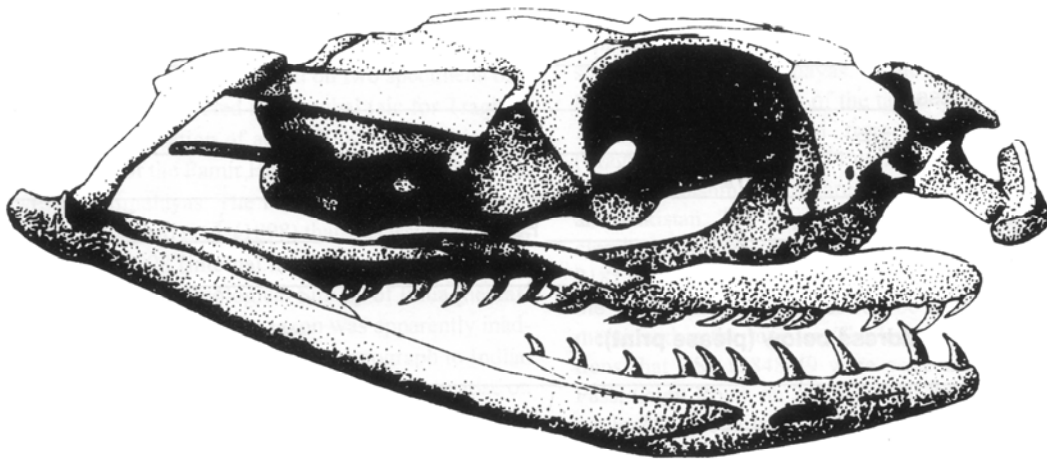


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**SYSTEMATIC STATUS OF *Lygosoma himalayanum tragbulensis* ALCOCK,
“1897” 1898 (SAURIA: SCINCIDAE) COLLECTED
BY THE PAMIR BOUNDARY COMMISSION, 1885**

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Lygosoma himalayanum tragbulensis Alcock, “1897” 1898, shown to be a valid taxon of scincid of the genus *Asymblepharus* Erementschenko and Szczerbak, 1980, is raised to specific status and redescribed. It is closely related to several other Himalayan species that were formerly placed in the genus *Scincella*, including *A. himalayana*, *A. ladacensis*, and *A. sikimensis*. *A. tragbulensis* (Alcock, “1897” 1898), is known from five examples, including the two syntypes in the collection of the Zoological Survey of India, collected from Tragbul Pass, western Himalayas, in an area claimed by India and Pakistan.

Key words: Systematics, Scincidae, *Lygosoma himalayanum tragbulensis*, *Asymblepharus tragbulensis*, Tragbul Pass, Himalayas.

INTRODUCTION

Lygosoma himalayanum, var. *tragbulensis* Alcock, “1897” 1898 was based on two specimens of a scincid lizard collected at “Tragbal (sic for Tragbul) Pass, at an elevation of about 9000 feet,” during the expedition of the Pamir Boundary Commission to the western Himalayas. The formal description was in a report by Gerard et al. (1898) that was issued towards the end of 1898 (internal information on the copy at the library of the Zoological Survey of India [hereafter ZSI] in Calcutta). The taxon was apparently inadvertently omitted from the next monograph to Indian lizards by Smith (1935), in the subsequent treatise on lygosomine scincids by Mittleman (1952) or in a revision of the genus *Scincella* by Ouboter (1986), to which other relatives were allocated. Constable (1949) listed the taxon as valid, based on his examination of a specimen in the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University (MCZ 7181) which he believed to be the paratype.

We examined the original description of the species and all specimens of this taxon in the collection of the ZSI and compare these with congeneric species from the Himalayas. In the same collection, there are four examples of the taxon (ZSI 12848-49, 13860-61), all collected from the type locality (Tragbul Pass, 34°29'N; 74°40'E), ca. 50 km NNW Srinagar, Kashmir, in an area claimed by both India and Pakistan. The original description of the form clearly mentioned of two types, and therefore MCZ 7181 cannot be a paratype, as mentioned by Constable (1949), nor can ZSI 13860 be the holotype, as mentioned in the register. The last data source mentions that ZSI 12848-49 were collected at Tragbul Pass, Gilgit Road, on 24 July, 1885 by G. M. Giles, while ZSI 13860 was taken at “Tragbul Pass about 9500 feet” by the same collector, making it clear that all five known specimens were taken during the Pamir Boundary Commission Expedition. Annandale (1905) also mentioned that four examples of this taxon was taken during the Expedition by Giles. However, the first two specimens appear to have been entered into the register later, which might explain why Alcock (“1897” 1898) did not have access to these at the time of description. We consider ZSI 13860-61 to be the two syntypes, as these match the original description and illustrations, in addition to being indicated as types in the register of the Indian Museum (now in the possession of the ZSI). The In-

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