

LESTES SELLATUS HAGEN, 1862, A SYNONYM OF XEROLESTES PALLIDUS (RAMBUR, 1842), WITH A NOTE ON THE GENUS XEROLESTES FRASER, 1951 (ZYGOPTERA: LESTIDAE)

L. sellatus was described by Hagen in SELYS

(1862, *Bull. Acad. r. Belg.* (II) 13: 288-338) from a small series collected by Ehrenberg during his journey to Syria and Egypt, deposited in the ZMHB and Hagen collections. He noticed that the species somewhat resembles *L. virens* (Charp., 1825), although lacking the metallic green shine. Er. SCHMIDT (1939, *Sber. Akad. Wiss. Wien* [I] 147[5/10] [1938]: 135-150) re-examined the types and figured the male cerci (paraprocts wanting) and the left thoracic colour pattern. In the Berlin collection he discovered only 1 ♂, 1 ♀ and a specimen without abdomen from Syria and concluded that *L. sellatus* should be placed as a distinct species close to *L. virens*, differing from it by an unusually broad humeral suture of the synthorax, combined with extensive black lateral markings, the whole body lacking any metallic shine. W. SCHNEIDER (1986, *Systematik und Zoogeographie der Odonata der Levante* [etc.], Diss. Univ. Mainz) placed *L. sellatus* into the synonymy of *L. virens*. Also H.J. DUMONT (1991, *Odonata of the Levant*, Israel Acad. Sci., Jerusalem) came to the conclusion: "... it is quite possible that *L. sellatus* is nothing more but a form of *L. virens*, combining the characters of the two described subspecies [*virens* and *vestalis*] in an extreme form."

In May, 1993, the author had the opportunity to examine the types of *L. sellatus* in the ZMHB collection, and to designate the three type specimens as follows:

- 1 ♂ **lectotype** from Syria; labelled "Syria Ehrbg." [yellow], "Lestes sellatus. Syria. Ehrenberg", "L. sellata Hag.", "2815" and "Typus" [red].
- 1 ♀ **paralectotype** from Syria; labelled "Typus" [red]. Segm. 7½ to 10 wanting.
- 1 ♀ **paralectotype** from Egypt; labelled "L. sellata ♀" and "Aegypt. Ehrbg." [blue]. Segm. 6 to 10 wanting.

These three specimens have been identified as types in the "Catalogus Orthopterorum Musei Berolinensis", cat. no. 2815. - The Egyptian female type obviously had escaped Schmidt's attention. The specimen without abdomen and without bearing a label, that was thought by SCHMIDT (l.c.) to be another type specimen of *sellatus*, turned out to be a misplaced syntype of *Lestes tricolor* Erichson, 1848, sticking together with the *sellatus* animals.

The author, who is just preparing the description of a new species of *Xerolestes* from Iran, at once recognized the three *sellatus* type specimens as being members of this Afro-Asian genus. After a thorough investigation of structural peculiarities on head, prothorax, venation and cerci as well as the colouring of head and thorax, comparing them with specimens of *X. ochraceus* (Sél., 1862), *X. unicolor* (McL., 1895) and *X. concinnus* (Sél., 1891) (all deposited in the ZMHB collection), and consulting the "Revision of African Lestidae" (cf. E. PINHEY, 1980, *Occ. pap. natn. Mus. Rhod.* [B] 6[6]: 327-479), the three types were undoubtedly found conspecific with the African *X. pallidus*. Conclusively we add to PINHEY's synonymy list (l.c., p. 439f.):

Xerolestes pallidus (Rambur, 1842)

- *Lestes sellata* Hagen in Séllys, 1862 (new synonymy): BRAUER (1876, *Festschr. zool. bot. Ges. Wien*, p. 299); - SÉLYS (1887, *Annls Soc. ent. Belg.* 31, p. 43).
- *Lestes sellatus*: KIRBY (1889, *A synonymic catalogue of Neuroptera Odonata*, Guernsey & Jackson, London, p. 162); - MORTON (1924, *Trans. R. ent. Soc. Lond.* 1/2, p. 30); - ANDRES (1928, *Mém. Soc. ent. Egypte* 3, p. 21); - SCHMIDT (1939, l.c., p. 136); - DUMONT (1991, l.c., p. 54).
- nec *Lestes virens* (Charp.): apud SCHNEIDER (1986, l.c., p. 49f.); - DAVIES & TOBIN (1984, *The dragonflies of the world*, vol. 1, S.I.O., Utrecht, p. 33); - TSUDA (1991, *A distributional list of world Odonata*, Tsuda, Osaka, p. 215).

The highly polychromatic *X. pallidus* has been hitherto recorded neither from Egypt nor from Syria; its northern distributional limits are known from Sudan, Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia. All type specimens probably belong to the form *wahlbergi* Ris, which normally occurs only between the latitudes 10°S and 27°S. The fully mature male has a heavily melanistic colour of head, thorax and abdomen, whereas the females are still immature, with sandy brown colours. This colour change, separating the immature from the mature phase, is a well known phenomenon in all *Xerolestes* species, occurring also in some other tropical taxa, e.g. the libellulids *Erythrodiplax* and *Uracis* in South America (cf. P.S. CORBET, 1992, in Current topics in dragonfly biology, Vol.

5, pp. 17-18, *Soc. int. odonatol. rapid Comm.* [Suppl.] 15).

The well defined genus *Xerolestes* does not consist only of the four African taxa (as hitherto assumed), but three Asiatic species (one still undescribed) have to be also included herein, viz. *X. concinnus* (Sél.) ranging from SE Asia up to Australia, and *Xerolestes* sp.n. from Iran are closely related to the African *X. pallidus*; *X. umbrinus* (Sél., 1891) from SE Asia is closely related to the African *X. ochraceus* (Sél.) and to *X. unicolor* (McL., 1895) from Madagascar (with ssp. *aldabrensis* [Pinhey, 1967] from the Seychelles). A more detailed analysis is in preparation.

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