

**A contribution to the knowledge of
Thorictus Germar, 1834 from Afghanistan
(Coleoptera: Dermestidae: Thorictinae)**

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Abstract – *Thorictus merkli* sp. n. from Afghanistan is described, illustrated and compared with similar species. With 5 figures.

Key words – beetles, myrmecophily, new species, taxonomy

INTRODUCTION

The myrmecophilous dermestid genus *Thorictus* Germar, 1834 currently includes 170 species and subspecies known from the Palaearctic, Oriental and Afrotropical regions (HÁVA 2015, 2020). Species from Afghanistan were described by JOHN (1962, 1964).

During the identification of dermestid specimens I found a new species of *Thorictus* from Afghanistan. It is described below.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The following measurements were made: BL = body length (measured from the head anterior margin to the apex of the elytra); BW = body width (measured between two anterolateral humeral calli). All measurements are given in millimetres. Text of the locality labels are cited verbatim.

Male genitalia were not studied. The differential diagnosis of the aedeagi is often problematic, and interspecific variation is currently very poorly defined (JOHN 1963). The setation of the thoracic venter of the four studied species is illustrated (Figs 1–4). The two species groups considered here were established by JOHN (1963).

The type specimens are deposited in the following collections: FGMRI = Forestry and Game Management Research Institute, Prague, Czech Republic; HNHM = Hungarian Natural History Museum, Budapest, Hungary.

RESULTS

Thorictus walanganus John, 1964
(Fig. 1)

Type material – Holotype: O-Afghanistan, Hindukusch, Walang, Salangtal, 2520 m, IX.1952, J. Klapperich (HNHM).

Thorictus khinjanus John, 1964
(Fig. 2)

Type material – Holotype: O-Afghanistan, Hindukusch, Khinjantal, Doschak, 2500 m, I.X.1952, J. Klapperich (HNHM).

Thorictus kabulanus John, 1964
(Fig. 3)

Type material – Holotype: O-Afghanistan, Umgebung von Kabul, 1740 m, III.1953, J. Klapperich (HNHM).

***Thorictus merkli* sp. n.**
(Fig. 4)

Type material – Holotype: „Afghanistan-650, Col de Sabxxak (à 65 km au nord-est de Hérat), 4.vi.1959, K. Lindberg” / “Au bord d’une mare de torrent à 110 m au-dessous du col., Alt. 2340 m” (FGMRI). The holotype is provided with red, printed label with the text as follows: „HOLOTYPE *Thorictus merkli* sp. nov. Jiří Háva det. 2020”.

Description – Body large (for a *Thorictus*), oval, dark brown, covered by short, yellow setae on dorsal and ventral surfaces. Measurements (mm): BL 2.53, BW 1.45. Head finely punctate with very short, yellow, recumbent setae. Labial palpi entirely brown. Antennae brown, with 11 antennomeres, antennal club compact, with 3 antennomeres, antennomere 11 short and broad, with

short yellow setae. Eyes small with microsetae. Lateral eyes on head with very small granules. Pronotum as finely punctate as head, covered by short, yellow, recumbent setation. Lateral margin of pronotum without fine dentation. Posterior corners without long yellow setae. Ventral posterior pronotal corners without yellow setation. Scutellum small, triangular, without setation. Elytra very finely punctate, covered by short, recumbent, yellow setae; lateral yellow setation erect; with two depressions in anterior half near scutellum. Epipleuron finely punctate, anterior corners with large bump; bump coarsely punctured, with yellow setation. Prosternum coarsely punctate. Mesosternum with small, foveolate punctures. Metasternum finely punctate. Setation on margin of thoracic venter as on Fig. 4. Abdominal ventrites very finely punctate, covered by very short, recumbent, yellow setae. Striation on first abdominal ventrite very short. Legs dark brown, covered by golden-yellow setae.

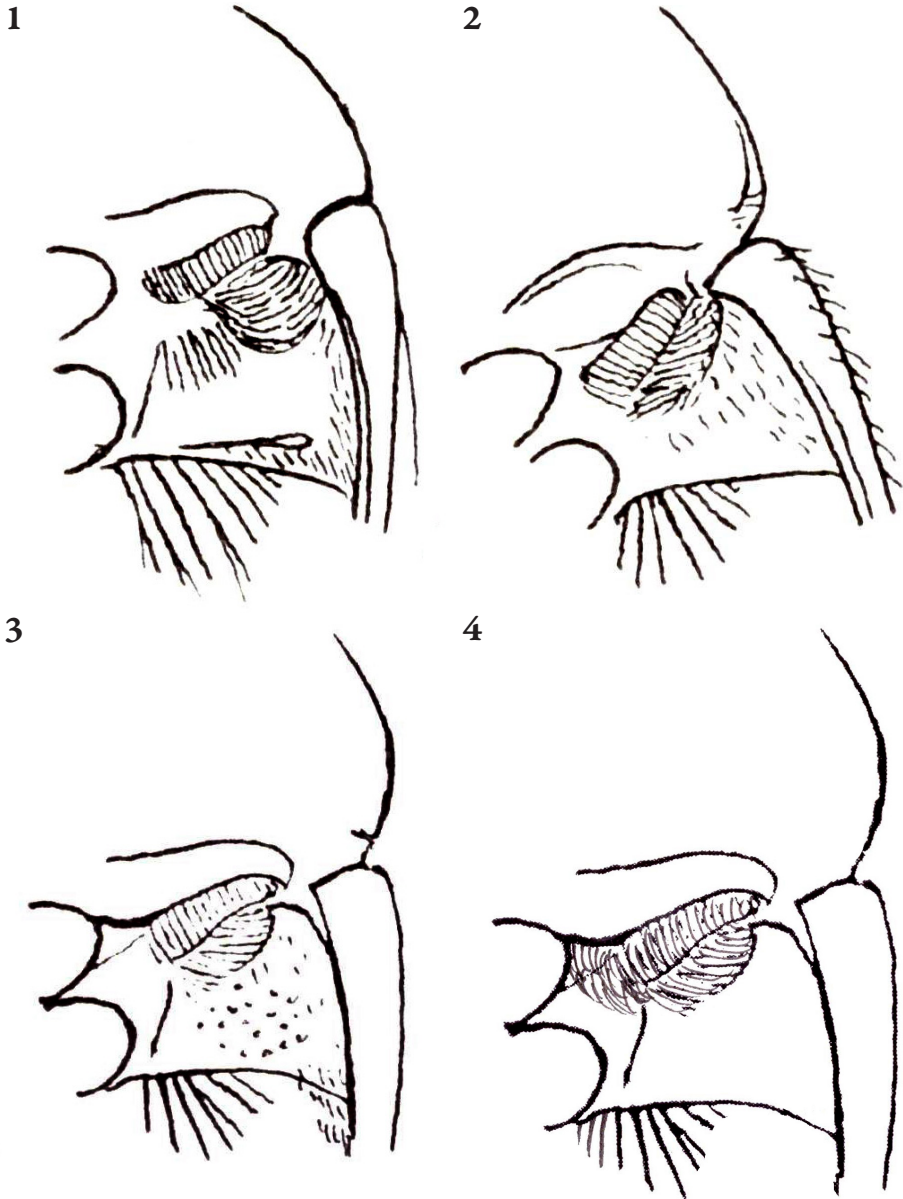
Differential diagnosis – The new species belongs to the *T. orientalis* species group according to characters stated by JOHN (1963), and is very similar to *Thorictus khinjanus* John, 1964 and *Thorictus walanganus* John, 1964, but differs from them by the setation on the thoracal margin in ventral view. From the extremely similar *Thorictus kabulanus* John, 1964 it differs by its shine and setation on the thoracal margins (Figs 1–4).

Etymology – Patronymic, dedicated to my friend and curator of Coleoptera in HHNM, Ottó Merkl.

LIST OF *THORICTUS* SPECIES FROM AFGHANISTAN

The type localities of the seven species are indicated on Fig. 5.

- Thorictus angustus* John, 1964
- Thorictus kabulanus* John, 1964
- Thorictus kandaharicus* John, 1962
- Thorictus khinjanus* John, 1964
- Thorictus merkli* sp. n.
- Thorictus quinquesulcatus* John, 1964
- Thorictus walanganus* John, 1964



Figs 1–4. Setation of thoracal margin of *Thorictus* Germar, 1834 species, ventral view: 1 = *Thorictus walanganus* John, 1964, 2 = *Thorictus khinjanus* John, 1964, 3 = *Thorictus kabulanus* John, 1964, 4 = *Thorictus merkli* sp. n.



Fig. 5. Map of type localities of *Thorictus* Germar, 1834 species in Afghanistan: 1 = *T. kabanus* John, 1964, 2 = *T. merkli* sp. n., 3 = *T. khinjanus* John, 1964, 4 = *T. walanganus* John, 1964, 5 = *T. kandaharicus* John, 1962, 6 = *T. angustus* John, 1964, 7 = *T. quinquesulcatus* John, 1964

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Acknowledgements – I would like to thank my friend Ottó Merkl (HNHM) for the loan of the material studied here, and also anonymous reviewers for critical reading of my manuscript. The paper was supported by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic, institutional support MZE-RO0118.

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