozolaimus* (parasitizing herbivorous iguanids).

Description of the metrical variability in females of *M. microstoma* from our material: Body opaque, length 6.70 7.55 mm, maximum width 0.43—0.64 mm. Length of cephalic end 0.049—0.061 mm, of oesophagus 2.02—2.18 mm, of its anterior end 0.84—0.97 mm, of bulbus 0.18—0.23 mm, width of bulbus 0.20—0.26 mm. Nerve ring at 0.23—0.34 mm, excretory pore at 1.74—2.12 mm from anterior end of body. Posterior end attenuating, terminating in a short tail process (length 0.010 mm). Anus at 0.48—0.59 mm, vulva at 2.89—4.21 mm from posterior end. Eggs with smooth surface, measurements 0.172—0.204 × 0.080—0.109 mm.

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Fig. 1. *Mehdiella microstoma* (Drasche, 1884) from *Testudo hermanni*. A — head (dorsal view); B — body (total view); C — caudal point; D — egg. Orig.