

A NEW GEOPHILID CENTIPEDE *HIMANTARIUM*  
*SAMUELRAJI* SP. N. FROM SOUTH INDIA

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(With 1 Text-figure)

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I—INTRODUCTION

Through the kindness of Professor J. Samuelraj, of the department of Zoology, Alagappa College, I have been able to collect and examine centipedes of a species of the genus *Himantarium* Koch (1847) from the Solayandar Koil Forest region. This species differs from the two other known species of the genus, viz., *H. gabrielis* Koch (1847) and *H. rugulosum* Koch (1863) in certain structural characters and also in its peculiar coiling behaviour. It is described here as a new species.

II—SYSTEMATIC ACCOUNT

Class **CHILOPODA**

Order **GEOPHILOMORPHA**

Tribe **HIMANTARIINI**

Family **HIMANTARIIDAE**

Genus **Himantarium** Koch (1847)

**Himantarium samuelraji** sp. n.\*

**Material.**—15 specimens, Solayandar Koil Forest region (Madras State), South India, ca. 9°25' N. Lat., 78°55' E. Long., Coll. *Sundara Rajulu*, 16.vii.1963; found in soft mud, under stones, and in organic debris.

**Body** blood-red in colour; anterior and posterior regions narrow. Total length (excluding antennae) 23 to 25 cms., width, 0.5 to 0.7 cm.

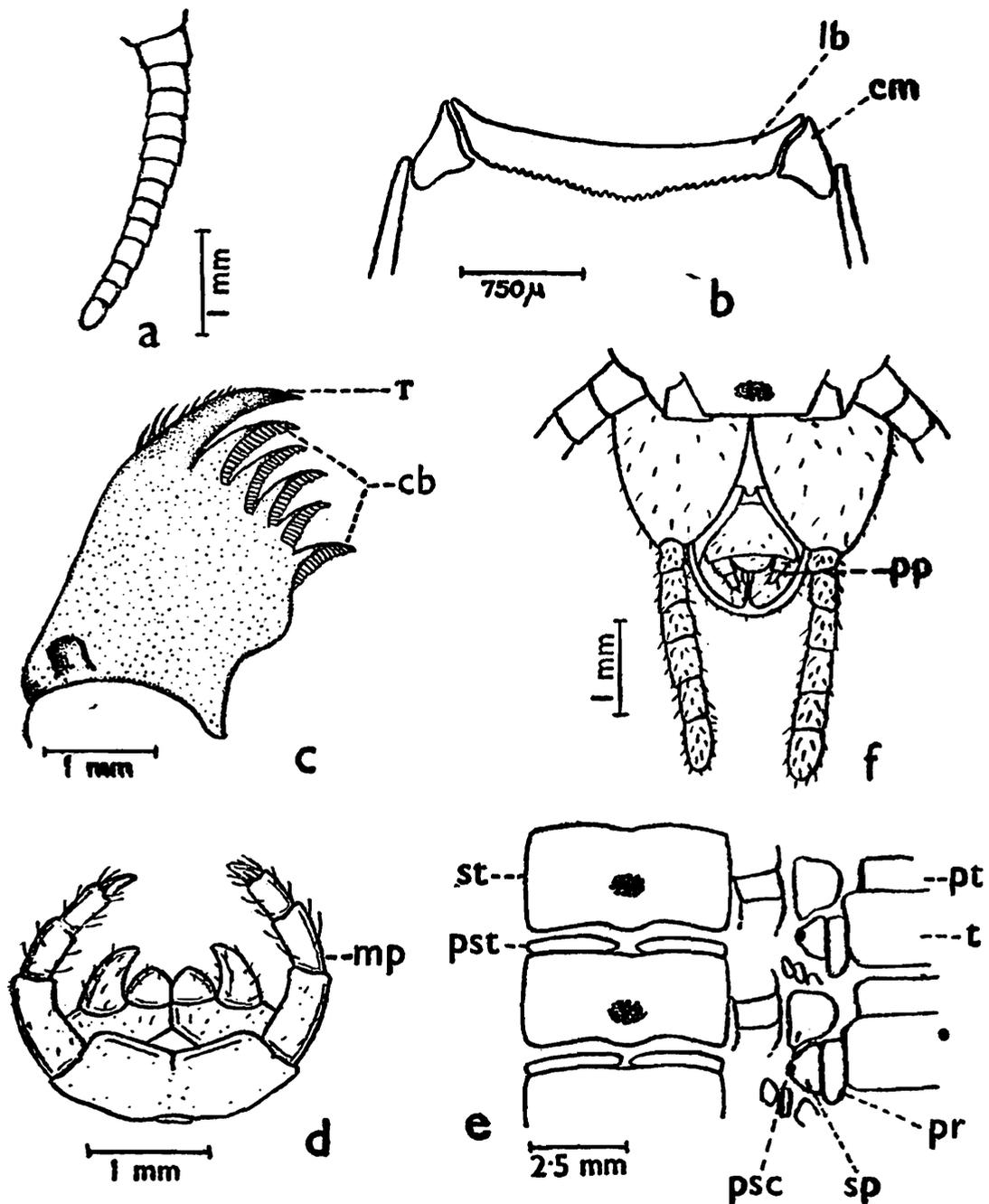
**Head** very narrow and conical. Eyes and ocelli absent. Antennae short and stumpy, 3 mm. long, thicker at the proximal end (Text-fig. 1a) and thinner at the distal end; 13-segmented. Labrum long; mostly of uniform width throughout (Text-fig. 1b), slightly arched below, free margin denticulated. Mandible with one long tooth, sharp and hook-like, the tip of the hook bent inwards; five short combs follow-

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\*Named after Professor J. Samuelraj.

*Rec. Zool. Surv. India*, 63 (1—4), 1971.

ing the tooth (Text-fig. 1c). II Maxilla small with a pair of long, slender and 4-segmented palp (Text-fig. 1d); the palps of both the sides form a 'V'



TEXT-FIG. 1—*Himantarium samuelraji* sp. n. (a) Right antenna. (b) Labrum. (c) Right mandible. (d) II Maxilla. (e) Sclerites of 19th and 20th segments. (f) Male genitalia, ventral view.

*cb.*, combs; *cm.*, comandibularis; *lb.*, labrum; *mp.*, maxillary palps; *pp.*, palpifers; *pr.*, paratergite; *psc.*, parascutellum; *pst.*, presternites; *pt.*, pretergite; *sp.*, stigmopleurite; *st.*, sternite; *t.*, tergite; *T.*, tooth of the mandible.

*Trunk* 133 segmented. Tergites twice as wide as the breadth (Text-fig. 1e); pretergite approximately half the size as the tergite; paratergite small, roughly conical, closely opposed to the stigmopleurite. Sternite approximately  $1\frac{1}{2}$  times wider than the tergite; sternal spinules grouped as an oval spot. Presternites represented by a pair of linear plates opposed to the anterior border of the sternite (Text-fig. 1e).

**Genitalia** ♂ : Penis short with a pair of double segmented palpifers ; all enclosed inside the dorsal plate (Text-fig. 1f. ) ; Female : Unknown.

**Type specimens.**—*Holotype.*—Male, from Solayandar Koil Forest region (Madras State), 16.vii.1963, (Coll. *Sundara Rajulu*). Deposited in the National Collections, Zoological Survey of India, Calcutta. (Reg. No. 3092/18, in spirit in a vial).

**Paratypes.**—With same data as the holotype. Deposited as follows : (i) one example, in the collections of the Zoological Survey of India (Reg. No. 3093/18, in spirit in a vial) ; (ii) one example with Prof. J. Samuelraj, Department of Zoology, Alagappa College, Karaikudi ; (iii) one example with the Natural Science Museum, Thiagarajar College, Madurai ; (iv) the remainder with the author.

**Type locality and geographical distribution.**—INDIA : Solayandar Koil Forest region, Madras State.

**Comparison.**—*Himantarium samuelraji* sp. n. is similar to *H. gabrielis* Koch, but is distinguishable by the following features : (i) Antenna very short, with 13 segments ; (ii) labrum long and uniform in width ; (iii) mandible with a long hook-like curved tooth and five small combs ; and (iv) second maxilla small with a pair of slender and long palps.

In *H. gabrielis* Koch the antennae are long, with 15 to 16 segments ; the labrum is short, with a very narrow middle region connecting the two wider lateral wings ; mandibles with a short and denticulated tooth and with four combs ; and finally the second maxilla large, with a pair of very corpulent conical palps (*vide* Koch, 1847).

A peculiarity noted in the behaviour of *H. samuelraji* is that, when disturbed, it coils its body into an irregular twist and remains inactive much similar to a millipede. Such a behaviour is unknown in any centipede.

### III—SUMMARY

1. A new species of Geophilomorpha, *Himantarium samuelraji* is described from South India (Type locality : Solayandar Koil Forest region, Madras State).

2. It is closely allied to *H. gabrielis* in the number and nature of the sclerites on the trunk segments and the structure of the male genitalia ; but differs in the shape of the labrum, the number of segments in the antenna, the number of combs in the mandible, and structure of mandibular teeth and maxillary palps.

### IV—ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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