

First caddisfly species from Mexican amber (Insecta: Trichoptera)

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Abstract

The first 4 new species of caddisflies (Trichoptera) are described from Mexican amber: *Culoptila aguilerai* n. sp. (Glossosomatidae), *Plectropsyche alvarezi* n. sp. (Hydropsychidae), *Antillopsyche mexicana* n. sp. (Dipseudopsidae), and *Xiphocentron chiapasi* n. sp. (Xiphocentronidae). *Culoptila*, *Plectropsyche*, and *Xiphocentron* are typical members of the Neotropical fauna and the fauna of Mexico; they now are also represented in Miocene Mexican amber. The genus *Antillopsyche*, previously known from the Greater Antilles and from Dominican amber, is now reported from Mexican amber.

Key words: Trichoptera, caddisflies, systematics, *Culoptila*, *Plectropsyche*, *Xiphocentron*, *Antillopsyche*, fossils, Mexican amber

Introduction

The specimens described here belong to Mexican Chiapas amber, which is considered to be middle Miocene in age. Mexican amber is a significant source of Cenozoic insect fossils. The study of Mexican amber is of great importance to the understanding of the paleoecology and paleobiogeography of the Central American region.

Research on Mexican amber inclusions began in the 1960s on material in the collection of the University of California, Berkeley. Trichoptera were mentioned (Hurd et al. 1962) from 2 undescribed specimens belonging to Hydroptilidae (B-8413-140) and Sericostomatidae (B-7053-32). Reinvestigation of this material by the authors has shown that the specimens seem to be fragments and are badly preserved; probably they do not even belong to the noted families. Tertiary Trichoptera species have been described and reviewed from Baltic (Ulmer 1912) and Dominican amber (Wichard 2006). In comparison, knowledge of the faunal inclusions of Mexican amber is entirely lacking with