Two new synonyms from Tibet (Diptera: Empididae: Clinocerinae)

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The subfamily Clinocerinae (Empididae, Diptera) are aquatic dance flies, most commonly encountered in fast flowing rocky streams and creeks. The adults often rest on emergent rocks and are rather common in temperate regions.

Two recent publications describing new species of Clinocerinae from Tibet (Liu et al. 2014; Wang et al. 2015) require re-evaluation. In the former study, Dolichocephala tibetensis Liu, Tang & Yang, 2014 was described and appears identical to D. flamingo Smith, 1965. The authors compared their new species to species from China, but surprisingly overlooked Smith’s detailed study of Empididae s. lat. from Nepal (Smith 1965) and did not cite this publication. The pattern of spots on the wing is identical in both species (as well as in D. qinlingensis Liu, Wang & Yang, 2014) and details of the clasp ing cercus and surstylus (although over-cleared and distorted in Smith (1965, figs 47, 48)) are clearly conspecific. For this reason I propose that D. tibetensis is a junior synonym of D. flamingo (syn. nov.) and the taxonomic history of this species is summarized in the following synonymy.


Dolichocephala tibetensis Liu, Tang & Yang, 2014: 1023. Type-locality: Tibet, Bomi, Galonglashan, 2954 m. syn. nov.

In the second publication, Wiedemannia tibetensis Wang, Wang & Yang, 2015 was described from a single specimen, which appears identical to W. glaucescens (Brunetti, 1917). The characters used to justify the recognition of this species are either individual specimen variation (discal cell with short appendage); error (pterostigma is present in W. glaucescens, not absent as stated by Wang et al. (2015)); or an artifact of preparation of the terminalia (distiphallus of W. tibetensis appears to be either partially destroyed due to strong clearing agent or not fully inflated and the surstylus is likely retracted within the epandrium). The most important character for species definition in Wiedemannia Zetterstedt and most Clinocerinae is the shape of the clasp ing cercus (Sinclair 1995), which is identical in both species and this striking fact was not even discussed by Wang et al. (2015). Based on this evidence, I propose that W. tibetensis is a junior synonym of W. glaucescens (syn. nov.) and the taxonomic history of this species is summarized in the following synonymy.

Clinocera glaucescens Brunetti, 1917: 80. Type-locality: Phagu, Simla District, India. SYNTYPES 2 ♀ (ZSI) [examined; only 1 ♀ in type collection].

Acanthoclincera glaucescens: Smith (1975: 200) [catalogue; transferred to Acanthoclinocera Saigusa].

Acanthoclinocera saigusai Smith, 1965: 102. Type-locality: Nepal, Taplejung District, Dobhan. HOLOTYPE ♂ (BMNH) [examined]. Smith (1975: 200) [catalogue; syn. of glaucescens].

Wiedemannia glaucescens: Sinclair (1994: 1012) [transferred to Wiedemannia]; Sinclair (1995: 715) [listed under subgenus Philolutra Mik]; Yang et al. (2007: 77) [catalogue]; Wagner et al. (2004: 23) [reared from small Himalayan stream].

Wiedemannia tibetensis Wang, Wang & Yang, 2015: 45. Type-locality: Tibet, Nyingchi, Sejilashan. syn. nov.

This paper highlights the need for more careful research in descriptive taxonomic work on Tibetan empidoid flies.
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