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Description of a new species of *Psilopholis* Brenske (Scarabaeidae, Melolonthinae, Melolonthini) from Vietnam along with some remarks on the genus

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Abstract. – A new species belonging to the genus *Psilopholis* Brenske, 1892: *P. vietnamensis* n. sp. is described from Vietnam, representing the first record of this Leucopholina for Vietnam. *Psilopholis vestita* (Sharp, 1881) is reinstated as *bona species*.

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Introduction

Though of conspicuous size, the representatives of the genus *Psilopholis* Brenske, 1892 remain rather poorly known. So far, this genus counts only two valid species: *Psilopholis gigantea* Matsumoto, 2010 and *P. grandis* (Castelnau, 1840). They were reported from Indonesia (Java, Sumatra) and Malaysia (Malay Peninsula, Sarawak, Sabah) (Arrow, 1938; Balthasar, 1932; Brenske, 1892; Brenske, 1894a; Brenske, 1894b; catalogueoflife.org; Jayarathnam, 1992; Matsumoto, 2010; Sharp, 1881; Wood & Yew, 1969).

Unexpectedly, one of us (DK) recently received a series of specimens from North Vietnam which fit well into the genus *Psilopholis*. These specimens closely resemble those belonging to *P. grandis* but tend to be a little smaller, have no costae on their elytra, and show a somewhat longer antennal lamellae in males than in female: they belong to a new species of which we give hereunder the description, representing the first record of the genus for Vietnam.

During our study, we also came across the problem of the taxonomic status of *Tricholepis vestita* Sharp, 1881 and we propose to relieve this taxon from synonymy and reinstate it to species rank. And finally, we made a synthesis of the known distribution.

Materials and methods

The material used for our comparative study consisted of nearly 80 dried (mostly, pinned) specimens apparently belonging to the genus *Psilopholis* Brenske, both from private collections and institutional collections.

Specimens were examined with a Leica MS-5 stereomicroscope and a Zeiss SM XX stereomicroscope; measurements were taken in 20

mm with an ocular grid. Length measurements are from the anterior margin of the clypeus to posterior margin of the pygidium.

The habitus photographs were taken with a Canon MP-E 65mm/2.8 1-5× macro lens attached to a Canon EOS 550D camera. Partially focused images of each specimen were stacked using the Helicon Focus 3.20.2 Pro software.

Specimens in the type series are provided with 2 red printed labels: [*Psilopholis* // *vietnamensis* sp. nov. // A. Reichenbach & // D. Keith det. 2023] and [HOLOTYPE or ALLOTYPE or PARATYPE]. Verbatim label data are cited for type material examined.

The specimens were first softened in a moist chamber, and then carefully cleaned to reveal the properties of their surface. After excision of the male genitalia (if present), the specimens were pinned in a proper way for photographic documentation.

Specimens in this study are deposited in the collections of the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris, France (MNHN) and in the collection of both authors (ARCL & DKCC).

Psilopholis vietnamensis spec. nov.

(1 & 2)

ZooBank: <http://zoobank.org/9681E2B2-EF4C-4892-A8B9-AC0B2D824A8C>

Holotype, ♂, Vietnam, Quang Nam, Tay Giang, Mt Axan, 1300m, IV. 2017, local collector leg (ex DKCC, to be deposited in MNHN).

Paratypes

- 3 ♀ (1 designated as Allotype) Vietnam, Quang Nam, Tay Giang, Mt Axan, IV. 2017, local collector leg (DKCC);

- 4 ♂ & 6 ♀, Vietnam, Quang Nam, Tay Giang, Mt Axan, III. 2018, Van Dang leg (DKCC);

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- 1 ♂ & 2 ♀, Vietnam, Quang Nam, Tay Giang, Mt Axan, 1300m, VII. 2021, Tranh leg (DKCC);

- 3 ♂ & 4 ♀, Vietnam, Quang Nam, Tay Giang, Mt Axan, 1700m, VII. 2021, Tranh leg (DKCC);

- 1 ♂ Vietnam NgocLinh 1700m, Kon Tum, VI 2016, local collector leg (ARCL);

- 1 ♀ Vietnam, Quang Nam, Tay Giang, Mt Axan, IV. 2017, local collector leg (ARCL)

Description of the holotype

Length 29 mm. – *Body* large and elongate. – *Dorsal and ventral surface* brown to reddish brown and almost completely covered with short more or less adpressed to reclined yellowish-grey to yellowish-brown hairs (Fig. 1).

Head. – *Chlypeus* subquadrate, reflexed anteriorly, straight, shortly rounded at the antero-lateral corners. *Chlypeus* and *frons* covered with hairs. – *Punctuation* all-over coarse and irregular, dense, the limits between punctures forming vermiculations of the integument. – *Integument* dull. – *Antennae* with 10 antennomeres, club 3-lamellate, which is longer than antennomeres 2-7 together.

Pronotum. – Very transverse, convex, strongly narrowed anteriorly. – *Lateral margin* very slightly sinuate in anterior half and serrate throughout, base projecting medially on scutellum. – *Anterior angles* slightly protruding, posterior angles marked, protruding backwards. – *Punctuation* of the same type as on the head but distinctly smaller with the integument forming a very tight network of vermiculations between the numerous and dense points, shinier.

Scutellum. – With punctuation and vestiture as on pronotum.

Elytra. – Smooth, with very obsolete to hardly evident costae, with a distinct sharply raised apical callus clothed with a tuft of longer hairs. – *Humeral callus* strong and very distinct. – *Punctuation* as on pronotum but much smaller with more free areas of integument between, giving a brighter appearance.

Pygidium. – Covered with short hairs, similar to those on pronotum and elytra.

Underside. – *Prosternum* with triangular postcoxal process. – *Metasternum* and *metacoxae* shining, densely covered with long hairs. – *Sternites* smooth, densely covered with very short hairs throughout; presence of scattered pupillate punctures in the center of a small smooth area contrasting with the surrounding surface.

Legs. – *Protibia* with three denticles, the third denticle situated nearly medially and slightly offset toward the base, shorter than the others but obvious. – *Metafemur* densely covered with short hairs; longer metatibial apical spur sharp, pointed apically and not definitively longer than the 1st metatarsal segment.

Aedeagus (Fig. 2). – Parameres almost straight and parallel from above, forming an Omega-shaped end in sideview.

Female (Fig. 1). – Closely resembling male in almost all respects. Antennal lamellae somewhat shorter, metafemur a little wider, and protibial denticles more rounded than in the male.

Derivatio nominis. – As a reference to the geographic origin of the species.

Variability. – The series is rather homogenous and length varies from 27 - 30 mm (mean 28.3 mm) for males and 29 - 33 mm (mean 30.1 mm) for females.

Discussion. – Aside its very distinctive genitalia, this new species can readily be discriminated from the others by its size, the sternites pilose and punctured all-over, the elytra with hardly visible costae and the size of the antennal club longer than the funicle without the scape.

Remarks. – The melolonthine genus *Psilopholis* has been introduced without any real generic characterization by Brenske (1892): *und zwar bildet grandis [Lepidiota] eine eigene Gattung, die ich Psilopholis nenne, wohin auch vestita Sharp gehört.*

In fact, he will give a justification later (Brenske, 1894a): *Die vorliegende Art [=grandis] gehört unzweifelhaft zu den Leucopholiden*

und nicht zu den Rhizotrogiden, und wer meiner Ansicht nicht ist, für diese und vestita eine neue Gattung aufzustellen, möge sie unter Lepidiota wohin sie Redtenbacher stellte, belassen, und sie nur als eine behaarte Art von den beschuppten absondern. Meine Gründe aber für die Trennung als Gattung sind die folgenden. Allgemein: Der habitus ist nicht mehr der einer Lepidiota, die Gestalt ist schlank, die Schuppen, welche allen Mitgliedern eigen sind fehlen ganz, und die Geschlechtsunterschiede kommen in anderer Weise hier zum Ausdruck. Das letztere hebt schon Burmeister hervor, welcher angiebt, dass der Fächer des ♂ und ♀ gleich gross sei. Es ist ein sehr geringer Unterschied nur vorhanden, auch ist der weibliche Schienbeinsporen nur wenig breiter als der männliche und die Schienen selbst sind an der Spitze beim ♀ nur mässig erweitert. Dafür tritt hier ein neues Geschlechtsmerkmal auf, welches bei den anderen Lepidioten nicht beobachtet ist:

Das ♀, hat auf dem letzten unteren Hinterleibsringe einen Quereindruck, der dem ♂ fehlt; hieran sind die beiden Geschlechter sehr leicht zu erkennen.

Spezielle Merkmale: Das entscheidende ist hier die Bildung der Hinterbrust. Bei den Lepidioten entsendet diese nach vorn einen Fortsatz, welcher sich zwischen die Mittel Hüften einschleibt und sich hier mit dem Fortsatz der Mittelbrust verbindet; die Verbindungsstelle ist immer durch eine glatte Naht, welche der Spitze nahe gerückt ist, angedeutet. Bei den Lepidioten müsste man daher correcter von einem Fortsatz der Hinterbrust sprechen, statt von einem solchen der Mittelbrust, denn jene ist stärker an dieser Bildung beteiligt ().*

Bei der vorliegenden Gattung nun dehnt sich die Hinterbrust nicht nach vorn aus, sie schiebt sich nicht zwischen die Mittel Hüften, sondern schliesst hinter denselben deutlich ab und die Mittelbrust schiebt den schmalen Verbindungstheil zwischen die Hüften. Die Vorderschienen sind in beiden Geschlechtern scharf dreizahnig.

Arrow (1938) evidently overlooked this definition and pointed to this problem, although providing some noticeable characterization: *This insect, called Trichopholis vestita by Sharp, was placed by Brenske, together with grandis Cast., under the catalogue name Psilopholis, to which no characters have ever been assigned. The proportions differ considerably from those of Trichopholis. The head is relatively small, the pronotum short and broad, with well-marked hind angles, and the elytra are long. The middle coxae in these two genera are not separated by a mesosternal process and the clothing does not consist of flat scales, but of short close-lying setae.*

Matsumoto (2010) provided a definition in a modern sense but without any reference to Brenske (1894a): *Body moderately to extremely large, elongate and convex. Both dorsal and ventral surfaces densely covered with thick minute hairs, without any roundish or oval scales. Clypeus quadrate, gently rounded at antero-lateral corners, with anterior margin straight; antennae 10-segmented with three small lamellae; mentum transverse and pot-shaped with lateral margin strongly emarginate in anterior half.*

Prosternum with triangular process just posterior to the intercoxal space of pro-coxae; mesosternum without any intercoxal process. Lateral sides of abdominal sternites each devoid of whitish patches of short thick hairs.

Protibia with three distinct denticles; the 2nd denticle clearly approaching to the 1st one; 3rd denticle rather sharp.

Aedeagus depressed and wide; phallobase twice as long as or longer than parameres in dorsal view, widely cleft and gently concave in each of apico-lateral triangular portions.

In the course of his study, Masumoto (2010) also synonymized *Tricholepis vestita* Sharp, 1881 with *P. grandis* (Castelnau, 1840) after he carefully read SHARP's original description of his *Tricholepis vestita*. *It agrees well with the female characteristics of Psilopholis grandis.*

Up to now, we couldn't trace Sharp's typical series of 4 specimens caught on Java and Sumatra. But after examination of different specimens from Malaysia and Indonesia, we can't agree with this



Fig. 1 & 2. *Psilopholis vietnamensis* **spec. nov.**

1. Holotypus (A) and Allotypus (B), Vietnam, Mt. Axan Tay-Giang, Quang Nam, 1300m, IV 2017, leg. local collector.
2. Aedeagus

treatment: there is a widespread taxon with medially smooth sternites in both sexes which fits well Sharp's description as well as Brenske's comments later. Furthermore, it shows distinctive genitalia, very different from both *P. grandis* and *P. gigantea* Masumoto, 2010: we refer it to *Psilopholis vestita* Sharp, 1881 *stat. rest., bona species*.

The distribution of the hitherto known species appears to be centred on the Sunda islands; all of them are found on Borneo, and both *P. grandis* and *P. vestita* were (and are) additionally collected on Java and Sumatra (incl. Nias). Only the new species, *P. vietnamensis*, is restricted to the Asian mainland. The real distribution of *P. grandis* and *P. vestita*, however, remains to be elucidated. One reason for that is the probable confusion of the two species by Brenske (1892) which makes it impossible to use his distribution data as reliable (Arrow 1938), though largely used by Dalla Torre (1912).

In the case of *P. grandis*, Blanchard (1845) wrote “Le type of du genre *Ancylonycha* (*A. pubera*, Dej.) provient de l'île de Java” [*A. pubera* = *P. grandis*]; Arrow (1938) “believe[d] it to be confined to Java”, and Balthasar (1932) also listed *P. grandis* from Java, Buitenzorg, 1928. We can confirm its occurrence in Java, and also in Sumatra (Utara), Nias and Borneo.

In addition, Brenske (1892), as well as Dalla Torre (1912), records the species from the Philippines (Manila) and Amboina (Ambon Island). Whereas we have been unable to find a verifiable source for the latter, a specimen from the Philippines was described as *Leucopholis* (*Lepidiota*) *manillae* by Redtenbacher (1868), and synonymized with *P. grandis* by Brenske (1892). We could examine HD-pictures of the (female) type of Redtenbacher's species and its patria label, kindly provided by H. Schillhammer, Wiener Hofmuseum, Vienna (Fig. 3). Both the photos and the original description of the specimen (particularly, “*Bauchringe sehr fein schuppenartig punktiert...*”) fit to the features of *P. grandis*; furthermore, the patria label gives the name of the responsible zoologist (Zelevator) and of the expedition (Novara) as well as that of the species (*manillae*).

Indeed, in 1858 two consecutive stations of the Novara expedition were Java and Manila. If there had been no confusion of the sites and the name was given on the basis of the real patria, this means that *P. grandis* occurred in Manila, at least at the time of the Novara expedition. Unfortunately, neither Matsumoto (2010) nor one of the authors or the entomologist colleagues they asked ever saw a specimen undoubtedly collected on the Philippines (or on Ambon Island). Thus, either the distribution of the species got narrowed within the century after the description of *L. (L.) manillae*, the least likely hypothesis, or both Manila and Ambon need to be considered as *patria falsa*.

Likewise, we found no reliable collection data of any species from the Asian mainland, including West Malaysia (Penang and Malacca). Therefore, all previously known taxa are restricted to insular Asia.

Another question is that of the classification of the genus into one of the current tribes of Melolonthinae. Conventionally, the genus is assigned to the Leucopholini or Leucopholina, respectively (cf. e.g. Brenske, 1892). A similar genus of ‘scale-devoid but hairy, large’ species, *Alepida* Allsopp (2018) (sorted out from *Lepidiota* Kirby) would also belong to the “classical Leucopholini” because the antennae are 3-lamellate as in *Psilopholis*. There are other genera with ‘scale-devoid but hairy, large’ species which classically are considered as “Melolonthini” such as *Rhopaea* Erichson (antenna 5- to 8-lamellate; lamellae much longer in the male than in the female) (Britton 1957b), and scale-devoid species of *Dermolepida* Arrow (male antenna 5-lamellate, female 4-lamellate) (Britton 1957a, b). Noteworthy, Britton (1957b, 1978) does not discriminate between the two classical tribes but assigns *Lepidiota* as well as *Rhopaea* and *Dermolepida* to “Melolonthini”.

This position, which might seem innovative, is in fact based, in his own words, on essentially practical and not analytical reasons: *The object of this work is to prove a means of identifying Australian Chafers* (Britton, 1957), then *It would indeed have been most satisfactory to have started the revision with a classification based on a study of the Melolonthinae of the world. This would, however, have*



Fig. 3. Holotype of *Leucopholis* (*Lepidiota*) *manillae* Redtenbacher [= *P. grandis* (-Castelnau, 1840)]. Courtesy of Dr. Harald Schillhammer (Wiener Hofmuseum).

been in itself a major work and would have precluded the achievement of my objective, which was primarily to make the Australian species identifiable (Britton, 1978).

In a recent molecular analysis (Eberle et al., 2018) *Dedalopterus fujianensis* (Zhang) and *Psilopholis grandis* (Cast.) – both traditionally assigned to “Leucopholina” – are placed close together but clearly distant from “Leucopholina” and “Melolonthina” in a tree displayed to elucidate the phylogeny of Melolonthine chafers. Thus, as already suggested by Matsumoto (2010), probably the taxa “Melolonthina” and “Leucopholina” cannot be maintained without redefinition in future.

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Résumé

Reichenbach A. & Keith D., 2023. – Description d'une nouvelle espèce du genre *Psilopholis* Brenske (Scarabaeidae, Melolonthinae, Melolonthini) du Vietnam avec quelques remarques sur le genre. *Faunitaxys*, 11(15) : 1 – 5.

Une nouvelle espèce du genre *Psilopholis* Brenske, 1892 : *P. vietnamensis*, est décrite du Vietnam. Il s'agit de la première citation du genre pour le Vietnam et, plus généralement, pour l'Asie continentale. *Psilopholis vestita* (Sharp, 1881) est rétabli comme bona species.

Mots-clés. – Coleoptera, Scarabaeidae, Melolonthinae, Leucopholina, Melolonthini, *Psilopholis*, taxonomie, systématique, distribution, nouvelle espèce, bona species, Asie, Vietnam.

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Illustration de la couverture :

Culture du riz.

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