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First record of *Trocheta haskonis* Grosser, 2000 (Hirudinea: Erpobdellidae) in Serbia

Clemens Grosser

With 3 figures

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One specimen of *Trocheta haskonis* Grosser, 2000 was collected in the cave Jama u Laništu in Eastern Serbia. This find is the first record of this large leech in the Balkans and marks the most Eastern and Southern known border of the distribution area of this species. The characters of the species and the circumstances of finding are described.

1 Introduction

Trocheta haskonis was described from the flooded area of the river Elbe in Saxony-Anhalt/Germany (Grosser 2000). This large species has a very concealed way of living: the leech prefers small temporary puddles (here, he was found together with *Lepidurus apus*) and is very rare in the waterbody of the river. Therefore, records are very rare. The leech was only known outside of the area of the river Elbe in the area of Vienna/Austria (Vienna Woods, Erbsbach; Grosser, unpublished).

The records from Austria and Serbia account for a wide distribution area from Central to Southeast Europe. A higher knowlege about habitats should make possible more finds of this leech in the future, this paper wants to give more information to this.

Altogether records of the genus *Trocheta* Dutrochet, 1817 are rare from Serbia. Nesemann & Neubert (1999) did not list any species for the territory of Serbia. Sket (1968) found juvenile individuals near Belgrade. He assumed an affiliation to *Trocheta cylindrica* Örley, 1886 (syn. *Trocheta bykowskii* Gedroyć, 1913). Grosser & Epshtein (2009) reported *Trocheta danastrica* Stschegolew, 1938 from Serbia. The author identified *Trocheta dalmatina* Sket, 1968 from the Tara Mountains/West Serbia (unpublished, leg. Ivo Karaman) Therefore, every find of *Trocheta* is important for the Serbian faunistics.

2 Material and methods

Material: 1 specimen: 53 mm in length, 7 mm in width; 2012-04-29; Serbia, Mt. Miroč, Kopana Glavica, Jama u Laništu; leg. Iva Njunjić; Coll. C. Grosser.
Methods: The leech was collected from the stony substrate and preserved in 70 % ethanol. The size was measured with a ruler. All studies occurred with the help of a stereomicroscope (Novex, enlargement 6.5x to 45x). Photos were taken with a microscope camera (Euromex, VC 3031C) and a digital camera (Canon EOS 400 D).

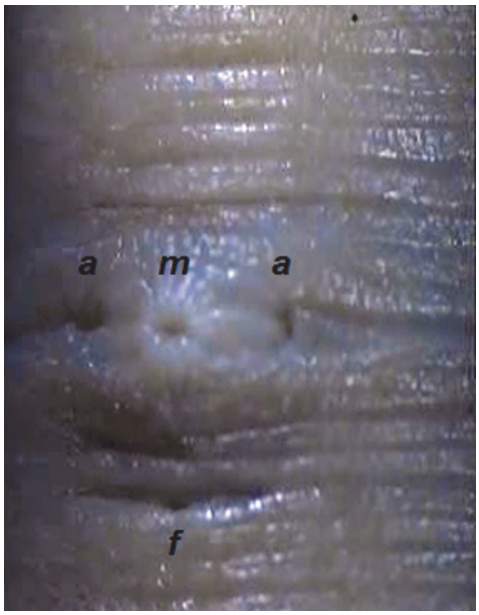
3 Identification

The specimen is unicoloured without stripes, lines or spots. A lot of small but well visible papillae roughen the dorsal and ventral surface. This individual tally with *T. haskonis* in the habitus. The anterior part of the body is cylindrical, the posterior part is slightly flattened.

The dorsal surface is convex. Lateral keels exist, special distinct in the last third of the body (Fig. 1). The annulation is typical of the genus *Trocheta*. Complete somites are subdivided in two neighbouring broadened and seven narrow annuli. The genital pores are separated by three annuli (annulus a2, b5 subdivided into two annuli; Fig. 2).

Furthermore this specimen shows the unmistakable characteristic of *T. haskonis*: accessory pores left and right of the male genital pore (Fig. 2). These accessory pores are known from European Erpobdellidae only from this species. Other species are smooth around the male genital pore without lateral depressions (Fig. 3).

Fig. 1: *Trocheta haskonis*. Habitus. Individual from Serbia



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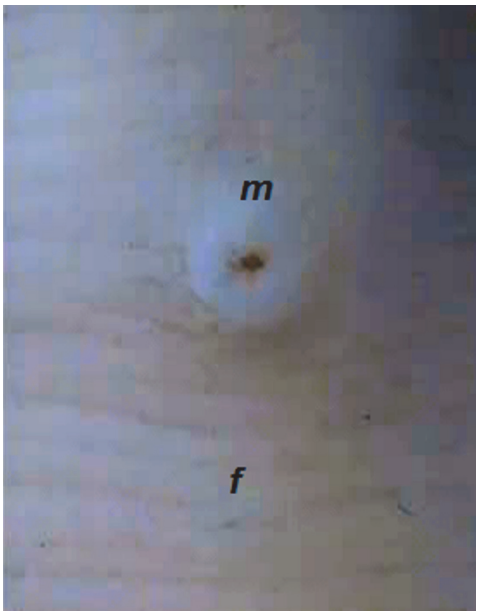

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Fig. 2: *Trocheta haskonis*. Genital and accessory pores; m = male pores, f = female pores, a = accessory pores. Individual from Serbia
Fig. 3: *Trocheta dalmatina*. Genital pores; male pores without lateral acessory pores. Individual from Serbia

4 Locality

The specimen of *T. haskonis* was collected on Mt. Miroč in Eastern Serbia at the altitude of 850 m a.s.l. in a very small lime stone pond in the cave Jama u Laništu at the depth of 100 m. Some troglobiontic Amphipoda could be found in the same pond. Mt. Miroč is a karst mountain located along the Danube east of Belgrade. Jama u Laništu is in the western part of the Miroč karst. The cave is very deep and cramped and irrigated from a short periodic stream.

5 Discussion

First *T. haskonis* was recorded in small puddles in the flooded area of the river Elbe in the lowland of Saxony-Anhalt. This species could be found right before and after high water in such temporary waterbodies. These places are apparently inconsistent with the subterranean locality in Serbian mountains. But in fact the habitats are not very different on closer inspection. The leeches migrate vertically with the ascending and falling ground water in the area of the river Elbe in spring and autumn. The author could dig up the leeches of a depth of 0.3 to 0.4 m from moist ground of the dried out puddles in summer. The unpublished location in Austria (Erbsbach/Vienna Woods) is similar to both places. This brook shows also high fluctuations in the water level. Its altitude is comparable to the found on Mt. Miroč in Serbia. The leeches were collected in a thick layer of foliage outside of the water. The Danube form also a Northern part of the boundary of Vienna Woods.

T. haskonis shows obviously a high tendency to a subterranean mode of life and prefers habitats, which are directly influenced by ground water. Other species of the genus *Trocheta* (*Trocheta cylindrica*) were also recorded from above ground waters, caves and subterranean habitats (Sket 1968, Nesemann & Neubert 1999).

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Address of the author: Clemens Grosser, Am Wasserturm 20, D-04523 Elstertrebnitz, c.grosser@gmx.de, www.hirudinea.de

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