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Maciej MROCZKOWSKI

Nicrophorus (*Nicrophorus*) *kieticus* sp. n. z Wysp Salomona (*Coleoptera, Silphidae*)

Nicrophorus (*Nicrophorus*) *kieticus* sp. n. из Соломоновых Островов (*Coleoptera, Silphidae*)

Nicrophorus (*Nicrophorus*) *kieticus* sp. n. from the Solomon Islands (*Coleoptera, Silphidae*)

[With 1 textfigure]

The geographical distribution of the genus *Nicrophorus* FABR. is of considerable interest. Of the 66 species so far described[1], the great majority, i. e. 53, occur in the Holarctic Region, and do not penetrate to other zoogeographical regions; only 3 of these 53 species occur throughout the entire Holarctic Region, the remainder being Palearctic (31 species), or Nearctic species (14 species). 7 species occur in the Oriental Region, thus making a total of 60 species occurring in the northern hemisphere. Of the remaining 6 species inhabiting the southern hemisphere, 5 occur in the Neotropical Region, and one in New Guinea.

The complete absence of species belonging to the genus *Nicrophorus* FABR. in the Ethiopian Region, in Madagascar, Australia and the islands of the Pacific is very interesting. This absence is not the result of a lack of material from these regions, since species of the genus *Nicrophorus*

[1] 8 species, described by GISTEL in 1848 and 1857 (6 from Europe and 2 from North America) have purposely been omitted here, since they are almost certainly synonyms of other species.

FABR., on account of their size and the ease with which they can be collected, and owing to their way of life and habits, which are generally well-known, could not escape the notice of entomologists carrying out field research work in South Africa or Australia, especially as several species of the necrophagous beetles of the genus *Silpha* L. sensu lato were found in these regions. The explanation of the absence of the genus *Nicrophorus* FABR. in the Ethiopian and Australian Regions must be sought for in the history of the family *Silphidae*, its phylogenetic development, and in the changes which took place in the formation of the land masses of the world. It is, of course, absolutely impossible to draw general conclusions as to the history, for example, of the formation of continents on the basis of the distribution of the species belonging to one genus of insects only, but it is worthwhile recording the interesting distribution of the species belonging to the genus *Nicrophorus* FABR., with the aim of supplying material for the use of zoogeographers, who, after gathering a sufficient quantity of such facts, are then able to form general conclusions of an historical-zoogeographical nature. It is also worthwhile recording this interesting distribution for the reason that the genus *Nicrophorus* FABR. is a clearly distinct genus, and exhibits scarcely any close relationship to other genera of the family *Silphidae*. The only genera comparatively closely related to the genus *Nicrophorus* FABR., and connected in this respect with the separate tribe *Nicrophorini*, are the monotypic genus *Necrocharis* PORT., occurring in the Nearctic Region, and the genus *Ptomascopus* KRAATZ, to which 3 species are known to belong up to the present, occurring in the eastern part of the Palearctic Region, and which is also known from the Lower Oligocene of France.

In view of the distribution of the species belonging to the genus *Nicrophorus* FABR. described above, the discovery in the Solomon Islands of one species of this genus is very interesting, and a description of this species under the name *Nicrophorus* (*Nicrophorus*) *kieticus* sp. n. is given below. This is the second species known to occur in the northern part of the Australian Region. The first, occurring in New Guinea, *Nicrophorus* (*Nesonecrophorus*) *heurni* PORTEVIN, 1926, belongs to another subgenus, and differs considerably in a large number of its features from the species described below.

Nicrophorus (Nicrophorus) kieticus sp. n.

Holotype. Female. Length of body 16 mm. Head black, shiny, only the clypeal membrane orange-brown. Punctures on the head very delicate and widely spaced. Frons devoid

of a reddish spot. Antennae black, shiny, club of normal size, the first joint of the club is also black and shiny, the remaining three joints being dark-brown and matt-surfaced. Pronotum black, shiny and completely hairless. The punctures on the pronotum, like those on the head, very delicate and widely spaced. Elytra black, shiny, with three pale-yellow spots on each elytron. The form and arrangement of the spots as on

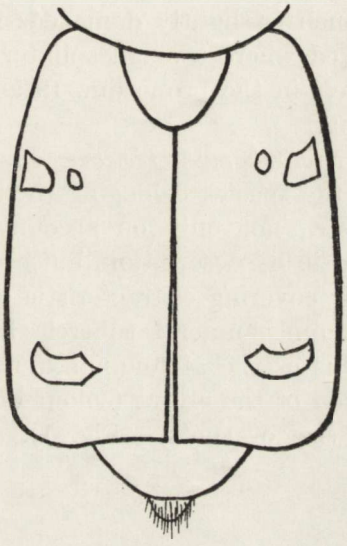

Fig. 1. *Nicrophorus* (*Nicrophorus*) *kieticus* sp. n. Elytra, ×6.

Fig. 1; the outer anterior spot does not touch the epipleura. Epipleurae of the elytra completely black. Punctures on the elytra widely spaced, but bigger and deeper than those on the head or pronotum, especially on the anterior part and tip of the elytra. There are three convex ribs on each elytron, but only the two inner ones are clearly visible. The outer rib is barely perceptible, and can best be seen on the larger of the anterior spots, where it runs through the centre of the latter. The ribs do not extend to the tip of the elytra, but stop just before the posterior spot. The side margins of the elytra and the humeral tubercles are completely hairless. The ven-

tral side of the body black, shiny, almost hairless, what hairs there are being very short, very widely spaced, and of a light colour. On the abdomen these hairs are black. The last abdominal segment densely covered with considerably longer, reddish hairs. The margins of the preceding segments completely hairless. Legs black, tibiae straight, not bent.

The specimen described above is labelled „Kieta, Bougainville" (Solomon Islands) and is kept in the collection of the Institute of Zoology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warszawa. This specimen is slightly damaged: in the middle the pronotum is cracked where a small splinter of wood has been driven into, and left in the pronotum. In addition, the middle left leg is missing.

Nicrophorus (*Nicrophorus*) *kieticus* sp. n. is not closely related to any of the species belonging to the subgenus *Nicrophorus* FABR. s. str., not only on account of the whole set of features detailed in its description, but especially on account of the type of hair covering characteristic of this species (side margins of elytra and humeral tubercle hairless, absence of hair on the margins of the abdominal sternites) and the characteristic coloration of the elytra (colour of spots pale-yellow, arrangement and size of spots — Fig. 1).

STRESZCZENIE

Autor opisuje nowy gatunek *Nicrophorus* (*Nicrophorus*) *kieticus* sp. n. na podstawie jednego okazu pochodzącego z Bougainville (Wyspy Salomona). Stanowisko to jest interesujące, ponieważ z 66 gatunków dotychczas znanych należących do rodzaju *Nicrophorus* FABR., 60 występuje na półkuli północnej, 5 w obszarze Neotropikalnym i jeden na Nowej Gwinei. Całkowicie brak jest grabarzy w obszarze Etiopijskim i w Australii.

РЕЗЮМЕ

Автор описывает новый вид *Nicrophorus* (*Nicrophorus*) *kieticus sp. n.* на основании одного экземпляра из Бугенвиль (Соломоновы острова). Место нахождения очень интересно, так как из 66 видов известных до сих пор, принадлежащих к роду *Nicrophorus* Fabr., 60 встречается в северном полушарии, 5 в неотропической области и один в Новой Гвинее. Совсем нет могильщиков в эфиопской области и в Австралии.

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