Peruphasma marmoratum, a remarkable new species of high montane Phasmatodea (Pseudophasmatidae: Pseudophasmatinae) from the Venezuelan Andes

DÁVID MURÁNYI
Department of Zoology, Hungarian Natural History Museum, Baross u. 13, H-1088 Budapest, Hungary

Abstract

A remarkable new species of high montane Phasmatodea (Pseudophasmatidae: Pseudophasmatinae), Peruphasma marmoratum sp. n. from the Venezuelan Andes is described and illustrated from both sexes. The species of Peruphasma Conle & Hennemann, 2002, which were excluded by Zompro (2004) are confirmed as belonging to the genus. The new species differs from all other members of the genus by the presence of tubercles on the mesonotum. Affinities, ecological and distributional notes, and notes on other Anisomorphini from Venezuela are presented.

Key words: Phasmatodea, Anisomorphini, Peruphasma marmorata, new species, Venezuela, Cordillera de Mérida

Introduction

The Pseudophasmatinae tribe Anisomorphini consists of Neotropical and South Nearctic species. The tribe sensu Bradley & Galil, 1977 was recently revised by Conle & Hennemann (2002) and to-date includes twelve genera (since revised to nine: Zompro (2004), Otte & Brock (2005)). Some of them are particularly high montane insects, the genera Peruphasma Conle & Hennemann, 2002 and Monticomorpha Conle & Hennemann, 2002 being the highest dwelling stick insects known so far, with the species included having extremely local distribution.

Conle & Hennemann (2002: 91) established Peruphasma based on Autolyca pentlandi Redtenbacher, 1906 and included seven further species. Zompro (2004: 146) excluded all species from the genus, except the type-species Peruphasma pentlandi (Redtenbacher), on the basis of a lacking dorsolateral appendix on sternite IX and the less bulgy subgenital plate in the males. However, as he had not transferred species elsewhere, they were retained in Peruphasma by Otte & Brock (2005). Zompro listed no differences between the females and left the seven excluded species without a generic placement at all, a state certainly of poor taxonomic use. The generic value of the distinguishing characters mentioned by Zompro is doubtful as there are no generic differences in the females. As already stated by Conle & Hennemann (2002: 92) at the time of establishing the genus, it is polyphyletic and deserves further splitting. However, as numerous still undescribed species are known, which belong in close relation of Peruphasma, it is undoubtedly best to provisionally retain these species in Peruphasma rather than leaving them without a generic affiliation (personal communication with O. Conle & F. Hennemann). Therefore, Zompro’s treatment is here disregarded and all species, with the exception of Autolyca picturata Redtenbacher, 1906, retained in Peruphasma (these are: Peruphasma anakena Conle & Hennemann, 2002; Autolyca doylei Caudell, 1906; Anisomorpha flavomaculata Blanchard, 1846; Peruphasma nigra Conle & Hennemann, 2002; Autolyca transversata Caudell, 1913 and Autolyca unicolor Redtenbacher, 1906). A new species which is remarkable for having rudimentary wings, Peruphasma