

Neotype of *Pseudagrion approximans* Selys, 1876 designated to resolve a nomenclatorial confusion in the genus *Aciagrion* Selys, 1891 (Odonata: Coenagrionidae)

Oleg E. Kosterin^{a,b*}, Jérôme Constant^c and Keith D.P. Wilson^d

^aInstitute of Cytology & Genetics SB RAS, Acad. Lavrentyev ave. 10, Novosibirsk, 630090, Russia; ^bNovosibirsk State University, Pirogova str. 2, Novosibirsk, 630090, Russia; ^cRoyal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Vautier street 29, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium; ^d18 Chatsworth Road, Brighton, BN1 5DB, UK

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To resolve a prevailing nomenclatorial confusion present in the genus *Aciagrion*, *A. tillyardi* Laidlaw, 1919 is placed in synonymy of *A. approximans* (Selys, 1876). The neotype of “*Pseudagrion approximans*”, a male specimen from Khasi Hills preserved in Coll. Selys Longchamps at RBINS, is designated to replace the lost holotype, which was an incomplete specimen of unknown provenance. Secondary sources suggest that Selys Longchamps himself had compared the present neotype specimen with the holotype.

Keywords: nomenclature; taxonomy; neotype; *Aciagrion*, *Pseudagrion approximans*; *Aciagrion approximans*; *Aciagrion tillyardi*; *Enallagma assamica*; East India; Khasi Hills

Introduction

The genus *Aciagrion* Selys, 1891 includes Asian and African species, and there has been much taxonomic confusion around many of them (Hämäläinen, 2001). A complete revision of the genus is a matter of future. However, at present it is possible to resolve the nomenclatorial confusion regarding the use of the names *Aciagrion approximans* (Selys, 1876) and *Aciagrion tillyardi* Laidlaw, 1919, which have been used, alternatively or simultaneously, as valid species names, referring to the same Asian species.

The name *approximans* was originally published by Selys Longchamps (1876, p. 507–508) verbatim as follows:

Race? *Pseudagrion approximans*, de Selys

♂ Abdomen environ 27, Aile inférieure 17 1/2.

Très-voisin du *microcephalum*. Il en diffère par ce qui suit:

1° Le ptérostigma est plutôt réniforme qu'en losange, les côtés externe et inférieur étant réunis en courbe sans angle à leur séparation. Ce ptérostigma est d'un noir décidé très-finement, mais distinctement cerclé de jaune pâle, surtout

*Corresponding author. Email: kosterin@bionet.nsc.ru

aux premières ailes; enfin les quarte sont pétiolées un tant soit peu plus loin que la nervule basale postcostale, comme chez l'*hisopa*.

2° L'épistome est noir, avec deux traits clairs transverses à sa base; les taches postoculaires bleues plus grandes, arrondies.

3° Au prothorax la petite tache dorsale claire est géminée. Le bord du lobe postérieur forme presque trois festons, le médian plus avancé.

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4° Au thorax les bandes noires antéhumérales et la dorsale semblent un peu plus larges, cette dernière non divisée en deux, l'arête étant noire.

5° L° 2e segment de l'abdomen a sa bande dorsale noire complète, comme chez le *migratum* (les 8-9° segments manquent).

♀ Inconnue.

Patrie: Un mâle sans indication de localité au Musée de Dresde; mais je suis convaincu qu'il provient de la Malaise ou de l'Asie tropicale.

NB. Quoique ce type soit dépourvu des appendices anals, et malgré sa grande ressemblance avec le *microcephalum* et le *migratum*, le ptérostigma et la base des ailes me semblent assez différents pour empêcher de la réunir à l'une ou à l'autre de ces formes.

The wording above “Race? *Pseudagrion approximans* de Selys” implied that the author supposed that this taxon, as well as *P. australasiae* [Selys, 1876] and *P. migratum* [Selys, 1876], might be a “race” of *Pseudagrion microcephalum* (Rambur, 1842). The nominal taxon *approximans* was based of a single male of unknown provenance. Furthermore, at the time of description, the holotype was missing abdominal segments 8–9 and presumably the caudal appendages. Also noteworthy is that the original description mentioned two light transverse streaks across the black lower face; large, blue, roundish postocular spots, and an almost trilobate prothorax with the median lobe more protruding.

According to a personal communication by Dr Christian Schmidt of Dresden Museum, the holotype and the relevant collection catalogues were apparently destroyed in the Dresden bombings during the Second World War in 1944.

Fifteen years later in his work devoted to specimens collected by Leonardo Fea in Burma and adjacent regions, Selys Longchamps (1891, p. 509–511) described, within “legion” (“grand genre”) *Agrion*, a subgenus *Aciagrion* Selys, 1891, which is now considered a valid genus. After the text devoted to *Aciagrion hisopa* (Selys, 1876), Selys (1891, p. 512) added the following note: “Le *Pseudagrion approximans*, Selys (Syn. Agr. donné comme race du *Microcephalum* (n. 168) et qui provient des Khasia Hills (par. M. Atkinson) est aussi un *Aciagrion*, assez voisin de l'*hisopa* par le point rapproché d'où naissent du principal les secteurs sous-nodal et médian, et par la forme des appendices anals. La connaissance de la femelle, que je ne possède pas, décidera que mon opinion est bien fondée, si cette femelle est munie d'une épine vulvaire. La tête de l'*approximans* est peu plus grosse et le noir y domine ainsi que sur le devant du thorax.” In the first phrase, Selys made two confusing statements: (i) he stated the type locality of *approximans* to be “Khasia Hills”, presently Khasi Hills, part of the Garo-Khasi range, Meghalaya State (before 1970 part of Assam State), India; and (ii) characterised the appendages, although both provenance and appendages had been mentioned as missing in the original description. Although Selys (1891) used the binomen *Pseudagrion approximans* (merely as a reference to his work of 1876), he clearly stated that the species belongs to *Aciagrion*.

According to the diary notes by Selys (Caulier-Mathy & Haesenne-Peremans, 2008), he had received Atkinson's specimens from the German insect dealer Otto Staudinger on 8 July 1876. At that time he still had the holotype of *P. approximans* available for study; it was returned to Dresden on 18 February 1879. Therefore it is safe to assume that Selys had made a direct

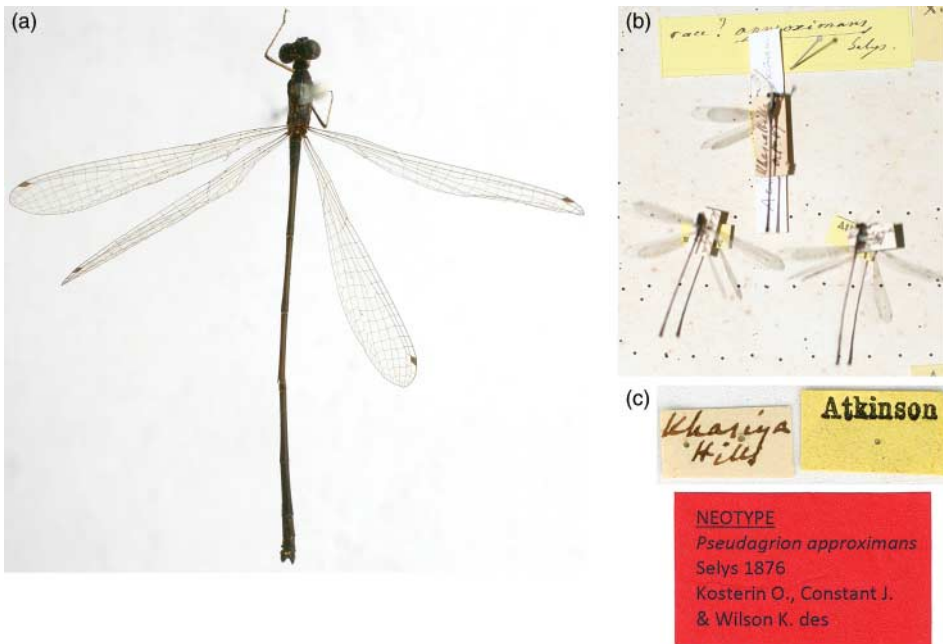


Figure 1. The neotype of *Pseudagrion approximans* Selys, 1876 in Selys Longchamps' collection at Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Brussels (RBINS): (a) general habitus; (b) position in the Selys' collection box (below right) among the series of three specimens by Atkinson from "Khasiya Hills"; (c) labels (not to scale).

comparison of the specimens and we are inclined to believe that Selys identified Atkinson's specimens correctly. On the other hand it remains uncertain whether the holotype of *approximans* also came from Khasi Hills.

The series of three males collected by Atkinson, identified by Selys as *approximans* (Figure 1), and two of the three syntypes of "*Pseudagrion? hisopa*, de Selys" (Selys Longchamps, 1876, p. 509–510) are presently kept in Selys Longchamps' collection at Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences, Brussels (RBINS). The geographic labels of the former vary from "Khasiya Hills/Oct 67" to "Khasiya Hills". It is noteworthy that the upper appendages in these two series are strikingly dissimilar as seen in profile: in *hisopa* they are conical with a small subventral tooth while in the other series they are deeply bifid with two large subequal teeth. The shape of the cercus of *hisopa* was characterised by Selys (1891, p. 511) as follows: "Appendices anals subtriangulaires". This fact proves that Selys was inaccurate in his statement concerning the shape of anal appendages in *approximans*.

Laidlaw (1919, p. 187) described *Aciagrion tillyardi* based on 3♂♂ and 1♀ from "Cherrapunji, Assam", presently Cherrapunji or Sohra, East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya, India. The description includes the following statement: "Types of ♂ and ♀ will be returned to the Indian Museum". The margin of the relevant page in the copy of the book by Fraser (1933) at Natural History Museum, London (BMNH) has the following handwritten remark supposedly by D. E. Kimmins (R. Dow, pers. comm.): "Type of *tillyardi* probably destroyed". K. A. Subramanian kindly informed us that *A. tillyardi* is not present in the type collection of Indian Museum, Kolkata.

In the same year, Fraser (1919, p. 877–878) described *Enallagma assamica* based on a series of "♂♂ and ♀♀" from "Shillong, Assam". Shillong is a capital of East Khasi Hills District and is situated just 36 km NE of Cherrapunji, the type locality of the previously considered taxon. According to Kimmins (1966, p. 180), the types of *E. assamica* are no longer available: "The

type is stated by Fraser (1933b: 343) to be in the British Museum Natural History, but there is no record there that it was ever received. There are no examples in the Fraser collection marked as type, or even bearing the data of the type series (27.X.1918), but there are examples taken at Shillong on other dates in October, 1918. This may be another instance where an error has occurred in the published date of capture. Fraser's description is not very detailed and differs somewhat from these examples, and while they may have been part of the type-series, it seems better to record the type as 'untraced'."

The original descriptions of *A. tillyardi* and *E. assamica*, both made in 1919, correspond to each other with respect to the characters of specimens described, and also to those of specimens collected by Atkinson in the Selys' collection, identified by Selys as *P. approximans*. All these specimens were taken from the same Khasi Hills. They clearly refer to the same species, which according to Fraser (1933, p. 343) is: "a very common species in the Khasia Hills, Assam, at 5,000–6,000 ft"; here the former broader geographical sense of Assam was implied. The synonymy of *A. tillyardi* and *E. assamica*, nearly simultaneously described from very close localities, was acknowledged by the authors of these two species (Fraser, 1933; Laidlaw, 1924). The publication date of the paper by Laidlaw (1919) was 25 February 1919, and of the paper by Fraser (1919) was 20 October 1919, as printed in the respective journals, so the name *tillyardi* has an eight-month priority over *assamica*. However, the valid name ascribed to this species by subsequent authors varied.

Laidlaw (1924, p. 4) mentioned *A. approximans* among species which were not known to him. He made the following notes: "This species has never been fully described. It is said by de Selys to be related to *A. hisopa* in venation and by the form of the anal appendages. The last 3 segments of the abdomen of the type are missing. . . . Said to come from Kjasi [sic] Hills." It is evident that he based his comments on the two works of Selys Longchamps (1876, 1891). He also noted: "Possibly *A. tillyardi* is synonymous, but the anal appendages of that species are strikingly different from those of *A. hisopa* in appearance." So, based on the misleading statement about the appendages by Selys Longchamps (1891), Laidlaw (1924) treated both names *approximans* and *tillyardi* as valid.

Since then, both these species names were included as valid names in checklists of Odonata of the world by Bridges (1991, 1993, 1994), Tsuda (1991, 2000) and of India by Prasad & Varshney (1995) and Subramanian (2009). Both species are also included in the current *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* and treated as valid species (Dow, 2009; Sharma, 2010).

Fraser (1933) reassociated the name *Aciagrion approximans* (Selys, 1876) with the species from Khasi Hills, considering this name as valid and *tillyardi* and *assamica* as junior synonyms. Most probably he followed the above-mentioned subsequent identification of the species from Khasi Hills by the name's author, Selys Longchamps (1891), and obviously based on "the shape of the hind lobe of the prothorax which is trilobate in *approximans*" (Fraser, 1933, p. 344), the character mentioned in the original description of *approximans* (Selys Longchamps, 1876). Fraser's (1933, p. 343) statement "Paratypes in British, Indian and Pusa Museums and also in the author's collection" is incorrect since paratypes of the taxon *Pseudagrion approximans* never existed.

Since 1933, the use of either the name *A. approximans* or *A. tillyardi* has varied among Indian authors who have published works on the fauna of north-east India. Some authors, based on the authority of F. C. Fraser and his fundamental monograph of Indian Odonata (Fraser, 1933), have used *A. approximans* (Selys, 1876) as valid for the species in question; see for instance Mitra (2006), Mitra, Dow, Subramanian, and Sharma (2010) and Babu (2011). In contrast Lahiri (1977, 1979, 1987) and Ram & Prasad (1999) have used the name *A. tillyardi*.

Recent authors publishing papers on Odonata of the countries beyond India have preferred to abstain from using the name *approximans*, because of uncertain identity of its holotype, and have invariably used the name *Aciagrion tillyardi* as valid (although conspecificity of their specimens

with those from East India is not guaranteed). This applies to works devoted to the faunas of China (Wilson, 1999, 2000; Wilson & Reels, 2001, 2003; Wilson, Reels, & Xu, 2008; Wilson & Xu, 2007; Xu, 2005), Thailand (Hämäläinen, 1988; Hämäläinen & Pinratana, 1999; Kosterin, 2012a), and Cambodia (Kosterin, 2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2014; Kosterin, Chartier, Holden, & Mey, 2012).

Thus, there are three available species group names, *approximans*, *tillyardi* and *assamica*, with all the name-bearing types missing, referring to the same taxonomic species, common in the West Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya, India. Two of them, *approximans* and *tillyardi*, used to be alternatively used as valid providing ongoing instability of the nomenclature which has lasted for nearly a century.

To provide stability, a nomenclatural act is necessary to establish one of the two names, *A. approximans* or *A. tillyardi*, as being uniquely valid for the species considered. Note there is no predominant usage of one of them to be respected. There were two options:

(i) The decision in favour of validity of the name *A. tillyardi* would be based on the available information about characters of the name-bearing types, in particular on there being insufficient information for identification in the case of the holotype of *A. approximans*. This would be a good reason to suppress the name *A. approximans* as *nomen dubium*. This could only be achieved via plenary power of the Commission of Zoological Nomenclature “to modify applications and provisions of the Code to a particular case if such application in its judgement disturbs stability or universality or cause confusion” according to the Article 81 of the Code, with its part 81.2.3 concerning names considered to be subjective synonyms applicable to the case. An application could be submitted to The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, in which it would be asked to use its plenary power to suppress the name *approximans* Selys, 1876, as published in the binomen *Pseudagrion approximans*, for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy, and to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the name *approximans* Selys, 1876, as published in the binomen *Pseudagrion approximans*.

This would be a prolonged process, including submission, revision and publication of the case in the Bulletin of the Commission of Zoological Nomenclature, discussion in the same organ, a vote by the Commission and publication of its Opinion. Moreover, even if successful, it would result in validation of the name *A. tillyardi*, but the name-bearing type for this nominal taxon will still be missing. A name-bearing type is necessary, first of all to clarify identity of specimens from regions remote from the type locality, such as Thailand, Cambodia and China. To *de novo* create the name-bearing type for *A. tillyardi*, one would have to obtain a new specimen from Cherrapunji, the type locality of this taxon, and to designate it as the neotype.

(ii) The decision in favour of the validity of *A. approximans* can be based on specimens by Atkinson from “Khasia/Khasiya Hills” identified as *approximans* by the species’ author, Selys Longchamps (1891), perhaps by their direct comparison with the holotype still in his hands (see above). Of those specimens, three males still exist in the Selys collection. Designation of one of them as the neotype of *Pseudagrion approximans* Selys, 1876 renders it a nominal taxon of doubtless identity, and *Aciagrion approximans* (Selys, 1876) a valid name, as the senior subjective synonym for the later proposed names, *tillyardi* Laidlaw 1919 and *assamica* Fraser, 1919. Automatically we obtain the name-bearing type of *Pseudagrion approximans* (Selys, 1876) and the type locality as the Khasi Hills. This scenario is achieved by regular application of the Code, under provisions of Art. 75, without the need to invoke the plenary power of the Commission, and results in both the valid name and the name-bearing type at once.

We make our choice in favour of scenario (ii) and hereby designate the neotype of *P. approximans*.

The above discussed taxonomical confusion justifies the neotype designation with respect of demand of Art. 75.3.1. The diagnosis below meets requirements by Art. 75.3.2. The description

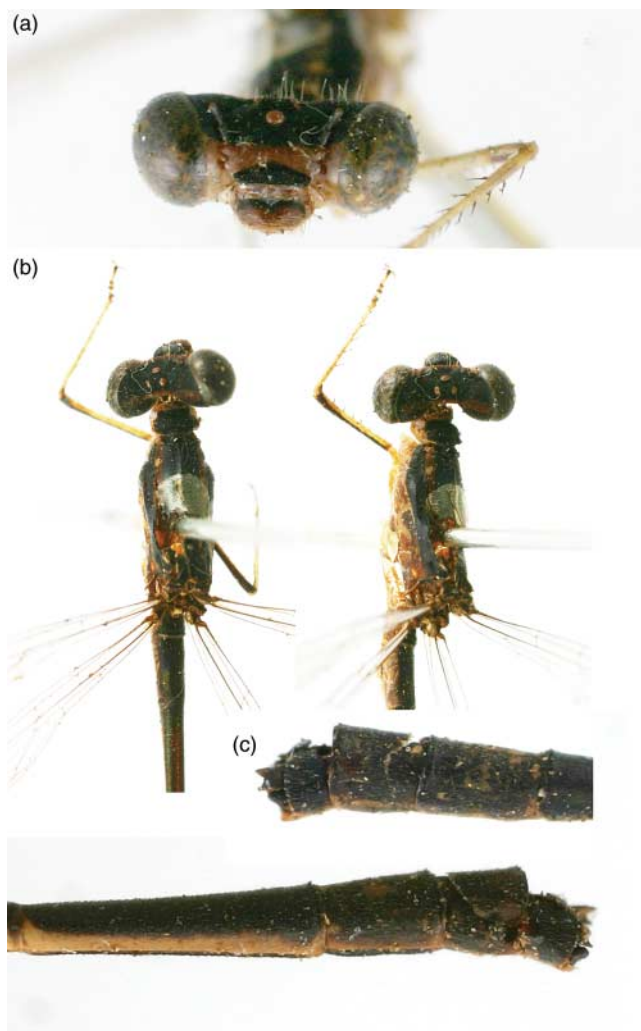


Figure 2. Details of the neotype of *Pseudagrion approximans* Selys, 1876: (a) head, frontal view; (b) head and thorax, dorsal and oblique dorsal views; (c) end of abdomen, left and right lateral views (not to scale).

below, Figure 2 and the neotype label are sufficient for recognition of the neotype specimens as demanded by Art. 75.4. Our communication with C. Schmidt at Dresden Museum and the fact of devastating bombing of Dresden in 1944 meet the requirement of Art. 75.3.4. The neotype characters correspond to the very brief description of the missing holotype of *P. approximans* and this specimen was identified as *P. approximans* by the taxon's author, Selys (1891), that satisfies the requirements of Art. 75.3.5. The origin of the holotype was unknown, so Art. 75.3.6 is inapplicable to this case. The neotype is preserved in Selys Longchamps' collection at RBINS, which is one of the largest and best kept Odonata collections in the world, complying with Art. 75.3.7.

Aciagrion approximans (Selys, 1876)

Race? [of *Pseudagrion microcephalum* (Rambur, 1842)] *Pseudagrion approximans* de Selys – Selys, 1876: 507–508 (original description; type locality unknown)

Pseudagrion approximans, Selys – Selys, 1891: 512 (identified from “Khasia Hills” [Khasi Hills]; placed in subgenus *Aciagrion* Selys, 1891)

Aciagrion tillyardi, sp. nov. – Laidlaw, 1919: 187 (original description; type locality: “Cheera-punji, Assam” [Cherrapunji/Sohra, Meghalaya]; junior subjective synonym)

Enallagma assamica, sp. nov. – Fraser, 1919: 877-878 (original description; type locality: “Shillong, Assam” [Shillong, Meghalaya]; junior subjective synonym)

A.[Aciagrion] approximans (de Selys) – Laidlaw, 1924: 4 (notes on the original description)

Material examined

Neotype of Pseudagrion approximans Selys, 1876. ♂ (Figures 1, 2), with labels: reddish white rectangular with hand-written “Khasiya Hills”, yellowish white rectangular with printed “Atkinson”. Added with a red rectangular “NEOTYPE / *Pseudagrion approximans* / Selys, 1876 / Kosterin O., Constant J. / & Wilson K. des.” Kept at Royal Belgian Institute of natural Sciences, Brussels (RBINS).

Additional specimens. 2 ♂♂ from the same series: one headless, with the original labels identical to the neotype; the second missing both right wings, with the same label “Atkinson” and the geographical label written by the same hand but with a different spelling version (coinciding with that in Selys, 1876) and containing a date: “Khasia Hills / Oct 67”; besides, it bears an additional label written by a different hand: “*approximans* / ♂”.

Description of the neotype

Condition and features of the specimen: Pinned, pterothorax surface broken to the left of pin. There is a spot of whitish substance (glue?) in front of pin. Legs incomplete and some damage to abdomen: S5 dorsal side in proximal part slightly broken; S10 slightly broken in its proximal dorsal area. Specimen overall darkened *post mortem*, less at legs, head and appendages, more at the end of abdomen. Ground colour yellowish-brown (further in description denoted as “light”), darkening nearly to black at the end of abdomen where the black pattern cannot be distinguished.

Head. Labium light, labrum light with a basal black stripe making lateral and central projections; anteclypeus light; postclypeus black; genae light; frons light to level just above bases of antennae; vertex black; occiput black with a light postocular pattern being a transverse streak behind vertex and widening laterally to a pair of subtriangular spots 2.4 times as long as wide at their end, slightly rounded and parallel to eyes margin. Antennal S1 light, remainder black except for extreme apex which is light.

Thorax. Prothorax light at sides, black dorsally but anterior lobe light, median lobe with light streaks along sides and posterior lobe with small light spots at sides, situated more dorsally than the above-mentioned streaks. Posterior lobe very slightly trilobate because of slightly protruding central “sublobe”. Pterothorax with light antehumeral stripes about half as wide as black humeral stripes. Legs (only left mid-leg and right hind leg present) light, femora with black stripes along dorsal sides; spines black; tarsi darker at tips. Postnodals: 12 in forewings, 11 in left hind wing and 10 in right hind wing. Pterostigmata brown, lightening to dark bordering veins; those on forewing slightly larger, their proximal and R1 margins equal in length and shorter than distal and costal margins, also equal in length; distal margin convex and so forms no obvious angle with R1 margin.

Abdomen. Long and slender, slightly expanding to both ends, at S1–2 and S7–10. Tergite dorsal sides broadly black, this colour expands at a segment distal part and contracts at proximal part forming incomplete light rings. S8 black except for tergite ventral margins and S9–10 totally black, with genuine black pattern invisible. Appendages black but cerci upper arms lighter, especially at inner sides, and paraproct lower portion entirely light. Cerci 1.3 times as long as broad in profile, deeply bifid because of a terminal semicircular concavity, with both upper and lower arms bluntly pointed and protruding behind to the same extent. Paraproct broader than cerci in lateral view, more shallowly bifid, with upper, black, rounded portion larger and more protruding, to the level of cercus hollow; lower, light and bluntly pointed part well seen from side.

Measurements. Total length 31 mm, abdomen 25 mm, hind wing 15 mm.

Diagnosis of Aciagrion approximans (Selys, 1876) based on the neotype

A medium-sized *Aciagrion* species with the cerci strongly bifid so that both the upper and lower arms protrude to the same level, and the posterior lobe of prothorax slightly trilobate.

Variation: both additional specimens are identical to the neotype in the above-mentioned characters.

Remarks

The neotype is slightly smaller than the lost holotype of *Pseudagrion approximans*, said to have had an abdomen 27 mm long and hind wing 17.5 mm long (Selys, 1876). The abdomen length in the neotype agrees with that provided in the original descriptions of the junior synonyms, *A. tillyardi* 24.5 mm (Laidlaw, 1919) and *E. assamica* 22–24 mm (Fraser, 1919). The hind wing length of the neotype is within the range provided in these descriptions (17 mm and 17.5 mm, respectively). Note, however, that the size in *Aciagrion* spp. may differ between seasonal broods, at least in a closely related species *Aciagrion migratum* (Selys, 1876) in Japan: in males, the abdomen length is 22.5–29 mm in summer specimens versus 27–32 mm in winter specimens, hind wing 14–19 versus 17–22 mm (Sugimura, Ishida, Kojima, Ishida, & Aoki, 1999; Udono & Takahashi, 1997). Seasonal variation of the abdomen length was also reported for *A. hisopa* in Cambodia (Kosterin, 2014).

It is hard to infer correspondence of the postocular pattern of the neotype with published verbal descriptions. The original description of *approximans* says “les taches postoculaires bleues plus grandes, arrondies” (Selys, 1876, p. 507). The original description of *A. tillyardi*: characterises the pattern as follows: “a linear gray-blue post-ocular mark on either side, connected by a fine, transverse line of the same colour across the occiput” (Laidlaw, 1919, p. 187). The actual pattern of the neotype, the line broadening to subtriangular spots at either side, is somewhat intermediate between the above statements. The original description of *E. assamica* says: “postocular spots blue and joined across the occiput by a line of the same colour” (Fraser, 1919, p. 877), not mentioning the shape of the spots. In *A. migratum*, the postocular marking also shows a considerable environmental modification, being much broader in the winter brood (Udono & Takahashi, 1997), so this character most probably is not diagnostic in the East Indian specimens either.

The prothoracic shape of the neotype closely corresponds to the original description of *approximans*, “Le bord du lobe postérieur forme presque trois festons, le médian plus avancé” (Selys, 1876, p. 507) but the trilobation, mostly due to the median “sublobe”, is very slight. Maybe this was the reason for the seemingly opposite characteristic in the original description of *A. tillyardi*: “The posterior margin of the prothorax is in all sexes regularly convex” (Laidlaw, 1919, p. 877).

In spite of this, Fraser considered both taxa conspecific and described the character as “posterior lobe of prothorax trilobate behind” (Fraser, 1933, p. 335).

The strongly bifid cerci of the neotype correspond well to the concordant descriptions in Laidlaw (1919, 1934) and Fraser (1919, 1933).

Laidlaw (1924, p. 6) notes on his description of *A. tillyardi*: “The dilatation of segments 8, 9, and 10 of the abdomen is a character not found in other species of the genus”; Fraser (1919, p. 877) notes the same for *E. assamica*: “Abdomen very attenuated as far as the 7th segment and then expanding gradually to the 10th”. In the neotype, the abdomen does expand slightly to the end.

The pattern at the end of abdomen is not seen in the neotype because of its post-mortem darkening. It was absent in the holotype; for the junior synonyms it was described as follows:

- “segments 9–10 gray blue, 10 metallic black” (Laidlaw, 1919, p. 187);
- “segments 8 and 9 deep sky-blue with no markings . . . ; broad, dorsal black marking on all segments except 8 and 9” (Fraser, 1919, p. 877);
- “segments 8 and 9 azure blue, segment 10 black” (Fraser, 1933, p. 343).

The original ground colour cannot be inferred from the neotype. The following is said in the descriptions of the three taxa involved:

- “très voisin du *microcephalum*”, that means blue; postocular spots blue in Selys (1876);



Figure 3. Topotypic males of *Aciagrion approximans* (Selys, 1876) as photographed in nature on 14 May 2014 at a roadside pond at the road Shillong-Cherrapunji, East Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya, India. Photographs by Vivek Sankar (top) and Tarun Karmakar (bottom).

- “gray-blue”, “gray-olive” and “greenish-white” at different body parts in Laidlaw (1919, p. 187–188);
- “bright-blue” in Laidlaw (1924, p. 3);
- “blue”, “deep sky-blue” and “pale greenish-blue” in Fraser (1919, p. 877–878);
- “blue”, “pale blue”, “azure blue” and “bluish green” in Fraser (1933, p. 342).

However, the live photos of topotypic males of this species made between Shillong and Cherrapunji, East Khasi Hills (Figure 3) clearly show the violet-blue ground colour turning greenish-blue at the thorax ventral parts and S3–7 (note also the large black mark at S10 dorsum and the green eyes with a brown patch on dorsum and a brown stripe below it). The same colour was mentioned for specimens of “*A. tillyardi*” from Hong Kong by Wilson (2000) who suggested the common name “Violet Aciagrion”. According to the authors’ experience, the violet-blue colour is especially apt to fade *post mortem* in damselflies (and the end of abdomen has soon darkened, as in the neotype, in the topotypic males collected by Krushnamegh Kunte and colleagues, pers. comm.). So the above-cited original descriptions, which did not mention violet, were most probably based on collected specimens only.

In summary, with the above minor reservations, the neotype characters are consistent with its being conspecific with *Aciagrion tillyardi*, *Enallagma assamica* and *Aciagrion approximans sensu* Fraser 1933, and it agrees with the original description of *Pseudagrion approximans*.

So, the valid name for the *Aciagrion* species from Khasi Hills, Meghalaya, India meeting the above diagnosis is *Aciagrion approximans* (Selys, 1876). Its name-bearing type is the neotype of *Pseudagrion approximans* Selys, 1876, hereby designated, and its type locality is Khasi Hills.

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