

Linzer biol. Beitr.	38/2	1138-1142	29.12.2006
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A new species of *Taxicera* and additional records of Himalayan Aleocharinae (Insecta: Coleoptera, Staphylinidae)

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A b s t r a c t : *Taxicera acuta* sp.n. (central Nepal) is described and illustrated. Additional records of several Aleocharinae species are reported from the Himalaya, among them two first records from Nepal and India, respectively.

K e y w o r d s : Coleoptera, Staphylinidae, Aleocharinae, *Taxicera*, Palearctic region, Himalaya, taxonomy, new species, new records.

Introduction

The Aleocharinae fauna of the Himalaya has been addressed in various articles during the past two decades (e.g. PACE 1991, 1992). Nevertheless, the inventory of this extremely diverse subfamily in the Himalayan region is still poorly known, as is suggested by continuous new discoveries even in Nepal, one of the best studied areas in the Eastern Palearctic region.

The present paper is based primarily on recently collected material from the Deutsches Entomologisches Institut and the Naturkundemuseum Erfurt. It not only yielded an undescribed species of *Taxicera* MULSANT & REY, but also several records of species whose distributions are poorly understood, among them two first records from Nepal and India, respectively.

Material and abbreviations

The material examined is deposited in the following collections:

DEI.....Deutsches Entomologisches Institut, Müncheberg (L. Zerche)

NMENaturkundemuseum Erfurt (M. Hartmann, W. Apfel)

cAss.....author's private collection

***Autalia smetanai* PACE 1991**

A d d i t i o n a l m a t e r i a l e x a m i n e d : **Nepal:** 4 exs., Gandaki prov., Manaslu, Bara Pokhari Lekh, Chhandi Khola valley, 2000-2300 m, 11.-12.IV.2003, leg. Schmidt (NME, cAss).

Remarks: The species is widespread in Nepal and was recently recorded also from the Chinese province Yunnan (ASSING 2005c).

***Cordalia permutata* ASSING 2002**

Additional material examined: **Nepal:** 3 exs., Annapurna, W Pokhara, Panchhase mt., 2000-2300 m, 18.V.1997, leg. Schmidt (DEI, cAss).

Remarks: This species is widespread in the Eastern Palaearctic region from Nepal to Taiwan; in Nepal, it appears to be the most common species of the genus (Assing 2002).

***Himalagria hetzeli* ASSING 2005**

Additional material examined: **Nepal:** 1 ex., Annapurna, Telbrung Danda, 2000 m, 15.IX.1997, leg. Schmidt (cAss); 1 ex., Annapurna, Krapa Danda, 2500 m, 30.V.1997, leg. Schmidt (DEI).

Remarks: Both genus and species were described only recently from central Nepal (ASSING 2005a).

***Outachyusa nepalensis* PACE 1991**

Material examined: **Nepal:** 1 ex., Annapurna, Marsyangdi valley, Barg chhop, 1700-2200 m, 22.-23.VIII.1995, leg. Schmidt (DEI); 1 ex., Annapurna, Lete-Ghasa, 2100-2500 m, 29.IV.1999, leg. Hirthe & Krüger (cAss); 1 ex., Annapurna, Modi Khola valley, lower Annapurna base camp, 2300-2700 m, 11.VI.2000, leg. Schmidt (cAss). **India:** 1 ex., Himachal Pradesh, Kulu valley, Manali, 1900-2100 m, V.1989, leg. Schuh (cAss).

Remarks: Previously, only the female holotype from "Bakhri Kharka" in central Nepal had become known (PACE 1991). The species is here recorded from India for the first time.

***Taxicera acuta* sp.n. (Figs 1-9)**

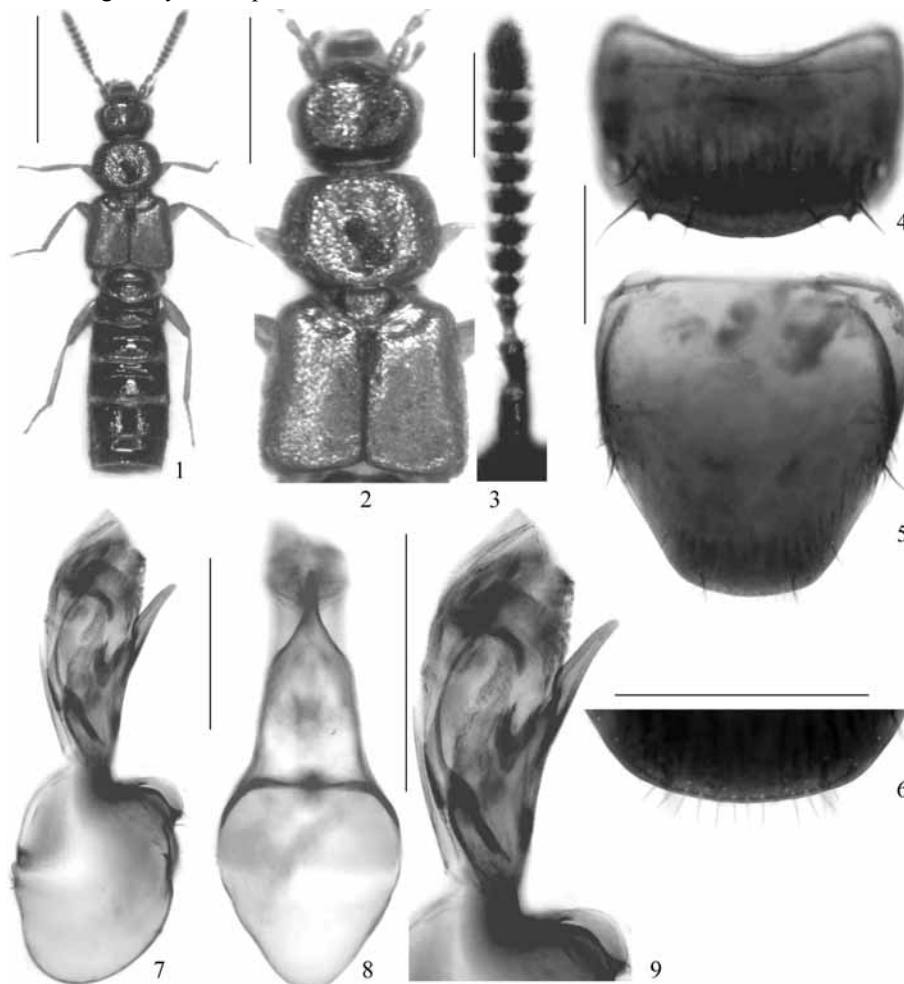
Holotype ♂: Nepal Annapurna Mts., Sikles, 1900 m, 2.8.95, leg. J. Schmidt / DEI Ankauf J. Schmidt 1999 / Holotypus ♂ *Taxicera acuta* sp.n. det. V. Assing 2006 (DEI). **Paratype** ♂: same data as holotype (cAss).

Description: 3.4-3.7 mm. Facies as in Fig. 1. Coloration: head blackish brown; pronotum dark brown; elytra yellowish to yellowish brown; abdomen blackish brown, with segments III-IV slightly paler brown; legs yellowish; antennae dark brown, with the basal 3 antennomeres paler.

Head distinctly transverse, approximately 1.35 times as wide as long (length measured from anterior margin of clypeus); puncturation coarse and very dense, anterior median area with or without very sparse punctures; dorsal surface without distinct microsculpture; eyes large and bulging, distinctly longer than postocular region in dorsal view (Fig. 2). Antenna with antennomere III slightly shorter and narrower than II; IV small and approximately twice as wide as long; V-X approximately 3 times as wide as long; XI slightly longer than the combined length of IX and X (Fig. 3). Maxillary palpus with fourth joint rather long, more than 2/3 the length of third joint.

Pronotum approximately 1.15 times as wide as head and 1.35 times as wide as long; puncturation dense, rather coarse, but not very deep; microsculpture distinct, but surface with subdued shine (Fig. 2).

Elytra approximately 1.15 times as long and 1.3 times as wide as pronotum; puncturation fine and moderately dense, barely noticeable in the pronounced microsculpture (Fig. 2). Hind wings fully developed.



Figs 1-9: *Taxicera acuta* sp.n.: (1) ♂ habitus; (2) ♂ forebody; (3) antenna; (4) ♂ tergite VIII; (5) ♂ sternite VIII; (6) posterior margin of ♂ sternite VIII; (7-8) median lobe of aedeagus in lateral and in ventral view; (9) apical part of median lobe of aedeagus in lateral view. Scales: 1: 1.0 mm; 2: 0.5 mm; 3-9: 0.2 mm.

Abdomen with anterior halves of tergites almost impunctate; posterior halves of tergites with sparse and moderately fine puncturation; microsculpture distinct, but shallow, predominantly composed of transverse meshes on tergites III-IV and of isodiametric meshes on tergites V-VII.

♂: head and pronotum deeply and extensively impressed (Fig. 2); posterior margin of tergite VIII smooth, laterally with short dent (Fig. 4); sternite VIII elongated posteriorly

(Fig. 5), posterior margin truncate (Fig. 6); median lobe of aedeagus with very acute ventral process (Figs 7-9).

♀: unknown.

E t y m o l o g y : The name (Lat., adj.) refers to the apically long and acute ventral process of the aedeagus.

C o m p a r a t i v e n o t e s : From all its congeners, the new species is distinguished by the male primary and secondary sexual characters, especially by the apically long and acute ventral process of the aedeagus, as well as by the shape of the posterior margin of the male tergite VIII. Using the key in KAPP (2005), the species would key out together with *T. deplanata* (GRAVENHORST). From this species, *T. acuta* is additionally distinguished particularly by the much coarser and denser puncturation, as well as the less pronounced microsculpture of the head and pronotum, and by the much deeper and more extensive impressions on head and pronotum (at least in the male). From the three Indian representatives, *T. necrophila* (CAMERON), *T. atra* (CAMERON), and *T. tertiana* (CAMERON), it is separated by larger size. In addition, it is distinguished from *T. necrophila* by the presence of microsculpture on the pronotum and by the more extensive impression on the pronotum, from *T. atra*, of which only the female holotype has become known, by much paler coloration especially of the elytra, the more transverse head, the larger eyes, and the shorter antennomere II (in relation to I), and from *T. tertiana* by the less pronounced microsculpture of the forebody, the more transverse head, the larger eyes, and the unmodified antennomere III (in *T. tertiana* laterally compressed). For diagnoses and illustrations of the other Palaearctic and Indian representatives of the genus see CAMERON (1939) and KAPP (2005).

D i s t r i b u t i o n a n d b i o n o m i c s : The type locality is situated in the Annapurna region in central Nepal. Additional bionomic data are not available.

***Drusilla canaliculata* (FABRICIUS 1787)**

M a t e r i a l e x a m i n e d : **Nepal:** 2 exs., Annapurna, E Lamjun Himal, S Sundar Danda, 2000-3500 m, 15.V.1994, leg. Schmidt (DEI, cAss).

R e m a r k s : The species is widespread and common in the Palaearctic region (ASSING 2005b); it is here recorded from Nepal for the first time.

***Amaurodera soror* (CAMERON 1939)**

A d d i t i o n a l m a t e r i a l e x a m i n e d : **Nepal:** 3 exs., Manaslu, Meme Pokhari Lekh, above Taksar village, 2100 m, 31.VIII.1995, leg. Schmidt (DEI, cAss); 1 ex., Manaslu, Dudh Pokhari Lekh, above Journey village, 2100-2600 m, 15.IX.1995, leg. Schmidt (DEI); 1 ex., Annapurna, Telbrung Danda, 2000 m, 15.VI.1997, leg. Schmidt (DEI).

R e m a r k s : The range of this Himalayan species extends from Himachal Pradesh to eastern Nepal; an updated distribution map is provided by ASSING (2006).

***Zyras (Termidonia) nepalensis* PACE 1992**

M a t e r i a l e x a m i n e d : **Nepal:** 16 exs., Manaslu, Meme Pokhari Lekh, above Taksar village, 2100 m, 31.VIII.1995, leg. Schmidt (DEI, cAss).

R e m a r k s : The description of this conspicuous species is based on a single male holotype collected in cattle dung in the surroundings of Pokhara (PACE 1992).

Acknowledgements

My thanks are due to the colleagues indicated in the material section for the loan of material under their care. Benedikt Feldmann, Münster, proof-read the manuscript.

Zusammenfassung

Taxicera acuta sp.n. (Zentral-Nepal) wird beschrieben und abgebildet. Weitere Aleocharinae werden aus dem Himalaya gemeldet, darunter je ein Erstnachweis aus Nepal und Indien.

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Zeitschrift/Journal: [Linzer biologische Beiträge](#)

Jahr/Year: 2006

Band/Volume: [0038_2](#)

Autor(en)/Author(s): Assing Volker

Artikel/Article: [A new species of Taxicera and additional records of Himalayan Aleocharinae \(Insecta: Coleoptera, Staphylinidae\) 1138-1142](#)