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### The authorship and type locality of *Melanocorypha leucoptera* (Aves: Alaudidae)

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The White-winged Lark is a monotypic bird species of Middle Asian steppes (Vaurie 1959; Alström *et al.* 2004; see Cowan 2006, 2007 for the term 'Middle Asia'). It was called *Alauda* (or *Melanocorypha*) *sibirica* J.F. Gmelin (1789: 799) until Gyldenstolpe (1926: 22) observed that *Tanagra sibirica* Sparrman (1786: pl. 19) is a junior synonym of *Melanocorypha yeltoniensis* (Forster, 1768: 350) and Hartert and Steinbacher (1933: 103) argued that *sibirica* J.F. Gmelin is preoccupied in *Melanocorypha* Boie (1828: col. 322) by *sibirica* Sparrman. Hartert and Steinbacher (1933) thus suggested that White-winged Lark should be called *Melanocorypha leucoptera* (Pallas "1831" = 1811: 518), which they believed to be the next oldest available synonym (see Hartert 1904: 211).

Subsequently, Peters (1952, 1960: 43) observed that *Alauda sibirica* J.F. Gmelin is not preoccupied by *Tanagra sibirica* Sparrman because of the one-letter difference (Art. 57.6 of the ICZN 1999; hereafter "the Code"; note that this rule was in force already in Peters' time; Hemming 1957: 78). For some reason, however, Peters (1952) decided not to return to *sibirica* J.F. Gmelin, which had been in use for the species for some 140 years, and suggested conservation of the specific name *leucoptera*, which had been in "prevailing use" for less than two decades by that time. Following Peters's (1952) proposal, the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature suppressed both *Tanagra sibirica* Sparrman and *Alauda sibirica* Gmelin (ICZN 1956: Opinion 403) and decided that the species in question should be called *Melanocorypha leucoptera* Pallas, 1811.

Following this action by the ICZN, the White-winged Lark has been generally called *Melanocorypha leucoptera*, and this name is generally attributed to Pallas (1811: 518). [See ICZN (1954: Opinion 212) for the dating of this book.] However, my literature search revealed that Pallas (1811) did not create the specific name *leucoptera*, whose true author is Hablizl (1785: 177).

Carl Ludwig Hablizl (1752–1821), a German naturalist in service of Russian tzars, published significant contributions to the ornithology of the countries surrounding the Caspian Sea (Hablizl 1782, 1783; Mlíkovský 2008, 2011). Subsequently, Hablizl explored Crimea in 1784–1785 on behalf of Count Grigorij Aleksandrovič Potemkin (1739–1791), governor of the Novorossiysk Governorate, to which Crimea was annexed in 1783 (Ena 1969; Fisher 1970). Hablizl's expedition resulted in a "physical description" of Crimea (Tauria), which first appeared in Russian (Hablizl 1785) and later in French (Hablizl 1788), German (Hablizl 1789a) and English (Hablizl 1789b) translations. These books appeared anonymously, but Hablizl is generally recognized as their author (e.g. Berg 1862: 32; Ena 1969). In the following passage, Hablizl (1785: 177) described *Alauda leucoptera* as follows (my translation): "It differs from the Common Skylark [= *Alauda arvensis* Linnaeus, 1758] in being larger and in having white wings." This brief but apt description leaves no doubt which species Hablizl had in mind.

Pallas (1811: 518) neither referred to Hablizl, nor attributed the specific name *leucoptera* to himself. However, Pallas almost certainly knew of Hablizl's work, because they knew each other personally (cf. Pallas 1784) and because Pallas explored Crimea in 1794 (see Pallas 1795) and then lived in Simferopol, Crimea, from 1795–1810 (Wendland 1992). Thus it can hardly be doubted that Pallas adopted the specific name *leucoptera* from Hablizl (1785).

Following Pallas (1811: 518), the Baraba steppe in northeastern Kazakhstan and adjacent parts of Russia has long been considered the type locality of *Melanocorypha leucoptera* (e.g. Volčaneckij 1954: 567; Peters 1960: 43; Stepanân 1990: 346, 2003: 383). However, given that Hablizl 1785 is the true author of the name, the type locality of *Alauda* (= *Melanocorypha*) *leucoptera* Hablizl, 1785 is Crimea. Hablizl (1785: 177) characterized the occurrence of this species within that region as follows (my translation): "Abundant in all lowlands and in mountain valleys." White-winged Lark was a common winter visitor to Crimea until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, but not later (Volčaneckij 1954; Ů.V. Kostin 1983; S.Ů. Kostin 2010). It is not clear from Hablizl's (1785) work during what season he recorded White-winged Larks in Crimea.