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A new *Elathous* REITTER, 1890, from Syria (Coleoptera: Elateridae)

Rüdiger PREISS

Abstract

Elathous ekaterinae n. sp. from the Anti-Lebanon Mountains and Golan Heights in Syria is described. It is separated from all known species of this genus in the Levantine area by its distinct yellowish colour, slim body and long, thread-like antennae.

Zusammenfassung

Elathous ekaterinae sp. n. vom Antilibanon-Gebirge und den Golan-Höhen wird beschrieben. Diese neue Art unterscheidet sich von allen bekannten *Elathous*-Arten der Levante durch die gelbliche Färbung, den schlanken Körper und die langen, fadenförmigen Fühler.

Introduction

During three periods of service, altogether approximately three years between 1996 and 2002, with the United Nations Peace Keeping Forces on the Golan Heights, I had the opportunity to collect new material and also to examine the beetle collection of the Tel-Aviv University. Due to the political situation and mine danger, my activities in the field were more or less restricted to water traps, pitfall traps and light traps. Use of a fluorescent black light and security spot-lights led to the discovery of the new species described here.

***Elathous ekaterinae* n. sp. (Fig. 1)**

Holotype: ♂, Syria, Golan Heights, Quneitra, 'Area of Separation', 'Charlie Gate', 950 m, 15. 09. 2001, leg. R. Preiss, coll. The Natural History Museum (BMNH), London. Paratypes: 2 ♂♂, with same data as HT, coll. Preiss, Carinthia; 1 ♂, Syria, Anti-Lebanon Mts., Bludan, 2100 m, leg. R. Preiss, 8. 08. 2000, coll. Preiss, Carinthia; 1 ♂, Israeli occupied Syria, Mt. Hermon, 2000 m, leg. Blondheim et Broza, 10. 08. 1970, coll. Tel-Aviv University.

Derivatio nominis: Dedicated to my dear friend Ekaterina.

Description:

Male: Shiny; light yellowish brown. Head slightly darker to ferruginous, as well as a narrow band along the frontal margin of the pronotum. Elytral apex with a tiny hint of a shadow. Pubescence yellow to golden, fine, of medium length, raised, on pronotum and head directed forwards.

Head closely punctured, punctures large and more or less umbilicate (if less, then punctures less crowded, but dense). Head feebly convex, with a deep triangular impression before its weakly curved anterior margin, which is sharply protruding roof-like over the clypeus.



Fig. 1. *Elathous ekaterinae* n. sp.

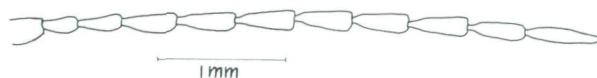


Fig. 2. antenna.

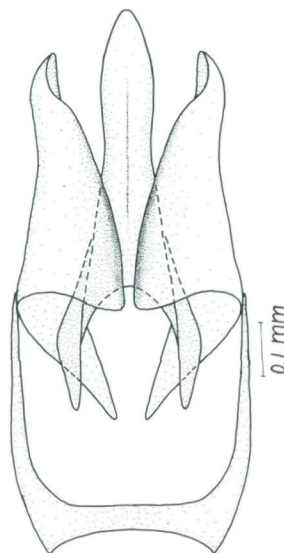


Fig. 3. aedeagus.

Antennae (Fig. 2) long, threadlike, exceeding apices of posterior angles of pronotum by approx. 2.5 segments. Second segment shortest, but 2x longer than wide, third segment slightly longer, both sub-conical and shiny; fourth to seventh elongate, increasingly slender to the last (11th) segment, which is needle-shaped and more than 4x longer than wide.

Tarsal ratios (1st to 5th segment, basic value = 1 for 4th segment):

pro-tarsus: 2.3 – 2 – 1.4 – 1 – 2.2

meso-tarsus: 2.8 – 2 – 1.4 – 1 – 2

meta-tarsus: 2.8 – 2.1 – 1.5 – 1 – 1.9

Pronotum (measured from apices of posterior angles to apices of anterior angles) 1.2x longer than wide, gently convex; sides sub-arcuate, feebly dilated just before the middle or in the anterior third; posterior angles short, slightly divergent, with a sharp carina twice as long as the hind angles. Lateral margin complete, straight, carved downwards anteriorly. Punctures on the disk of pronotum fine with wide and shiny intervals, towards the front margin (on the darker band) slightly umbilicate.

Lateral margin of prosternum apparently with a double suture, apices slightly divergent, taking a part of the 3rd antennal segment.

Scutellum almost 1.5x longer than wide, sub-quadrangular, basal margin convex and densely punctured. Shoulders evenly rounded, without protuberances (dorsal view). Elytra 2.6x longer than broad; nearly parallel, inconspicuously dilated just in front of the posterior

third, narrowly rounded at the apex; striae well marked and closely punctured; interstriae flat or slightly convex, with few fine punctures.

Aedeagus as in the fig. 3.

Female: unknown.

Size: Length 8.5-11 mm; width 2.1-2.8 mm.

Variability: Apart from their size, the specimens vary in the size of umbilicate punctures on the head, the length of the pronotal hind angles, the lateral margins of pronotum (more or less arcuate), and profile of interstriae, which may be flat to slightly convex.

Comparative remarks: The new species can be separated from all other known species by its yellowish colour, the slender body and long, thin antennae.

Ecology: This species lives at high altitudes; 950 m at the locus typicus on the Golan Heights, probably close to the lowest altitude where it can be found. At the locality in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains the vegetation consisted of alpine meadow in the damp areas around small pools or springs. Grassland with small pools is also the dominant habitat at the locality west of Quneitra ('C-Gate'). *Elathous ekaterinae*, therefore, is believed to be associated with wet meadows.

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