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INHOUD: J. KRIKKEN, *Aesalus timidus* sp. nov., a remarkable addition to the Indonesian stag-beetle fauna (Coleoptera: Lucanidae) (p. 49). — R. DE JONG, *Pyrgus warrenensis* Verity en *alveus* Hübner in de Hohe Tauern (Lepidoptera, Hesperidae) (p. 52). — D. HILLE RIS LAMBERS, *Aphis citricola* van der Goot, 1912, replaces *Aphis spiraecola* Patch, 1914 (Homoptera, Aphididae) (p. 59). — J. VAN DER VECHT, The date of publication of M. Spinola's paper on the Hymenoptera collected by V. Ghiliani in Para, with notes on the Eumenidae described in this work (p. 60). — Literatuur (p. 64: B. J. LEMPKE). — Korte mededelingen (p. 58: H. H. EVENHUIS en H. J. VLUG; p. 59: G. R. LANGOHR; p. 64: Nieuwe aanwinsten voor de bibliotheek, B. J. LEMPKE).

## ***Aesalus timidus* sp. nov., a remarkable addition to the Indonesian stag-beetle fauna (Coleoptera: Lucanidae)**

by

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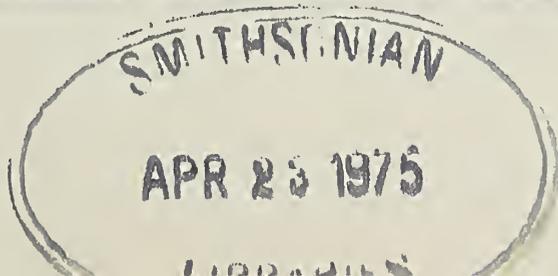
### ABSTRACT

*Aesalus timidus* sp. nov. from Sumatra is described and illustrated. The world distribution of *Aesalus* is briefly discussed.

During my 1972 expedition to North Sumatra I climbed the Gunung Bandahara, one of the higher mountains in the Gajo and Alas Reserves. The ascent led through dense undisturbed forest, with camps at 810, 1430, 1810 and 2430 m above sea-level. On sorting out the scarabaeoid material collected, I noticed two peculiar little specimens, which proved to be referable to the aberrant lucanid genus *Aesalus* Fabricius. They were attracted to the illuminated collecting sheet in Bivouac Three (1810 m), situated in montane rainforest, a relatively cool, extremely humid environment; the daily minimum and maximum temperatures measured were 12.7 and 23.7°C respectively, the humidities 72 and 100%.

Looking like small skin-beetles (*Trox*), *Aesalus* may certainly be termed paupers among the usually extravagant stag-beetles. Until now seven species have been described in this genus, from regions scattered throughout the world (map, fig. 1): central and northern Europe, the Caucasus, Japan, Taiwan, southern Mexico and Guatemala (Benesh, 1960: 21—22, and others); in the tropics they presumably always inhabit temperate localities.

Initially I was inclined to consider the present addition a stragler from northern regions, a phenomenon recorded for many montane-alpine Malaysian organisms (for instructive botanical examples see Van Steenis, i.a. 1962); an interesting coleopterous case are the well-known burying-beetles of the genus *Nicrophorus* Fabricius (Silphidae), primarily holarctic, but occurring on mountains throughout the Indo-Australian archipelago, also in our Bandahara Bivouac Three. A closer examination of the



Sumatran *Aesalus*, however, showed that they could not simply be related to their nearest known neighbour in the North, *Ae. asiaticus* Lewis (fig. 1: 3). Several features, such as the deep sulci for the reception of middle and hind tibiae in both metapectus and abdominal venter, strongly suggest a protective function, which is not carried through in the other species. These properties justify an isolated position within the genus, and I look forward to possible discoveries of other *Aesalus* in Asia, which could clarify the origin of the Sumatran species.

***Aesalus timidus* sp. nov. (figs. 2—8)**

Description (holotype). — Approximate length 4, width 2.5, height 2 mm. Integument reddish brown; dorsum largely covered with scaly whitish tomentum, integument locally shining through; pronotum and elytra with variably infuscated, stiff, more or less erect bristles, arranged in tufts, or scattered; remaining pilosity fine, yellowish, rather pale. Dorsum and many other parts densely to closely punctate. Habitus, fig. 2.

Cephalic contours, fig. 4; general surface of head flat; largely covered with scaly whitish tomentum (inside dashes, fig. 4). Pronotal contours, fig. 5; disc of pronotum evenly convex; anterolateral declivities slightly depressed; general surface largely covered with scaly whitish tomentum (except inside dashes, fig. 2); disc ornamented with paramedian concentration of ca. 60 black bristles (black spot fig. 2), and lateral concentration of ca. 12 yellow-brown bristles (shaded spot fig. 2). Scutellum, fig. 2. Elytral contours, figs. 2, 6; disc of elytron with three longitudinal bands of thicker, brighter white tomentum, alternated with bands in which the integument shines through; the former with concentrations of bristles, either black or yellow-brown (black and shaded spots respectively, fig. 2); posterior declivity with scattered erect bristles.

Anterior margin of mentum straight. centre with well-defined concentration of fine, slightly curved, suberect, golden setae. Mandibles unmodified. Intercoxal elevation of prosternum with flat disc, contours fig. 7. Metasternum shiny, densely punctate, punctures isodiametric, well-defined, partly with short appressed seta. Metepisternum remarkably sulciform (fig. 3), in conjunction with adjacent section of epipleuron adapted to receive middle tibia. Visible abdominal sternites 1—3 adapted to receive hind tibiae, having a continuous, deep, well-defined, impunctate sulcus on either side (fig. 3); surface of sternites 1—3 densely to closely set with annulate, isodiametric to slightly elongate punctures, several with a minute appressed seta; posterior border of sternites, particularly of 3, crenulated; distal sternites with punctation effaced due to scabrous microsculpture.

Fore tibia (fig. 8) plump, with three external denticles, the two smaller ones strongly deflexed. Underside of fore femora with anteromarginal groove, anterior border fringed with ca. 9 outstanding setae; fore femoral punctation dense to close, punctures small, annulate, approximately isodiametric, with minute appressed stubble. Middle and hind femora (fig. 3) with punctation, of equal density, but finer, and pilosity longer. Middle and hind tibiae (fig. 3) lacking notable features, with long, fine semierect pilosity, including terminal tuft.

Not dissected to establish sex, probably female. Detailed measurements may be computed from the figures.

Variation. — The second specimen (paratype) is very similar to the holotype.

Diagnostic remarks. — *Aesalus timidus* is immediately recognizable from the apparently unique metapectoral and abdominal sulci. Other diagnostic features include the shape of the head capsule, elytra, prosternal elevation, and fore tibia, as well as the peculiar dorsal pilosity.

Material examined. — Holotype and paratype, with label reading "Museum Leiden/N. SUMATRA: Bivouac Three/Mt Bandahara, ca 1810 m/3°45'N—97°45'E./10—16.VII. 1972/J. Krikken, no. 25". Paratype will be sent to Museum Zoologicum Bogoriense, Indonesia.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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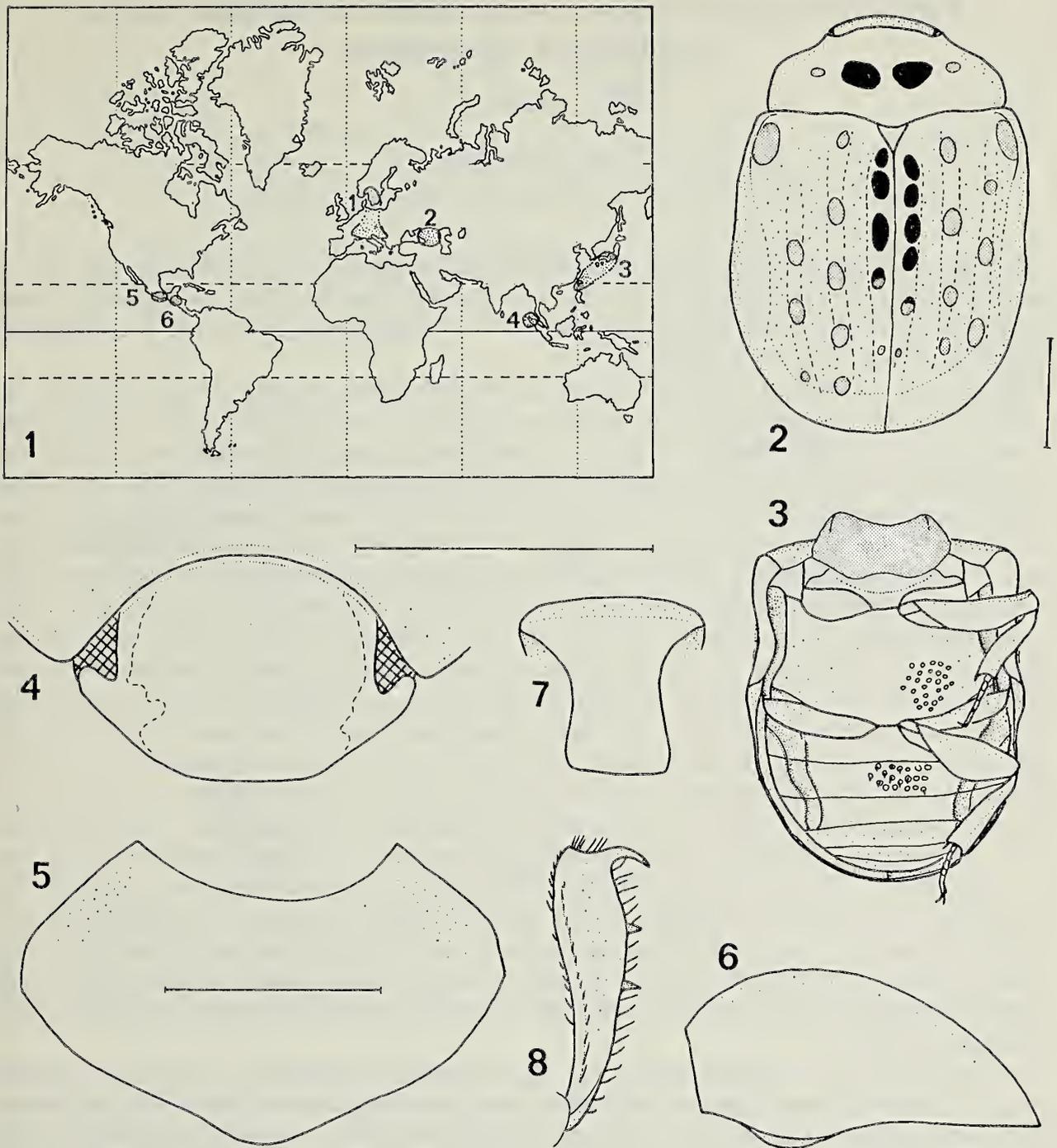


Fig. 1. Map showing approximate known distribution of *Aesalus* species: *scarabaeoides* (Panzer) (1); *ulanowskii* Ganglbauer and *daghestanicus* Didier & Seguy (2); *asiaticus* Lewis (3); *timidus* sp. nov. (4); *trogoides* Albers and *smithi* Bates (5); *neotropicalis* Bates (6).

Figs. 2—8. *Aesalus timidus*, holotype. 2, outline body, with topography of pilosity (see description), dorsal view, protective posture; 3, hind body, ventral, right middle and hind legs omitted. Outline of: 4, head capsule, full-face; 5, pronotum, dorso-frontal, 6, left elytron, lateral; 7, prosternal elevation, ventral; 8, right fore tibia, dorsal, with pilosity. Scale-line = 1 mm; 2, 3, 6: same scale, 4, 7, 8: ditto.

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