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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 Afro-tropical 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, Hailuoguo 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.

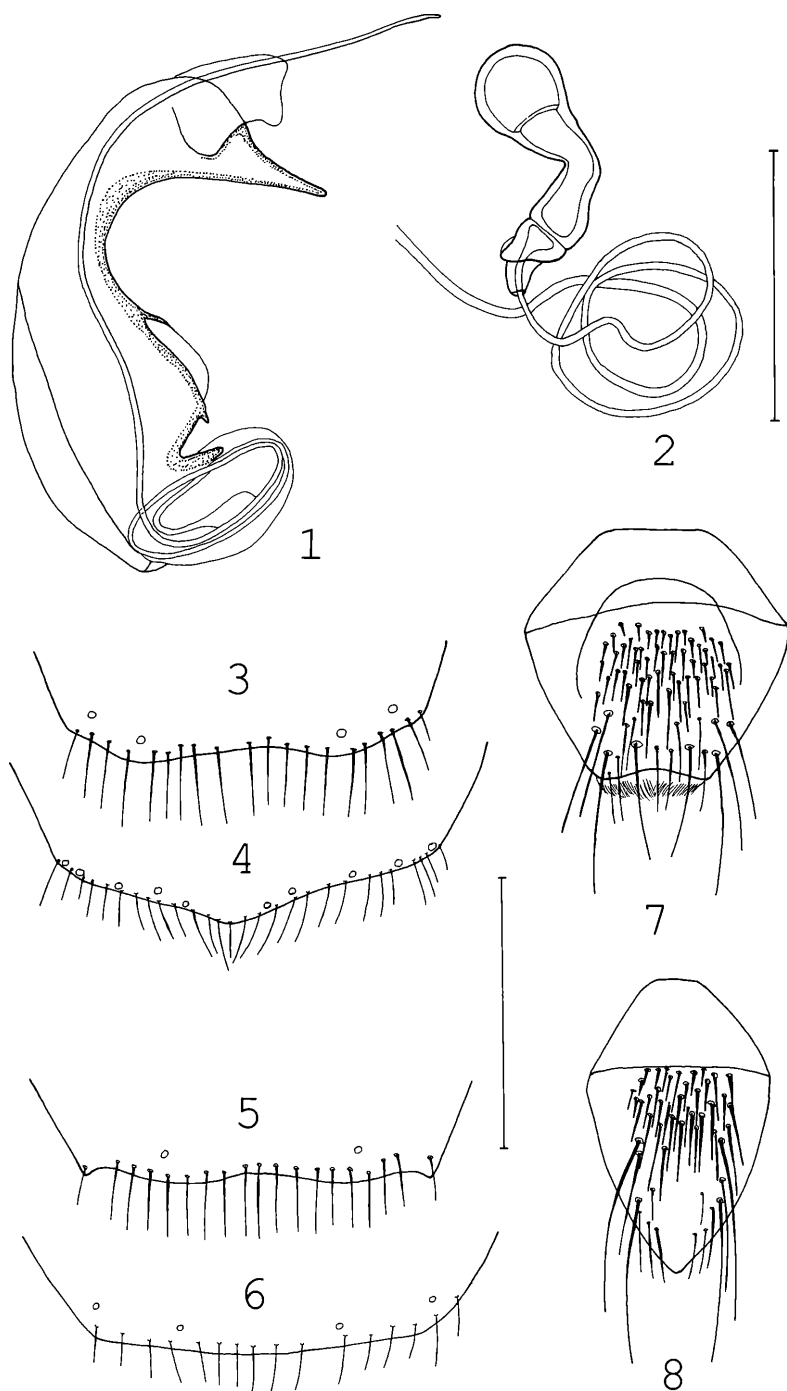
Body length 2.2–2.8 mm; in general appearance (size, colour, punctuation) somewhat reminding of *A. rivularis* (GRAV.), from which, however, the new species is readily distinguished by external characters alone.

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 punctation 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); punctation as in *A. rivularis* very indistinct, minute and sparse; hind wings reduced, brachypterous.

Abdomen with punctation 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 Palearctic species of *Autalia* in ASSING (1997) will have to be modified as follows:

Key to the Palearctic 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

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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 Palearctic species. 4a
- Head darker than pronotum; size often larger. Western Palearctic 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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