***Aspidisca cicada* Müller, 1786**

Most likely ID: n.a.

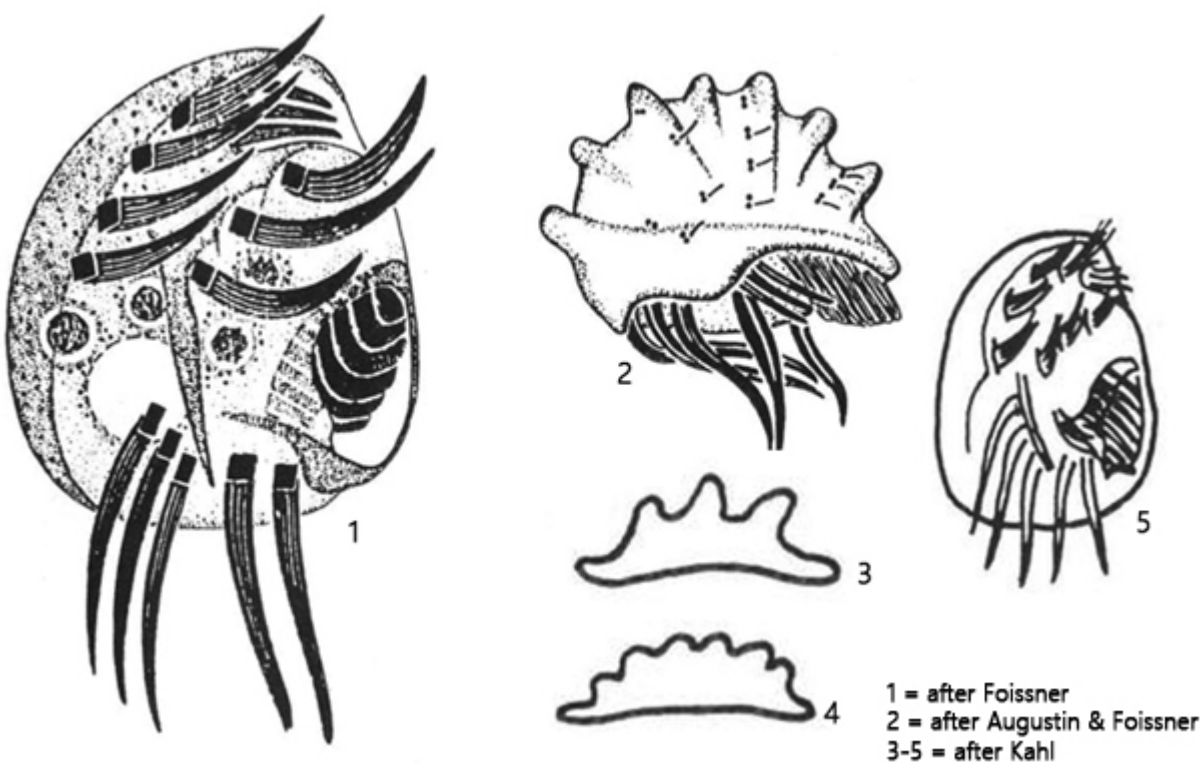
Synonym: *Aspidisca costata*, *Aspidisca sulcata*

Sampling location: Ulmisried, Bussenried, Purren pond, Pond of the convent Hegne, Simmelried

Phylogenetic tree: *Aspidisca cicada*

Diagnosis:

- body roundish-triangular, dorso-ventrally flattened
- dorsally convex with 6–8 distinct ribs (number of ribs variable)
- length 25–40 µm, width 20–40 µm
- macronucleus horseshoe-shaped
- one globular micronucleus adjacent to macronucleus
- contractile vacuole on right side, posterior half
- 7 ventral cirri
- 5 transverse cirri
- 3 frontal cirri (hard to see)
- oral apparatus left, posterior half
- adoral zone of 11 membranelles



Aspidisca cicada

The genus *Aspidisca* is one of the most common hypotrichous ciliates in my sampling sites. Of the various species of this genus, I find *Aspidisca cicada* to be one of the most common. This species is in the literature also referred to *Aspidisca costata* and to *Aspidisca sulcata*, which are synonyms.

This ciliate is easy to observe as it likes to settle on the floating coverslip and is then easy to observe from the ventral side. However, the shape of the dorsal side is important for accurate identification. To do this, a few specimens have to place on the slide and wait for a few minutes before placing the coverslip. During this time, the specimens orient themselves with the ventral side of the glass surface. When the coverslip is then placed on the slide, the shape of the dorsal side can be closely examined. In the case of *Aspidisca cicada*, the dorsal side is convex and has 6–8 distinct ribs (s. fig. 2 a-c). This allows *Aspidisca cicada* to be distinguished from the similar species *Aspidisca lynceus* (smooth dorsal side) and *Aspidisca turrita* (dorsal side with spine).

The ciliature of *Aspidisca cicada* is clearly reduced compared to other hypotriche ciliates. There are only 7 ventral cirri and 5 transversal cirri. In addition, there is a small pit at the anterior end with a membranelle of 3 cirri, which is hard to see. Between the ribs on the dorsal side are rows of short bristles, which are also hard to see.

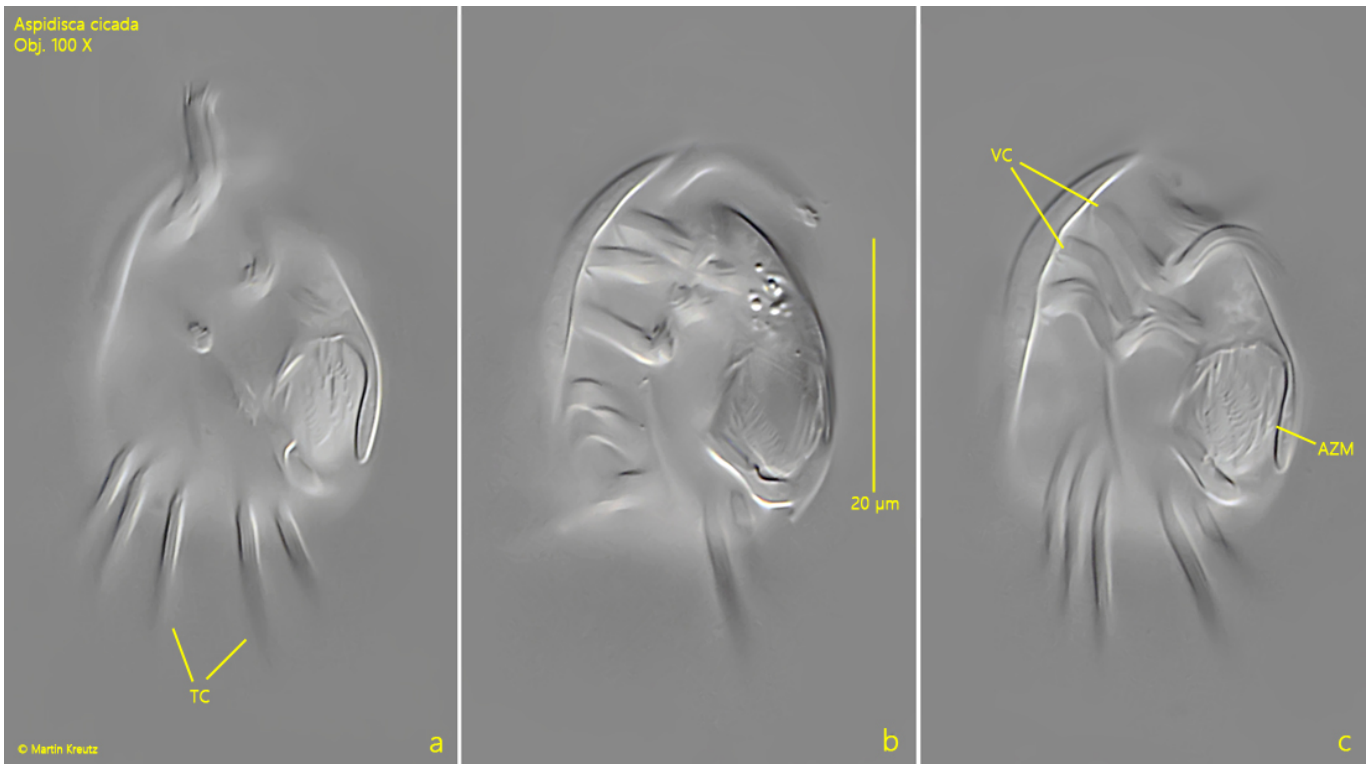


Fig. 1 a-c: *Aspidisca cicada*. L = 32 µm. Three focal planes of a specimen from ventral. Note the membranelles of the adoral zone (AZM) in the oral apparatus. TC = transverse cirri, VC = ventral cirri. Obj. 100 X.

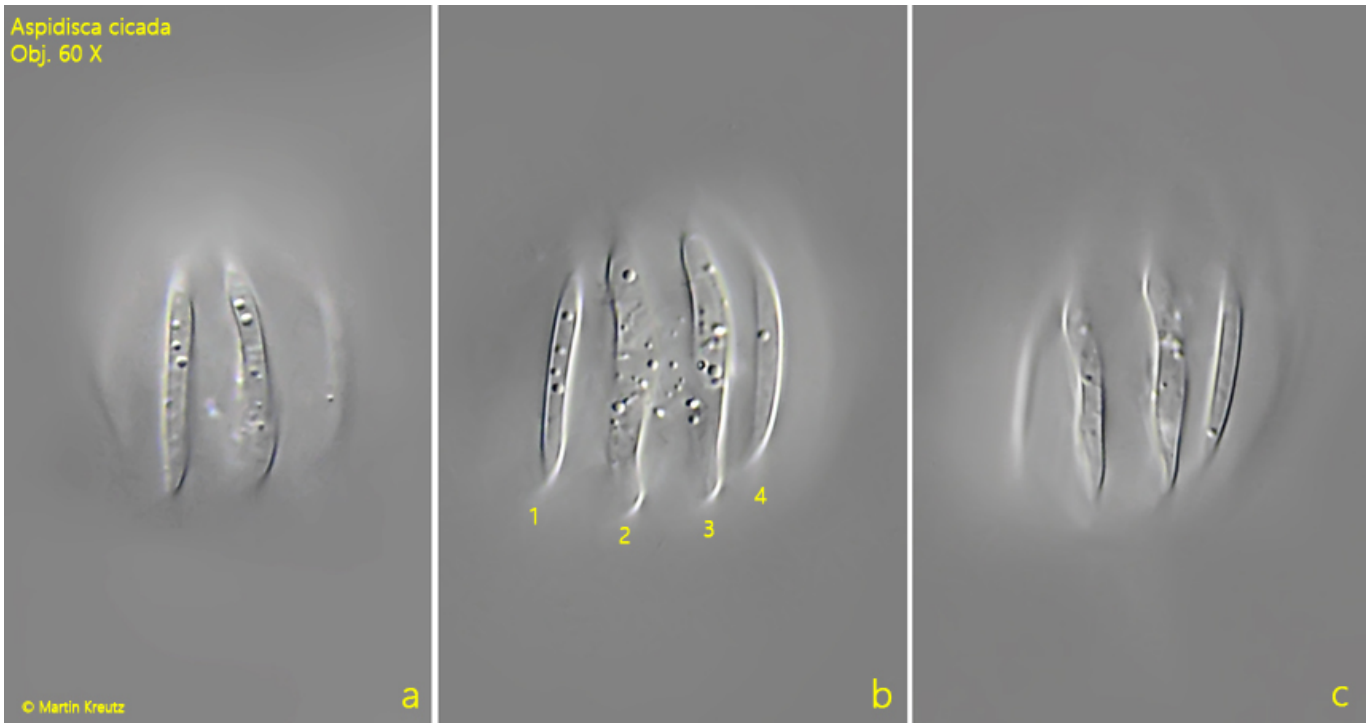


Fig. 2 a-c: *Aspidisca cicada*. Three focal planes of the ribs on the dorsal side. Because of the convex shape of the dorsal side only 4 ribs (1–4) are in the focal plane. Obj. 60 X.



Fig. 3 a-b: *Aspidisca cicada*. L = 32 µm. A specimen crawling over a detritus flake in lateral view from right. TC = transverse cirri, VC = ventral cirri. Obj. 100 X.