

A new *Myriochila* (subgenus *Monelica*) from Baluchistan, Pakistan (Coleoptera: Cicindelidae)

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Abstract: A new tiger beetle species, *Myriochila* (*Monelica*) *akhteri* **n. sp.** (Coleoptera: Cicindelidae), closely related to the African species *M. (M.) dorsata* (Brullé, 1834) and *M. (M.) mirei* Rivalier, 1961, is described from Lowralai, Baluchistan, Pakistan. This African-Asian connection east of the Sahelian/Saharian area, the Arabian peninsula and the arid Iranian plateau is a biogeographical distribution similar to that exhibited by two other closely related species in this same genus the Indian species *M. (M.) fastidiosa* (Dejean, 1825) and its African counterpart *M. (M.) vicina* (Dejean, 1831).

Riassunto: Una nuova Cicindela, *Myriochila* (*Monelica*) *akhteri* **n. sp.** (Coleoptera: Cicindelidae), affine alle specie Africane *M. (M.) dorsata* (Brullé, 1834) e *M. (M.) mirei* Rivalier, 1961, viene descritta di Loralai, Beluchistan, Pakistan. Questa interessante connessione africano-asiatica, molto a est dell'area sahelio-sahariana, della penisola arabica e dell'arido plateau iraniano ricalca una distribuzione bogeografica simile a quella mostrata da altre due specie dello stesso genere, la specie indiana *M. (M.) fastidiosa* (Dejean, 1825) e la sua comune controparte africana *M. (M.) vicina* (Dejean, 1831).

Key words: Tiger beetles, Cicindelidae, *Myriochila*, new species, *akhteri* **n. sp.** Pakistan

The second author recently received tiger beetle specimens from Pakistan (Baluchistan) of an undescribed *Myriochila* (*Monelica*) species, closely related to the African species *M. (M.) dorsata* (Brullé, 1834) and

M. (M.) mirei Rivalier, 1961, both known only from the Sahelian or Saharian areas. This new species is described in the following.

***Myriochila (Monelica) akhteri* n. sp.** (figs 1–6)

Material examined: Holotype, male, and eight paratypes (5 males, 3 females) from Pakistan (Baluchistan): Lowralai, 12.VII.2008, A. Akhter leg. (Lowralai (Loralai) lies at about 150 km ENE from Quetta, Baluchistan). Holotype and 3 paratypes in coll. WIESNER (later SMNS, Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde), 4 paratypes in coll. CASSOLA and 1 paratype in coll. SCHÜLE.

Diagnosis: A medium-sized *Myriochila* species of the subgenus *Monelica*, closely resembling the Sahelian *M. (M.) dorsata* (Brullé, 1834) and Saharian species *M. (M.) mirei* Rivalier, 1961, with a wide continual marginal whitish band from the shoulder to the elytral apex; elytral ground colour greenish bronze. Humeral lunule hooked upwards apically, middle lunule rather long, descending on disc, connected or not with a discal roundish spot, subapical lunule emitting on disc a conspicuous, wide, comma-shaped spur (sometimes more or less coalescing with the marginal band). Females devoid of any elytral mirror. Labrum testaceous, much wider than long, unidentate in front in the middle, with four setigerous punctures near forward margins (two in the middle, two near the lateral sides). Head and genae glabrous, apart from two setigerous punctures on fixed loci near eyes. Femora metallic green; tibiae and first two segments of tarsi mostly testaceous-rufescent, metallic green apically; last tarsomeres metallic green.

Description: Head bronze coloured with cupreous reflections on vertex, very finely striated. Glabrous, with two setae or setigerous punctures at fixed loci near the eyes. Genae glabrous. Labrum testaceous, much wider than long in both sexes, distinctly unidentate in front in the middle, with four setae or setigerous punctures near forward margins (two in the middle, two near the lateral sides). Mandibles shiny piceous-black with long pointed apical tooth and an elongated, internally rounded, yellowish-testaceous outer spot near the basis. Maxillary and labial palpi testaceous with the last joint dark metallic. Antennae as long as to the middle of the elytral length, shorter in female; scape and antennomeres 2–4 metallic

green to cupreous, almost glabrous; antennomeres 5–11 lighter, rufescent brown, finely and evenly pubescent.



Fig. 1: *Myriochila (Monelica) akhteri* **n. sp.**, male paratype, habitus.

Thorax: pronotum slightly longer than wide, bronze with coppery reflections, finely and evenly sculpted, the sculpture appearing distinctly granular. Lateral sides covered with recumbent white hairs. Proepisterna dark coppery, covered with long white recumbent hairs. White recumbent pubescence covering mesepimera, sternum and metepisterna, as well as the bottom end of mesepisterna. Female mesepisternal coupling sulci lacking or poorly developed.

Elytra: Elytral ground colour dark, greenish bronze with coppery reflections, covered with small, evenly spaced, bluish punctures. All elytral markings confluent, forming a wide continuous marginal band from the shoulder to the elytral apex; humeral lunule hooked upwards apically; middle lunule long, descending on disc, connected or not with a discal roundish spot; subapical lunule with a conspicuous, wide, comma-shaped spur extending from the disc, sometimes coalescing with the marginal band. Females devoid of any elytral mirror. Elytral apex rounded, with a tiny sutural tooth in both sexes.

Underside green with coppery reflections. Abdominal sternites finely pubescent laterally. Trochanters testaceous-rufescent. Femora metallic green, tibiae and first two proximal segments of tarsi mostly testaceous-rufescent, metallic green apically, last tarsomeres metallic green.

Male aedeagus arched, tapering, approximately of the same width in the apical half, briefly ending with a roundish slightly up-turned apex; a rather long crest on the left side near the apex. Inner sac with reduced circonvolutions of the flagellum.

Length: 11–12.5 mm (without labrum).

Etymology: This new *Myriochila* species is cordially dedicated to its discoverer, A. AKHTER, who collected the specimens from the type locality.

Remarks: Partially rufescent legs and inner sac of aedeagus make it clear that this *Myriochila* species is a member of the subgenus *Monelica* Rivalier, 1950 (RIVALIER 1950). Moreover, the whitish elytral markings that form a continuous wide marginal band and a rather long, descending middle band, parallel to the suture, suggest that *Myriochila* (*Monelica*) *akhteri* **n. sp.** is a close relative of both *Myriochila* (*Monelica*) *dorsata* and *M. (M.) mirei*, respectively known from several African Sahelian countries (from Senegal to Sudan) and the Saharian area (Morocco, Senegal, Algeria, Niger, Ciad: WERNER 2000; Mali, Mauritania: new records). However, the new species differs from both these species by

having darker elytra, a distinctly hooked apical end of the humeral lunule, a distinctly unidentate labrum and a longer subapical crest of male aedeagus, and moreover it is very distant geographically from its closest relatives.

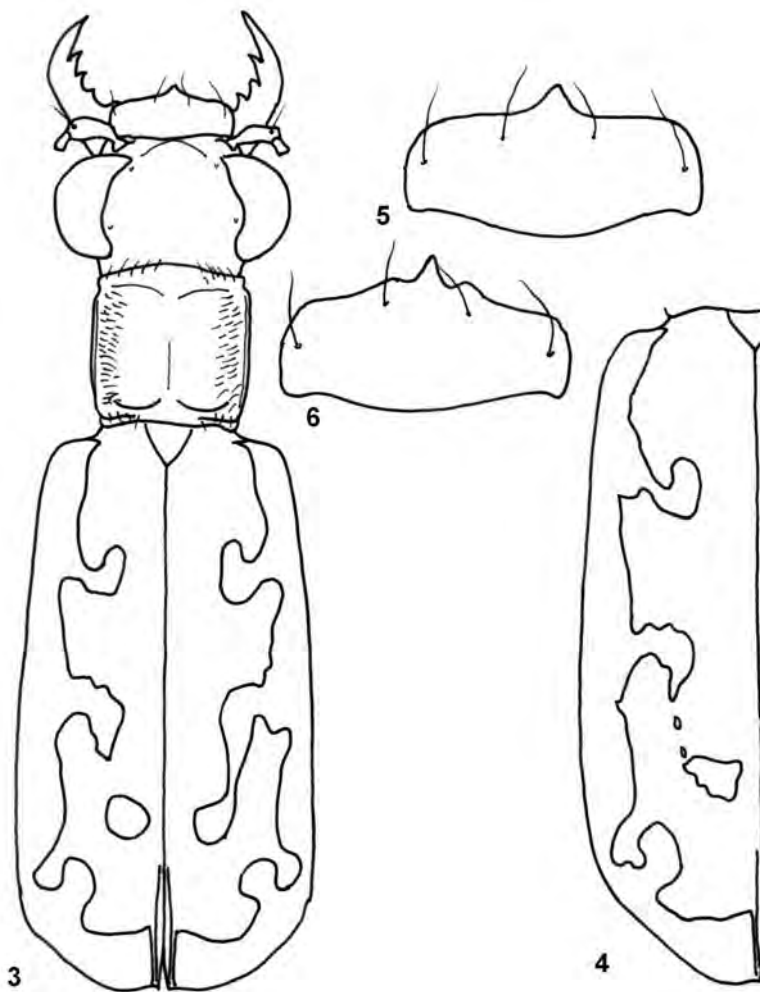


It is notable to find a near relative of the two African species of *Myriochila* (*Monelica*) in Pakistan (Baluchistan) so far east of the Sahelian/Saharian regions, the Arabian peninsula and the arid Iranian plateau. However, in the same subgenus *Monelica*, a similar distribution is exhibited by two other closely related species, the Indian *M. (M.) fastidiosa* (Dejean, 1825), widespread in the Indian subcontinent from Pakistan to Sri Lanka and Burma (ACCIAVATTI & PEARSON 1969) and its common African counterpart *M. (M.) vicina* (Dejean, 1831), formerly considered a subspecies of *fastidiosa* but more recently raised to full specific status by WERNER (2000), WERNER & CASSOLA (2000) and WERNER & OESTERLE (2000).

Fig. 2: *Myriochila* (*Monelica*) *akhteri* n. sp., aedeagus.

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Figs 3, 5: *Myriochila (Monelica) akhteri* **n. sp.**, male paratype; 3) habitus; 5) labrum.

Figs 4, 6: *Myriochila (Monelica) akhteri* **n. sp.**, female paratype; 6) labrum; 4), left elytron.

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(105th contribution towards the knowledge of Cicindelidae)

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