A NEW SPECIES OF MEPACHYMERUS (DIPTERA : CHLOROPIDAE) PREDACIOUS ON CHILOTRAEA INFUSCATELLUS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT. Mepachymerus sabroskyl, sp. nov. (Diptera : Chloropidae) is described from Andhra Pradesh, India, reared from Chiloptraea infuscatellus on sugarcane.

A small collection of Chloropidae was received through the courtesy of M. Lakshmikantham, Sugarcane Specialist, Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University, in 1970 for determination, reared from the larvae of the sugarcane borer, Chiloptraea infuscatellus (Snellen) (Lepidoptera : Pyralidae). They represent an undescribed species of Mepachymerus Speiser (= Steleocerus Becker), which is described here.

Mepachymerus is so far represented in India by six species, namely M. giganteus indicus Frey, ensifer (Thompson), formosus (Becker), crucifer (de Meijere), molianus Cherian and assamicus Cherian. Lamb (1917) was doubtful about the occurrence of ensifer and formosus in India. Cherian (1973, Oriental Ins. 7(4): 507-512) described two new species (mentioned above) and recorded crucifer for the first time from India. A key to the Indian species was also given by him.

Mepachymerus sabroskyl*, sp. nov. (Figs. 1-3).

Male: Blackish brown; small. Palpus dark brown. Head (Fig. 1) brownish-black; length and width (including eyes) subequal, length to height 22 : 17; frons brownish-yellow; narrow; width a little less than one half that of head width (including eyes) and also its own length; slightly projected beyond the eyes and with a black streak at apex. Vertex triangle brownish-black, shining, ending a little beyond three-fourth of the length of frons, margins straight, enclosing a shallow elliptical depression. Gena pale yellow; a little more than twice the length of 3rd antennal segment. Second and third antennal segments brown, 3rd segment broadly oval; arista dark brown, long, hairy, tubular except the apex where it is slightly swollen with pointed end (nearly spatulate type); nearly equal to the length of frons. Proboscis pale-

*Named in honour of Dr. C.W. Sabrosky.

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yellow. Eyes black, large, with diagonal long axis, about twice that of the 3rd antenal segment and three-fourths of the frons.

Thorax black, longer than wide; about twice as long as wide; mesonotal lateral stripes brownish-black; humeral callus brownish-yellow; hairs black. Scutellum black; small; about one third that of the mesonotal part; nearly as wide as long; semicircular. Pleuron dark brown. Wing (Fig. 3) light brown, long and narrow, about three and quarter times longer than broad; veins thick and brown; costal sector third a little less than twice the 2nd costal sector; middle cross-vein distad of the middle of the discal cell as about 3 : 2; terminal sector of 4th vein vanishing apically. Halteres brownish-black, clavate. Legs brownish-black, long and slender; femora thick, with strong bristles on inner margin, fore tarsus long and slender. Abdomen black, smooth, narrower behind.

Chaetotaxy: Outer and inner verticals broken; 2 pairs of fronto-orbitals about the middle of the frons; ocellars well-marked and divergent; notopleurals 1+2; scutellars 1 pair apically.

Length: Body 3.0 mm; wing 2.0 mm.

Female: Agrees with the male except that it is a little longer.
Holotype ♂, India: Andhra Pradesh: Anakapalle, reared from larvae of sugarcane borer, *Chilotraea infuscatellus*, at Sugarcane Research Station, Anakapalle, Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University, 1970, Coll. M. Lakshminathan (exact date not mentioned). Paratype ♀, same data. Both holotype and paratype at present in the author's collection and will be deposited in the National Pusa Collection, New Delhi.

Remarks: This species belongs to the *tenellus* group of *Mepachymerus* Speiser because of large, broad and nearly equilateral shining frontal triangle and slender fore tarsus. It comes close to *Mepachymerus giganteus indicus* Frey in having the frons projecting beyond eyes. It can be easily differentiated from the latter by the following characters: Frons only a little projecting beyond the eyes as compared to greatly produced in *indicus*; arista somewhat spatulate, clavate; halteres and 2nd costal sector less than twice the 3rd costal sector.

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