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NOTE

FIRST REPORT OF THE PARASITOID WASP *PIESTOPLEURA* FÖRSTER (HYMENOPTERA: PLATYGASTROIDEA: PLATYGASTRIDAE) FROM INDIA

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First report of the parasitoid wasp *Piestopleura* Förster (Hymenoptera: Platygastroidea: Platygastridae) from India

Kamalanathan Veenakumari [1], Peter Neerup Buhl [2], Anandhan Rameshkumar [3] & Prashanth Mohanraj [4]

[1,3,4] ICAR-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources, P.B. No. 2491, Hebbal, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560024, India
[2] Troldhøjvej 3, DK-3310 Ølsted, Denmark
[1] veenapmraj@gmail.com (corresponding author), [2] pnbuhl@hotmail.com, [3] drrameshtrichy@gmail.com, [4] veenaprashi@rediffmail.com

The family Platygastridae has two subfamilies Platygastrinae and Sceliotrachelinae, the former being parasitoids of Cecidomyiidae (Diptera) while the latter are parasitoids of eggs of Flatidae, Pseudococcidae, Aleyrodidae, Curculionidae and Cerambycidae (Goulet & Huber 1993). *Piestopleura* belongs to the subfamily Platygastrinae. This genus is being reported for the first time from India.

While collecting Platygastroidea from their natural habitat, a specimen of the genus *Piestopleura* Forster was collected from a Malaise trap erected at the Institute of Wood Science and Technology (IWST), Malleswaram, Bengaluru. The specimen was imaged with a Leica M205A stereomicroscope, with 1x objective and Leica DFC-500 digital camera. Voucher specimen is deposited at the ICAR-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India.

Piestopleura Förster
(Images 1 & 2)

Material examined: ICAR/NBAIR/P1184, 28.vii.2012, India, Karnataka, Bengaluru, IWST, Malaise trap, forest land, coll. A. Rameshkumar.

Diagnosis: This genus can be easily distinguished from other genera of Platygastrinae by the presence of the following character states: head antero-posteriorly compressed; mesosoma extremely laterally compressed; mesoscutellum elongate, never semicircular; metasoma with flat ventral surface. The presence of a distinct T1 makes it more related to *Leptacis* than *Synopeas* (Ashmead 1893; Jackson 1969).

Biological information: *Piestopleura* parasitizes the eggs or larvae of gall midges (Cecidomyiidae). The wasp egg does not hatch until the fly larva is fully grown. The egg divides multiple times when the host is much larger than the wasp, resulting in identical clones that allow many wasps to develop from a single egg (polyembryony). Ossiannilsson (1937) recorded different parasitic Hymenoptera such as *Macroglenes penetrans* (Kirby), *Leptacis tipulae* (Kirby), *Platygaster tuberosula* Kieffer, *Platygaster* sp., *Isostasius punctiger* Nees, *Piestopleura thomsoni* Kieffer, *Sactogaster pisi* Förster, and *Ectadius mamertes* (Walker) as parasitizing the lucerne flower midge *Contarinia medicaginis* Kieffer. Barnes (1939) recorded eulophids [*Aprostocetus annulatus* (Förster) and *Omphale aetius* (Walker)] and platygastrids [*Synopeas* sp. and *Piestopleura catillus* (Walker)] as parasitoids of *Dasyneura alpestris* (Kieffer).

Distribution: *Piestopleura* is represented by 19 species worldwide (Johnson 2016). Of these, 14 are known from

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Image 1. *Piestopleura* sp. (female)

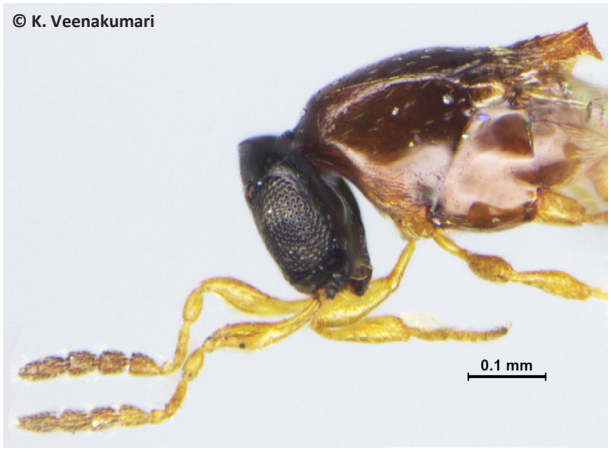

Image 2. Dorsally compressed mesosoma of *Piestopleura* sp.

the Palaearctic region while one species each has been reported from the Nearctic, Neotropical, Afrotropical, Australasian and Oriental regions (Vlug 1995; Johnson 2016). The only Oriental species - *Piestopleura milnei* Buhl - was described from Philippines, and subsequently reported from Laos. This is the first report of the genus from India.

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