NOTES ON THE GENUS PROTOTHEA WEISE WITH REDESCRIPTION OF P. QUADRIPUNCTATA (MULSANT) (COLEOPTERA: COCCINELLIDAE: COCCINELLINI)

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Abstract.—The genus Protothea Weise, 1898 is diagnosed and transferred from Halyziini (=Psylloborini) to Coccinellini. Nedina Hoang, 1983 is synonymised with Protothea (new synonym) and Nedina mirabilis Hoang, 1984 with Protothea quadripunctata (Mulsant, 1853) (new synonym). The remaining species of Nedina are transferred to Protothea: P. decempunctata (Hoang, 1983), P. limbata (Hoang, 1983), P. flavescens (Hoang, 1983), P. octoguttata (Hoang, 1983), P. aurea (Hoang, 1984), and P. melanaria (Hoang, 1984) (new combinations). P. quadripunctata (Mulsant) is redescribed and illustrated based on material from India (Assam; Nagaland).

Key words.—Protothea, Nedina, Coccinellidae, Coccinellini, new synonyms, new combinations, Protothea quadripunctata, redescription.

INTRODUCTION

Protothea Weise (1898) is a poorly known genus of ladybird beetles with only two recognized Oriental species, P. quadripunctata (Mulsant, 1853) and P. firma Weise (1898). The third species, Protothea ranamese Bielawski (1960), described from Sunda Islands, was transferred by Iablokoff-Khnzorian (1984) to Illeis (Bielawskia). Iablokoff-Khnzorian (1982) included Protothea in the annex of his revision of the Palaearctic and Oriental Coccinellini having insufficient material for its proper treatment. He provided brief descriptions of the genus and the two species therein without any illustrations and also did not include the genus in his key to the genera.

Protothea quadripunctata (Mulsant) is the only species recorded so far from India, but these records were exclusively based on the original descriptions of P. quadripunctata and P. indica Weise (1910). Mader (1933) synonymised these two species based on their identical descriptions and illustrated the adult. Recently, the senior author had the opportunity to examine few specimens of P. quadripunctata collected from the northeastern region of India. In view of the very little information available on Protothea and P. quadripunctata, they are redescribed and illustrated in this paper.

TAXONOMY

Protothea Weise
(Figs 1–19)

Protothea Weise, 1898: 226. Type species by monotypy: P. firma Weise, 1898.


Diagnosis. Protothea is readily separated from the other Coccinellinae of the Oriental Region by the unusual, characteristic structure of the prosternum (Figs 5, 15), and the elongate terminal segment of antenna (Fig. 2), the former character being uniquely diagnostic. The large and pyriform process, on a visibly higher plane than the rest of the prosternum, is somewhat similar to that in the species of Pseudaspidimerus Kapur, 1948 (Scymninae: Aspidimerini) and Propiptus Weise, 1901 (Scymninae: Scymnini), but these genera have a distinctly pubescent dorsum and very short antennae.

Discussion. Comparison of Protothea with other Oriental genera revealed that the genus Nedina Hoang (1983a), described from Vietnam, is a new junior synonym of Protothea. The prosternal process and antenna...