



***Platyonitis oberthueri* Janssens, 1942 and *Epionitis tarsatus* Balthasar, 1942 (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae: Scarabaeinae: Onitini) — synonymy confirmed**

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The genus *Epionitis* Balthasar, 1942 and species *Epionitis tarsatus* Balthasar, 1942, were described from a single female from “Ost-Afrika, Ussambara” [= NE Tanzania] (Balthasar 1942). Earlier the same year, Janssens (1942) established the new genus *Platyonitis* for *P. oberthueri* Janssens, 1942 based on two specimens (holotype male and paratype female) from “Manica” [= Manica, Mozambique]. Krikken (1974) synonymized both these names based on study of Janssens’s types and Balthasar’s description. However, he was not able to study the holotype of *E. tarsatus*, so he could not fully confirm the synonymy of both type species. Krikken (1974) stated on p. 202: “Several descriptive details of *E. tarsatus*, based on a single female, are strongly indicative of a synonymy, but since no information on the characteristic shape of the middle femora is given by Balthasar, I prefer to postpone my final decision on the matter”.

During the preparation of the catalogue of primary types of Scarabaeoidea deposited in the collection of the National Museum, Prague, Czech Republic (e.g., Bezděk & Hájek 2009), we studied the holotype of *E. tarsatus*. Its comparison with the female paratype of *P. oberthueri*, as well as with additional specimens of this species from southern Kenya, allows us to fully confirm Krikken’s (1974) assumption and establish above-mentioned synonymy. Moreover, the corrected original spelling of *P. oberthueri* is selected here by the action of First Reviser and inconsistencies between the published type locality and the type locality labels of *P. oberthueri* are briefly discussed.

The following codes (after Arnett *et al.* 1993) identify the collections housing the material examined (curator’s names are in parentheses):

FSCC—František Sládeček collection, České Budějovice, Czech Republic

ISNB—Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique, Brussels, Belgium (Alain Drumont)

MNHN—Muséum national d’Histoire naturelle, Paris, France (Antoine Mantilleri)

NMPC—National Museum, Praha, Czech Republic (Jiří Hájek)

For specimen labels, our remarks are found in square brackets: [p] – preceding data are printed, [hw] – preceding data are handwritten. Separate labels are indicated by a double slash “//” and lines within each label are separated by a slash “/”.

***Platyonitis oberthueri* Janssens, 1942**

(Figs. 1–5)

Platyonitis Oberthüri Janssens, 1942: 9 (published in January).

Platyonitis Oberthuri Janssens, 1942: 8.

Platyonitis oberthüri: Ferreira 1962: 76; Ferreira 1972: 460; Ferreira 1976: 177.

Platyonitis oberthuri: Krikken 1974: 201; Zunino 1974: 35; Zunino 1975: 47; Krikken 1977: 163; Davis *et al.* 2008: 176.

Epionitis tarsatus Balthasar, 1942: 196 (published in December), **new synonymy**.



Ost Afrika
Usambara Geb.
1600 m.
Farm Temnah
11. V. 1933.

Boucomont det. 1935
onitis sp. ? ♀

TYPUS

Epionitis
tarsatus
n. sp.
Bf. V. Balthasar det.

Epionitis
tarsatus m.

ex coll. V. Balthasar
National Museum
Prague, Czech Republic

2

Coll. R. I. Sc. N. B.
Mozambique
Makindu
1944

A. Janssens det., 1941:
Platyonitis
Oberthueri n. sp.
Anatype ♀

cf. Bull. Mus.
Hist. Nat. Belg.
XVIII, 1944, n. 2,
p. 8, fig. 14.

Para-
type

VIDIT
M. ZUNINO 1974

seen
by
det. J. Krikken 1973

Genitalia montés
en Barème du Canada
sur verre
det. M. ZUNINO 1974 ♀

4

Ukanyu
E-Africa

EX-MUSEO
H. W. BATES
1893

A. Janssens det., 1940

Platyonitis
explanatus ♂
nov. gen. nov. sp.

.HOLOTYPE.

A. Janssens det. 1942
Platyonitis ♂ TYPE
Oberthueri A. Janssens

Museum Paris
ex Coll.
R. Oberthur

MNHN
EC1931



3

5

FIGURES 1–5. 1–2: *Epionitis tarsatus* Balthasar, 1942: 1. habitus of the holotype, arrow indicates distinct crenulation of posterior edge of mesofemora; 2. labels of the holotype; 3–5: *Platyonitis oberthueri* Janssens, 1942: 3. habitus of the paratype; 4. labels of the paratype; 5. labels of the holotype.

Type locality. *Platyonitis oberthueri*: “Manica”. *Epionitis tarsatus*: “Ost-Afrika, Ussambara”.

Type material examined. *Platyonitis oberthueri*: paratype: ♀ (ISNB): “♀ [p] // Makithi / Br. O. Afr. [hw, white [hw, white label glued on blue label] // Coll. R.I.Sc.N.B. [p] / Mozambique [hw, blue label] // Para- / type [p, orange label with black frame] // A. Janssens det., 1941: [p] / Patyonitis / Oberthüri n.sp. / Paratype ♀ [hw] // cf. Bull. Mus. / Hist. Nat. Belg. [p] / XVIII, 1942, n. 2 / p. 8, fig. 14 [hw] // seen / by [hw] / det. J. Krikken 1973 [p] // Génitalia montés / en Baume du Canada / sur Verre / ZUNINO 1974 [p] // VIDIT [hw] / M. ZUNINO 1974 [p, red label]”. Microscopic section of female genitalia is attached to the same pin, with following label: “Paratypus / Platyonitis / Oberthuri Janss. [hw] // Prép. génital / en baume du / CANADA, M. ZUNINO 1974 [hw, other side of the label]”.

Epionitis tarsatus: holotype: ♀ (NMPC), “Ost Afrika / Usambara Geb. / 1600 m / Farm Temnah [p] / 11.V. [hw] 1933 [p, blue label] // TYPUS [p, red label, black margin] // Epionitis / tarsatus / typ. n. sp. [hw] / Dr. V. Balthasar det. [p] // Boucomont det. 1935 [p] / Onitis sp. ♀ [hw] // Epionitis / tarsatus m. [hw, pink label]”.

Additional material examined. KENYA: “Laikipia, Kenya / Uaso Nyire, afr. c. / Machulka lgt. [p]”, 1 ♀ (NMPC); “COAST. PROV. / Sagala Hills, Voi env. / 5.12.-13.12.2009, Kenya / František Sládeček lgt. [p]”, 22 ♂♂ 11 ♀♀ (FSCC), 1 ♂ 1 ♀ (NMPC); “COAST. PROV. / Sagala Hills, Voi env. / 21.12.-23.12.2009, Kenya / František Sládeček lgt. [p]”, 1 ♀ (FSCC).

Correct original spelling. Janssens (1942) spelled the name of this species in two different ways in the original work: *P. Oberthuri* (p. 8 – description of the species) and *P. Oberthüri* (p. 9 – figure caption). Both spellings are still in use. Ferreira (1962, 1972, 1976) applied *P. oberthüri*, while Krikken (1974, 1977), Zunino (1974, 1975) and Davis *et al.* (2008) followed *P. oberthuri*. Because the precedence between these two spellings cannot be objectively determined, *P. oberthüri* is selected here as an incorrect original spelling by the action of First Reviser (Article 24 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature), and the name must further be corrected to *P. oberthueri* according to Article 32.5.2.1 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature 1999).

Type locality. Janssens (1942) reported the type locality of *P. oberthueri* as “Manica” [= Manica, western Mozambique, coordinates: 18°56'S 32°52'E]. Because all subsequently recorded specimens of this species were collected in Kenya, this type locality seemed to be doubtful. Locality labels attached under both the holotype and paratype of *P. oberthueri* are handwritten and almost illegible (see Figs. 4–5). In our opinion, the paratype female was collected in “Makithi” [= Makithi hill, central Kenya, coordinates: 00°30'S 38°07'E]. Due to kindness of A. Mantilleri (MNHN), we received digital photographs of the labels attached under the holotype of *P. oberthueri* (Fig. 5). The locality label of the holotype could be tentatively interpreted as “Karibani / E. Africa” [= Karibani, southern Kenya, coordinates: 01°57'S 37°21'E]. Georeference data were obtained from the Google Maps webpage (maps.google.com). Both these localities are within the known geographic area of this species.

Distribution. Kenya, northern Tanzania (Balthasar 1942, Krikken 1974, this paper). Record from Mozambique (Janssens 1942) was based on misinterpretation of data on locality labels. The species should be removed from the fauna of Mozambique.

The following three species now compose the genus *Platyonitis* Janssens, 1942:

***Platyonitis oberthueri* Janssens, 1942**

Epionitis tarsatus Balthasar, 1942, **new synonymy**

Distribution. Kenya, Tanzania.

***Platyonitis smeenkorum* Krikken, 1974**

Platyonitis parentii Zunino, 1974, synonymy by Zunino (1975)

Distribution. Kenya.

***Platyonitis bicuariensis* Ferreira, 1976**

Distribution. Angola.

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