

7.2. Soricomorpha

FUR: The fur is fine, velvety and thick, rather homogeneous in structure. It is unicoloured and the main ground colours are brown and grey; the albinistic and melanistic specimens are very rare (CHĘTNICKI *et al.* 2007, NEDYALKOV *et al.* 2014). The dorsal part is always darker. The colours may change seasonally and/or can be variable depending on the environmental conditions of the habitats and the food composition. The arrangement of the bristle hairs along the tails and paws can be a diagnostic generic character (FANG *et al.* 1997).

HAIR, MACROSCOPIC: The hairs are short, thin; the length rarely exceeds 15 mm. The GH0 and GH1 straight guard hairs are sparse; the GH2 and UH hairs are combined zigzag-like or sometimes wavy. Hairs bicolorate or polychrome: the shaft is grey, dark grey or deep brown; the shorter shield is dark brown or reddish brown above the last stricture. Tip transparent, lacking medulla and pigments. The guard hairs of the Soricidae and the Talpidae can be distinguished by the structure of the tip region as the apex is abruptly tapering, long in the shrews while it is long and gradually tapering in the moles.

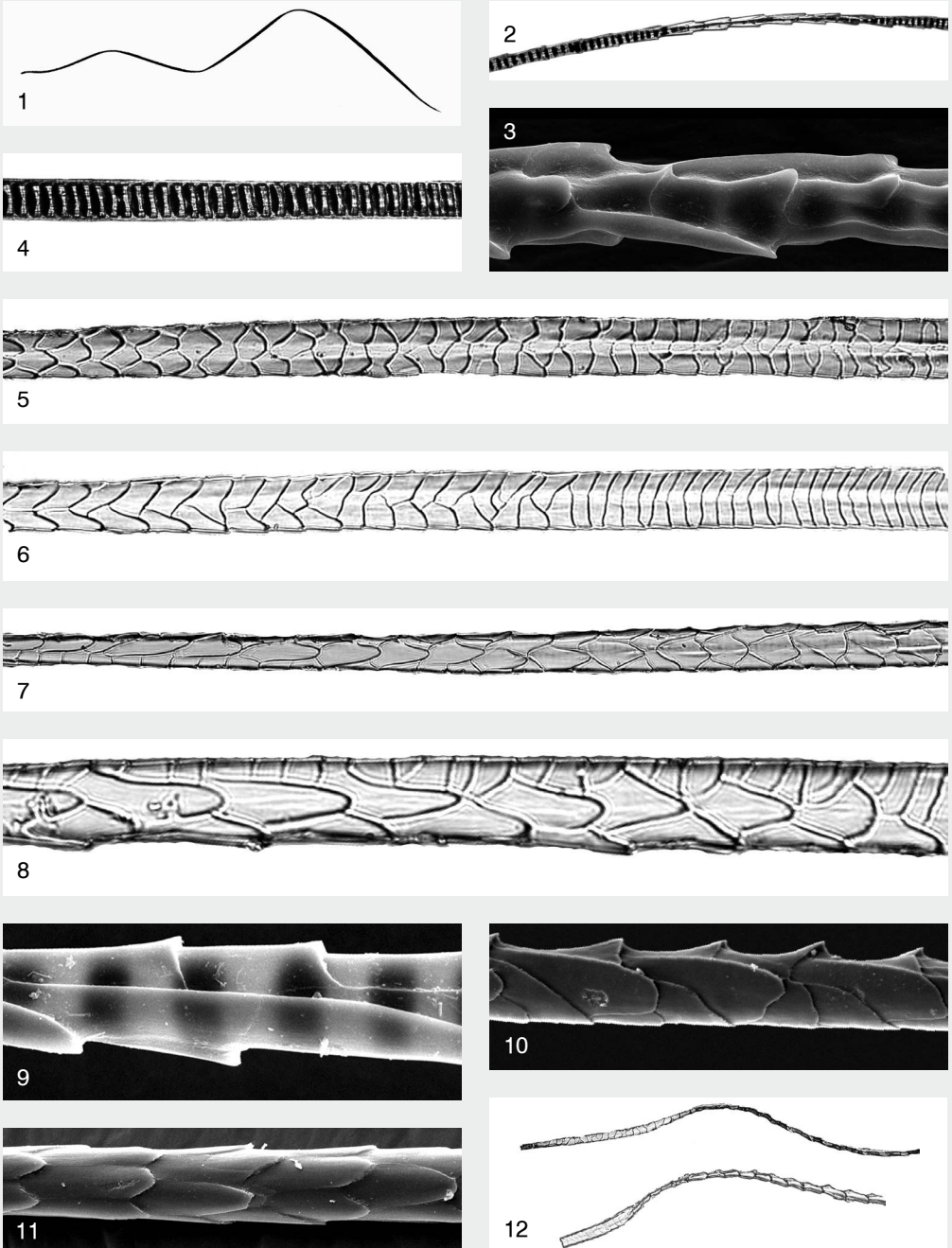
HAIR, MICROSCOPIC: The bulb ball-shaped or knobby. The basal section is tubular or slightly bulbous. The cuticular pattern is corniculate coronal at basal part. The GH1 guard hairs have rhomboid scales on the shaft and the transit; the cross-section is most often circular; a shallow channel may be present on the shield. The cuticular pattern of GH2 is combined petal on the shaft, elongated rhomboid on the strictures, broad petal or rhomboidal pine-cone on the transit. The pattern of the shield is transversal petal at the maximum diameter, often with one or two channels; the apical pattern is figureless waved, apically rippled.

The medulla is nummiform, uniserial regular or chromosomal along the entire hair; tubular amorphous or medullaless at the strictures. The pigments aggregate within the spaces between the medullar cells; on the shield, they can be found densely but diffusely also in the cortex; the tip is usually transparent, lacking the medulla.

The diagnostic cross section characters are found in the basal part, in the shaft and the maximum diameter of the GH2. The cross sections most often H-shaped or quadri-concave (amoeboid) in the genera *Neomys* and *Sorex*, U-shaped in *Crocidura* and circular or oblong in *Talpa*.

TAXONOMIC CHARACTER of the order: the combined petal cuticular pattern at the shaft.

SIZE: $m/d_x = 0.75$



Soricomorpha: 1 = shape of GH2 and UH hairs; 2 = stricture, transparent view; 3 = stricture, SEM; 4 = medulla; 5 = cuticula, channelled transit; 6 = cuticula, transit; 7 = cuticula, distal shaft; 8 = cuticula, proximal shaft; 9 = proximal shaft, SEM; 10 = distal shaft, SEM; 11 = base, SEM; 12 = shapes of basal sections