

A new termite species from Iran, *Microcerotermes shahroudiensis* sp. nov. (Isoptera: Termitidae)

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Abstract

Microcerotermes Silvestri is a cosmopolitan genus and is distributed in all zoogeographical regions, with the exception of the Nearctic. During the study of Iranian termite fauna, specimens of *Microcerotermes* were collected from Shahroud, Iran. Morphological studies indicated that specimens belonged to a new species. This species comes closest to *Microcerotermes varamanicus* Ghayourfar, but soldiers differ in possessing darker head-capsule and distinct postclypeus demarcated from frons.

Key words: Isoptera, Termitidae, new species description, Iran

Introduction

The termite genus *Microcerotermes* Silvestri is cosmopolitan and distributed in all zoogeographical regions, except the Nearctic. Several species of the genus have been reported from Iran and its adjacent countries: *Microcerotermes diversus* Silvestri from Mesopotamia (Silvestri, 1920), Iran (Weidner, 1960) and Saudi Arabia (Harris, 1964); *M. buettikeri* Chhotani and Bose from Saudi Arabia (Chhotani & Bose, 1979) and Iran (Ghayourfar & Esmaili, 1993); *M. gabrielis* Weidner from Iran (Weidner, 1955) and Saudi Arabia (Badawi *et al.*, 1982); *M. baluchistanicus* Ahmad, *M. sakesarensis* Ahmad, *M. longignathus* Ahmad, *M. prochampioni* Ahmad, *M. chaudhryi* Akhtar, *M. lahorensis* Akhtar, *M. maliki* Akhtar and *M. pakistanicus* Akhtar from Pakistan (Ahmad, 1955; Akhtar, 1974). Several species of *Microcerotermes* have been reported from Iran. Ghayourfar (2000) reported *M. chhotani* Ghayourfar, *M. turkestanicus* Luppova and *M. pakistanicus* from Iran. In the current study, specimens collected from Shahroud (Ghaderabad village), Sem-