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Scorpions at high altitudes: A new species of *Scorpiops* Peters, 1861 (Scorpiones: Scorpiopidae) from the Taxkorgan Reserve, Xinjiang, China

Scorpions de haute altitude : une nouvelle espèce de Scorpiops Peters, 1861 (Scorpiones : Scorpiopidae) de la réserve du Taxkorgan, Xinjiang, Chine

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ABSTRACT

Although scorpions have been described from China since the 19th century, it was only in the early 2000s that this fauna has seen a noticeable improvement in terms of the number and diversity of the described taxa. Some regions of China have been extensively prospected, while others remain largely unexplored. The latter is the case for the Province of Xinjiang, in the Extreme West of the country. A few contributions dealing with scorpions from this region are available, but these mainly concern representatives of the family Buthidae. In the present paper, a new species belonging to the genus *Scorpiops* Peters, of the family Scorpiopidae Kraepelin, is described from the Taxkorgan Natural Reserve. The description is based on one male and one female collected under stones at altitudes of 4500–4600 m. To our knowledge, this is the first species ever described from the Taxkorgan Natural Reserve and may represent an endemic element within the fauna of Xinjiang Province.

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RÉSUMÉ

Malgré les descriptions d'espèces de scorpions de Chine depuis le XIX^e siècle, c'est seulement à partir des années 2000 que cette faune a connu une véritable explosion, tant pour le nombre que pour la diversité des taxa découverts. Certaines régions de Chine ont été largement prospectées, tandis que d'autres demeurent encore peu explorées. Ceci est le cas de la province du Xinjiang, dans l'Extrême-Ouest du pays. Certaines contributions à la faune de scorpions de cette région existent, mais concernent notamment des éléments de la famille des Buthidae. Dans la présente contribution, une nouvelle espèce appartenant au genre *Scorpiops* Peters et à la famille des Scorpiopidae Kraepelin est décrite de la réserve naturelle du Taxkorgan. La description est basée sur un mâle et une femelle collectés enterrés sous des pierres, à des altitudes de 4500–4600 m. À notre connaissance, cette

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espèce est la première jamais décrite de la réserve naturelle du Taxkorgan et doit vraisemblablement représenter un élément endémique de la faune de la province du Xinjiang, en Chine.

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1. Introduction

As already outlined by several authors [1–5], our knowledge of the scorpion fauna of China has seen a remarkable development since the early 2000s. This improvement concerns not only global numbers, but also the diversity of the described taxa. Although some Chinese Provinces have been extensively prospected, with the descriptions of several new species [4], others remain poorly sampled. The latter is most certainly the case for the Western Chinese Province of Xinjiang. Some contributions to the scorpion fauna of this province are available, but

these mainly concern representatives of the family Buthidae C. L. Koch, 1837 [6,7].

In the present contribution, a new species belonging to the genus *Scorpiops* Peters, 1861 of the family Scorpiopidae Kraepelin, 1905 is described from the Taxkorgan Natural Reserve, located in the southwestern portion of the Xinjiang Province, near the borders with Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan (Fig. 1). The new species represents the first record of a scorpion from the Taxkorgan Natural Reserve and probably constitutes an endemic element of this region. The scorpions were found buried under stones at an altitude of 4500–4600 m, placing the

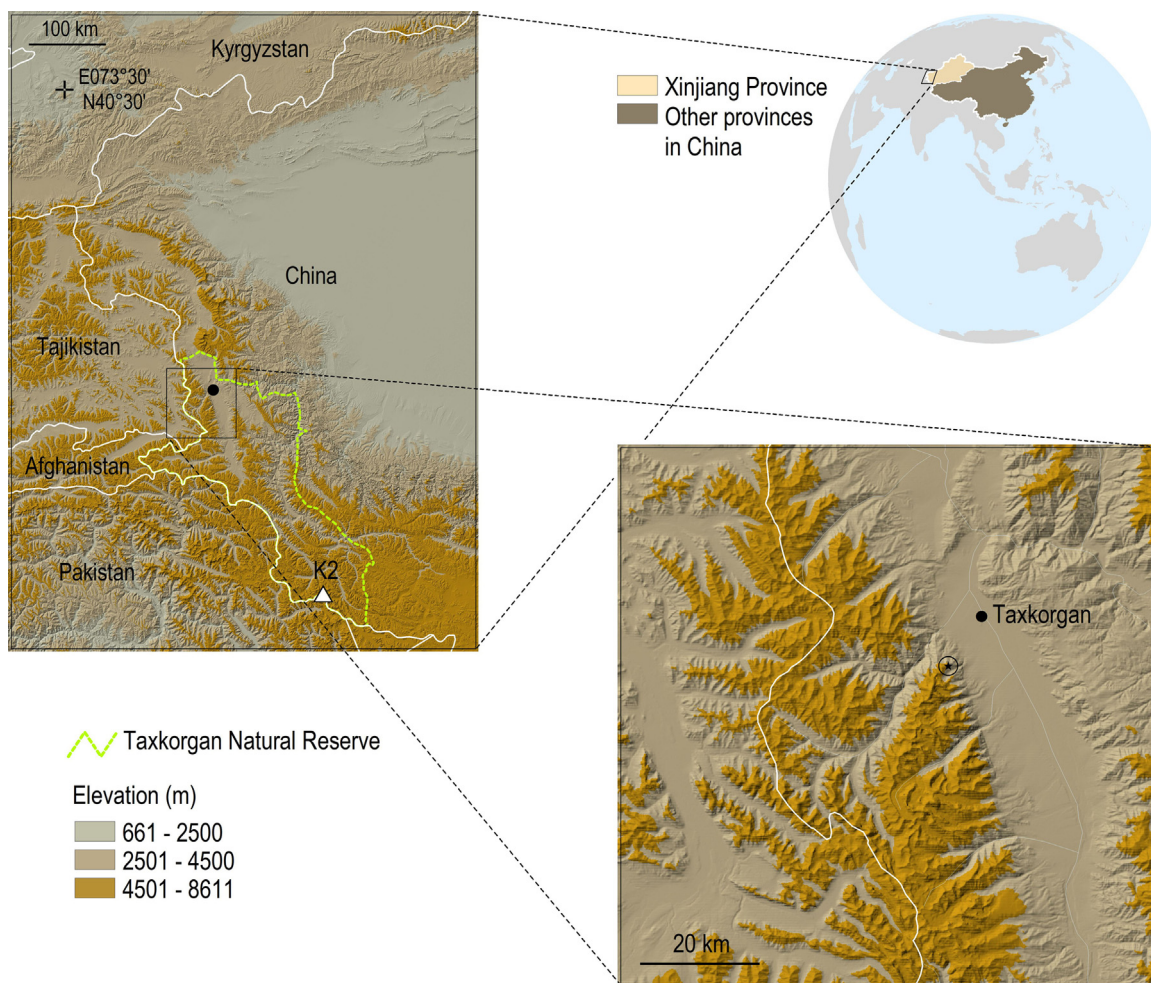


Fig. 1. Physical map of Xinjiang Autonomous Province in China, showing the Taxkorgan Natural Reserve. Circle with black star indicates the approximate area SW of Taxkorgan where the new species was collected.

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