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A new species of *Autalia* LEACH in SAMOUELLE from China (Insecta: Coleoptera: Staphylinidae: Aleocharinae)

With 8 Figures

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Abstract. *Autalia schuelkei* spec. nov., the eighth species of the genus in the Palaearctic region, is described from Sichuan, China. The primary and secondary sexual characters are illustrated.

Introduction

According to a recent review, seven valid species of *Autalia* LEACH in SAMOUELLE occur in the Palaearctic region (ASSING 1997). Together with five and ten species from the New World and the Afrotropical region, respectively (KLIMASZEWSKI 1992), the genus currently comprises 22 valid species worldwide. During a joint excursion with A. Pütz and D. Wrase to China in spring 1997, Michael Schülke, Berlin, collected several specimens of a further – the 23rd – species of *Autalia*, which is described below.

Autalia schuelkei spec. nov.

Holotype ♂, CHINA: W-Sichuan (14), Daxue Shan, Hailuogou Glacier Park, Camp 3, 3000–3100 m, 29.34.22 N, 101.59.39 E, 29.05.1997, leg. M. Schülke (coll. Assing).

Paratypes 7 ♂♂, 6 ♀♀, same data as holotype (Deutsches Entomologisches Institut Eberswalde, Staatliches Museum für Tierkunde Dresden, coll. Schülke, coll. Assing).

Description.

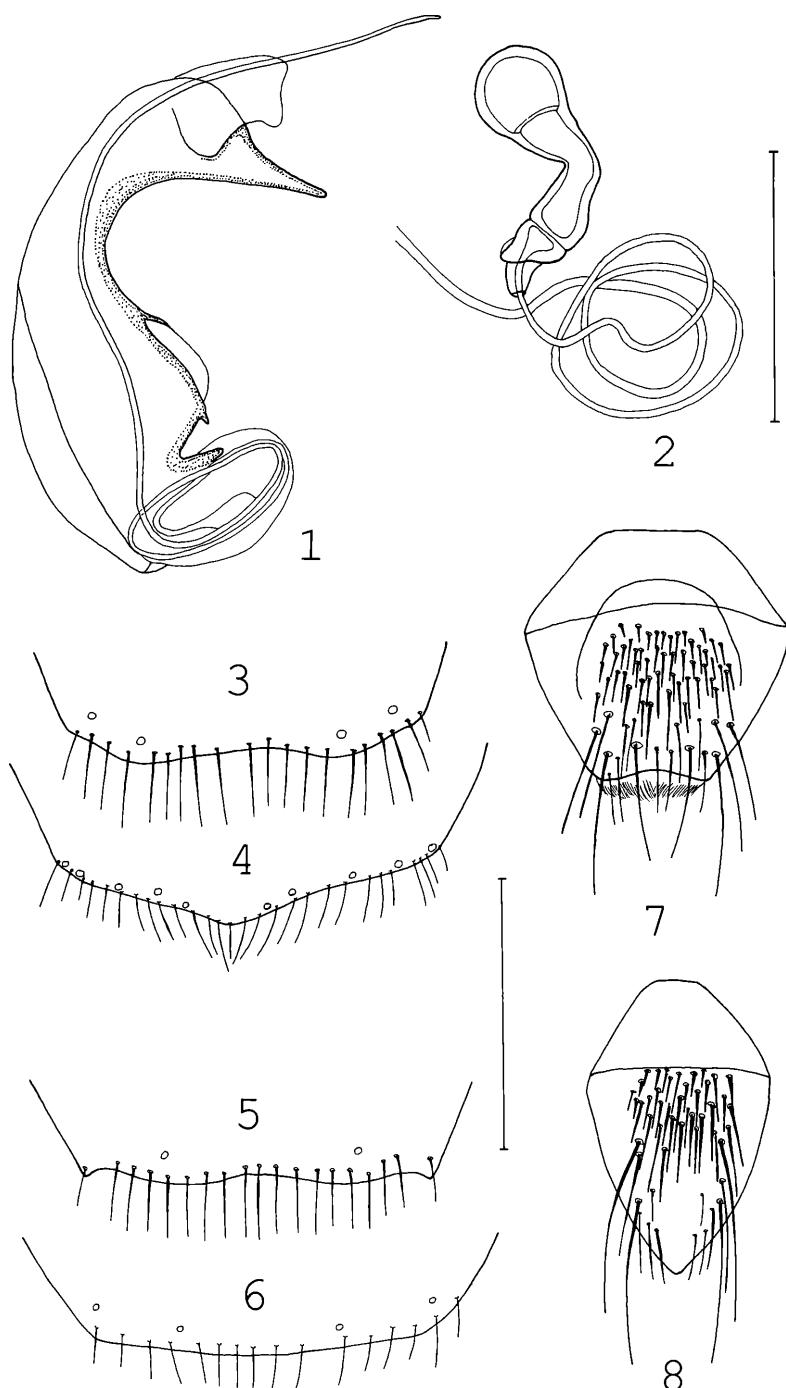
Body length 2.2–2.8 mm; in general appearance (size, colour, punctuation) somewhat reminding of *A. rivularis* (GRAV.), from which, however, the new species is readily distinguished by external characters alone.

Whole body ± uniformly dark brown to blackish brown; legs, palpi and abdominal apex lighter, yellowish to light brown.

Head with very small eyes; temples in dorsal view (from hind margin of eyes to neck) at least 3 × longer than eyes, weakly convex; punctuation as in *A. rivularis*; antennae somewhat more massive and especially longer than in *A. rivularis*; antennomeres I and II distinctly oblong and longer than the following joints, III–IV oblong, but decreasing in length, V oblong to subquadrate, VI subquadrate to indistinctly transverse, VII–X transverse, and XI ca. 1.5 × the length of X.

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Figs 1–8: *Autalia schuelkei* spec. nov. (1, 3, 4, 7: holotype; 2, 5, 6, 8: paratype): aedeagus in lateral view (1), spermatheca (2); hind margins of ♂ tergum (3) and sternum (4) VIII; hind margins of ♀ tergum (5) and sternum (6) VIII; ♂ tergum X (7); ♀ tergum X (8). Scales: 0.2 mm.

Pronotum with fine and sparse punctuation as in *A. rivularis*; lateral furrows and transverse basal groove distinct, together forming a U-shaped impression; median furrow narrow and shallow, posteriorly indistinct, not reaching transverse basal groove.

Elytra short, at suture – measured from apex of scutellum to hind margin – only as long as or slightly longer than the pronotum (ratio: 1.0–1.1); punctuation as in *A. rivularis* very indistinct, minute and sparse; hind wings reduced, brachypterous.

Abdomen with punctuation similar to *A. rivularis*, denser on terga VI–VII than on terga III–V

Sexual dimorphism of sternum VIII and tergum X distinct.

♂ tergum VIII posteriorly with weak central concavity and rounded angles (Fig. 3); hind margin of sternum VIII distinctly pointed centrally (Fig. 4); tergum X posteriorly ± truncate to weakly concave (Fig. 7); aedeagus of characteristic shape, median lobe in lateral view strongly bent and apically very acute; flagellum rather long, with 2–3 basal coils (Fig. 1).

♀ tergum VIII posteriorly as in ♂, but with distinct corners (Fig. 5); hind margin of sternum VIII truncate to weakly convex; tergum X apically acutely pointed (Fig. 8); spermatheca of characteristic shape (Fig. 2).

Derivatio nominis: I gladly dedicate this species to its collector, the distinguished specialist of Staphylinidae and dear friend Michael Schülke, Berlin.

Distribution and bionomics: *A. schuelkei* spec. nov. is only known from the type locality, where it was sieved from litter of deciduous trees on sandy soil in the vicinity of a riverbank (SCHÜLKE, pers. comm.). The absence of hind wings suggests a restricted area of distribution.

In order to accomodate the new species, the key to the Palaearctic species of *Autalia* in ASSING (1997) will have to be modified as follows:

Key to the Palaearctic species of *Autalia*

1. Body colour, except for the legs, ± uniformly dark brown to blackish; antennomeres 1–3 as dark as the following joints; maxillary palpi blackish brown to black. ♂: flagellum of aedeagus short, not coiled at base. Species predominantly associated with decaying organic matter (dung, compost etc.). 2

Antennae, pronotum, elytra, abdominal segments III–V and tip of abdomen usually yellowish brown to reddish yellow or light brown; antennae often darkened apically; in melanistic specimens at least the base of the antennae and abdominal segments III–V lighter; one ± uniformly brown to blackish brown species with yellowish maxillary palpi. ♂: flagellum in some species longer and coiled at base. Species predominantly associated with fungi or with litter. (Note that the ecology of *A. rufula* and *A. smetanai* is unknown.) 3

[...]

4. Whole body, sometimes except for the slightly darkened tergum VI, ± uniformly reddish or brown to blackish brown; body length not exceeding 2.8 mm. Eastern Palaearctic species. 4a

Head darker than pronotum; size often larger. Western Palaearctic species. 5

- 4a. Body colour reddish, on average smaller (1.8–2.5 mm).

♂ tergum VIII distinctly concave posteriorly; hind margin of sternum VIII only weakly pointed in the middle, tergum X of different shape; median lobe of aedeagus in ventral view with deeply bifid ventral process, flagellum shorter (see Figs. 4a, c, e, f in ASSING 1997).

♀ spermatheca and tergum X as in Figs. 4b, d in ASSING (1997).

Japan.

A. rufula SHARP

Body colour brown to blackish brown; on average larger (2.2–2.8 mm).

♂ tergum VIII weakly sinuate posteriorly (Fig. 3); hind margin of sternum VIII centrally more distinctly pointed (Fig. 4); median lobe of aedeagus not bifid, in lateral view of different shape; flagellum clearly longer (Fig. 1).

♀ tergum X posteriorly acutely pointed (Fig. 8); spermatheca of characteristic shape (Fig. 2). Sichuan, China.

A. schuelkei spec. nov.

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