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A new flightless species of *Melanophilharmostes* from São Tomé (Coleoptera, Scarabaeoidea, Hybosoridae, Ceratocanthinae)

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Keywords :

Coleoptera; Scarabaeoidea; Hybosoridae; Ceratocanthinae; *Melanophilharmostes*; *gillesi*; new species; systematics; taxonomy; Africa; São Tomé.

Abstract. – *Melanophilharmostes gillesi* **sp**. **nov**. is described from São Tomé (São Tomé e Principe, Guinea Gulf). This is the first *Melanophilharmostes* Paulian, 1968 reported for São Tomé e Principe and the second for the Guinea Gulf islands.

Ballerio A. & Coache A., 2023. – A new flightless species of *Melanophilharmostes* from São Tomé (Coleoptera Scarabaeoidea Hybosoridae Ceratocanthinae). *Faunitaxys*, 11(65): 1 – 6.

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Introduction

Philharmostes Paulian, 1968 currently includes 18 species (Ballerio, 2016; Grebennikov, 2022), it is distributed mainly through the Guineo-Congolian rainforest block, extending southwards till central Angola, northwards till the west-Sudanian savannas of Burkina Faso, and eastwards till Ethiopia and Kenya with two isolate localities (respectively Bonga and Kakamega forest). The phylogenetic position of the genus and its relationships with the sister genus *Pseudopterorthochaetes* Paulian, 1977 have been recently discussed by Grebennikov (2022). The aim of this paper is to describe a new species from the island of São Tomé, thus becoming the second known *Melanophilharmostes* from the Guinea gulf islands.

Methods and abbreviations

Methods and terminological conventions follow Ballerio & Grebennikov (2016) and Ballerio (2021) and references therein quoted. Label data are provided verbatim, with a slash to separate labels. In giving collecting data for examined material, authors' comments are in square brackets. Photographs were taken with a Canon Eos D5 MII with a macro-objective MP 65 mm. Multi-layer images were then assembled using Helicon Focus software and cleaned and unmasked using a photo processing software.

Abbreviations

- **EL**: maximum elytral length;
- **EW**: maximum total elytral width;
- **HL**: maximum head length;
- **HW**: maximum head width;
- **L**: length;
- **PL**: maximum pronotal length at middle;
- **PW**: maximum pronotal width at middle;
- **W**: width;
- **MHNL**: Musée d'Histoire naturelle de Lyon (Musée des Confluences), CCEC, Lyon, France.

Systematics

Family **HYBOSORIDAE** Erichson, 1847

Subfamily **CERATOCANTHINAE** Martínez, 1968

Tribe **CERATOCANTHINI** Martínez, 1968

Genus ***Melanophilharmostes*** Paulian, 1968

Melanophilharmostes gillesi **sp**. **nov**.

(Fig. 1-3)

ZooBank: https://zoobank.org/4D054B4D-D13B-4726-91C9-569471BDB50F

Holotype, ♂, deposited in the collection of MHNL, Lyon, France, labelled as follows: / Sao Tome et Principe, Ile de Sao Tome, 28 m, Ponta Furada, 06 XI 2022, Microland Expe 5, Leg. B. Gilles, battage / *Melanophilharmostes gillesi* **n**. **sp**. det. A. Ballerio & A. Coache, 2023 Holotypus ♂ / [specimen glued on a card, male genitalia glued on a separate card pinned beneath the specimen].

Diagnosis. – *Melanophilharmostes gillesi* **sp**. **nov**., can be differentiated from the other species of the genus by the following combination of characters:

a) dorsal body surface without uniform cover by dense fine punctation (sensu Ballerio, 2016) (only few very sparse punctures are present);

b) head punctation made of transverse short comma-shaped punctures;

c) pronotum with larger punctation made of wide comma-shaped punctures;

d) pronotum without transversal long shallow lines;

e) elytra without longitudinal rows of fine lines or punctures;

f) elytral carina delimiting epipleuron present and complete;

g) elytral punctation mainly made of transverse large comma-shaped punctures;

h) aedeagus with short parameres (length ratio of parameres to phallobasis = 0.4);

i) brachypterous.

Reviewer :

Jean-Bernard Huchet (*UMR* 7205, *CNRS* / *Muséum national d'histoire naturelle*, *Paris*, *France*) - http://zoobank.org/AD63F3ED-5BCD-499C-8A10-DD29EA962CA4

Because of the lack of uniform cover of dense fine punctation on elytra, *M. gillesi* **sp**. **nov**. can be compared only to *M. ashantii* (Paulian, 1974) from Ghana, *M. bicarinatus* (Paulian, 1974) from Ghana, *M. burgeoni* (Paulian, 1946) from Ivory Coast, Congo, Cameroon, and Angola, *M. donisi* (Basilevsky, 1955) from Congo, *M. endroedyi* (Paulian, 1968) from Congo, *M. ocellatus* (Paulian, 1968) from Congo, and *M. pygmaeus* (Petrovitz, 1968) from Congo. The new species, lacking ocellate punctation on pronotum, can be easily differentiated from *M. bicarinatus*, *M. burgeoni*, *M. donisi*, and *M. ocellatus*. It differs from these species also because of the complete elytral carina delimiting the pseudoepipleuron, which in all the above listed species is limited to the median- and distal-third of the elytron. The differences with *M. ashantii* and *M. endroedyi* lie in the lack, in *M. gillesi* **sp**. **nov**. of any longitudinal lines on elytra and again in the development of the elytral carina delimiting the pseudoepipleuron, which in *M. ashantii* and *M. endroedyi* is limited to median- and distal-third of the elytron.

Description of the holotype

Dimensions. – HL: 1.0 mm; HW: 1.5 mm; PL: 1.5 mm; PW: 2.7 mm; EL: 3.0 mm; EW: 2.8 mm.

General aspect. – Small sized flightless Ceratocanthinae. Body moderately convex. Brown, shiny, dorsum with setigerous punctures bearing a relatively long erect feebly clavate seta (40×), underside, tarsi and antennae reddish-brown, setation yellowish.

Head. – W/L ratio = 1.44; apical margin triangular with angle obtuse and sharp and sides weakly curved; genae distinctly produced outwards, acute; genal canthus complete, fused with the occipital portion of head; dorsal ocular area medium-sized, interocular distance about 13 times the maximum width of dorsal ocular area, ventral ocular area large, clypeal surface covered by strongly impressed medium-sized transverse comma-shaped punctures, oriented centrifugally and mixed to few simple fine punctures bearing an erect medium-sized fine seta, punctation sparser on clypeal disc, vertex having a transverse furrow, shortly interrupted in the middle. Interpunctural distance of comma-shaped punctures shorter than punctural diameter; fore margin with some transverse large comma-shaped punctures. Antennae with ten antennomeres.

Pronotum. – Transverse (W/L ratio = 2.25), subtrapezoidal, weakly convex, surface regular, fore angles not truncate, the whole pronotal margins marked by a continuous circumnotal ridge; whole pronotal surface covered by shallow punctation: punctation on disc made of transverse lines of variable length mixed with very few simple fine punctures and with two smooth areas in the middle of disc and near pronotal base, punctation on sides made of denser large comma-shaped punctures with opening oriented outwards; interpunctural distance shorter than punctural diameter. Setation long and erect.

Scutellum. – Covered by several small transverse comma-shaped punctures, interpunctural distance inferior than punctural diameter.

Elytra. – Longer than wide (W/L ratio = 0.92); subovoidal (dorsal view); humeral callus indistinct; elytral surface convex, covered by sparse (interpunctural distance equal to or twice than punctural diameter) shallow punctation. Punctation made of large horseshoe-shaped punctures with opening directed backwards mixed to fewer comma-shaped punctures mainly concentrated on elytral basal third. Horeseshsoe-shaped and comma-shaped punctures having a simple setigerous pore inside, setae relatively long and fine, distally clavate. Lateral carina distinct, thick, sharp and complete. Pseudoepipleura covered by few large comma-shaped punctures with opening directed upwards.

Wings. – Brachypterous.

Sexual dimorphism. – Unknown due to the lack of available females. The male holotype displays the usual secondary sexual dimorphism found in other species of *Melanophilharmostes*, i.e., male protibiae with short apical teeth and mesotibial inner apical spur bent inwards at a right angle.

Male genitalia. – Aedeagus with short distally membranous subtruncate parameres, as in Fig. 3a-c; spiculum gastrale as in Fig. 2.

Etymology. – Noun in the genitive case. Named after Benoit Gilles (Angoulème, France), who collected the holotype.

Distribution and habitat. – Known only from the type locality (Fig. 5-6), in the northwestern portion of the island of São Tomé (República Democrática de São Tomé e Príncipe) (0°14’17’’N - 6°28’24’’E). The area is characterized by a large secondary moist forest. The holotype was observed walking on leaves at night (Fig. 4).

Remarks. – This is the second Ceratocanthinae known to occur on São Tomé island after the recently described *Chaetophilharmostes filippii* Ballerio & Coache, 2022. The only other *Melanophilharmostes* known to occur in the Guinea Gulf islands is *Melanophilharmostes poggii* Ballerio, 2016 from Annobón/Pagalu island (Ballerio, 2016). *Melanophilharmostes gillesi* **sp**. **nov**. is brachypterous. An extensive study of wing development in the genus is not available. To our knowledge at least one other species of *Melanophilharmostes* is flightless, i.e., the aforementioned *M. poggii* (also brachypterous) and again from a small oceanic island.

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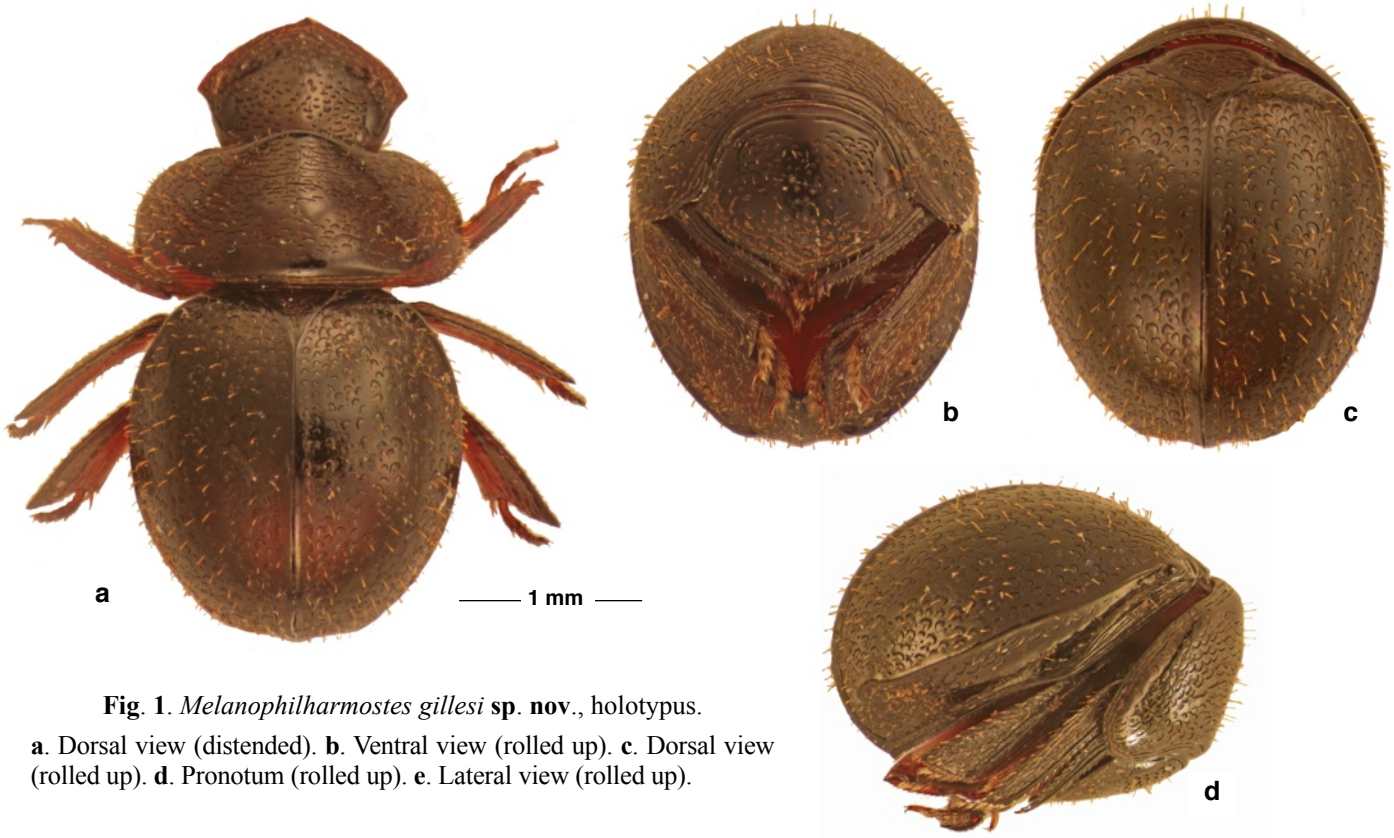

Fig. **1**. *Melanophilharmostes gillesi* **sp**. **nov**., holotypus.
a. Dorsal view (distended). **b**. Ventral view (rolled up). **c**. Dorsal view (rolled up). **d**. Pronotum (rolled up). **e**. Lateral view (rolled up).

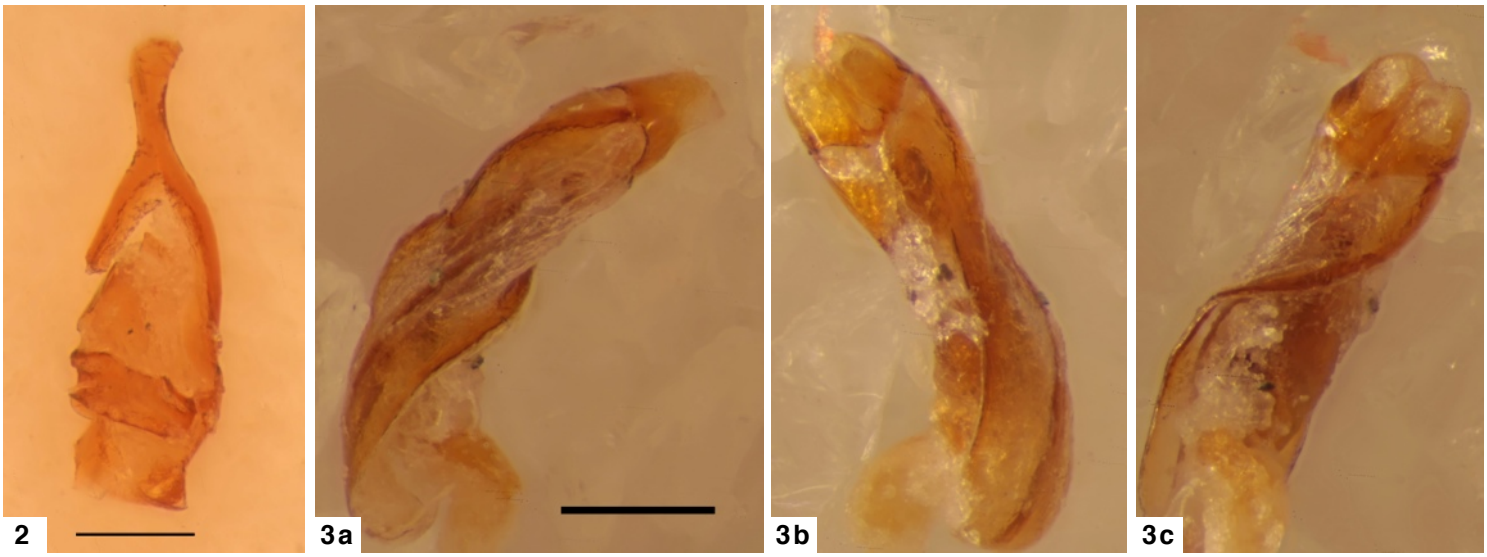

Fig. **2**-**3**. *Melanophilharmostes gillesi* **sp**. **nov**., holotypus. **2**. Spiculum gastrale. **3**. Three views of aedeagus (Scale bars 0.3 mm).

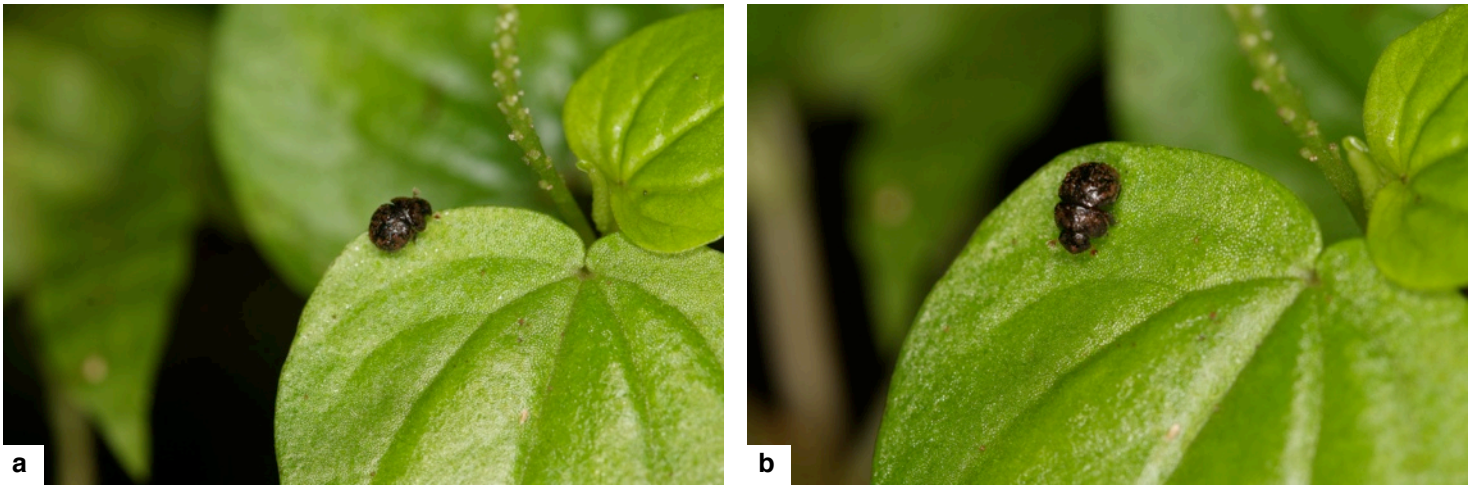

Fig. **4**. *Melanophilharmostes gillesi* **sp**. **nov**. **a** & **b**. Holotype walking on a leaf.

Fig. **5**. *Melanophilharmostes gillesi* **sp**. **nov**. **a** - **b**. Type locality.

Fig. 6. Distribution map. Red dot indicates the type locality.

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Contribution des auteurs [1]

Correspondance avec l'éditeur. – AB & AC
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Résumé

Ballerio A. & Coache A., 2023. – Une nouvelle espèce du genre *Melanophilharmostes* de São Tomé (Coleoptera Scarabaeoidea Hybosoridae Ceratocanthinae). *Faunitaxys*, 11(65): 1 – 6.

Melanophilharmostes gillesi **sp**. **nov**. est décrite de São Tomé (São Tomé e Principe, Golfe de Guinée). Il s'agit du premier *Melanophilharmostes* Paulian, 1968 signalé pour São Tomé et Principe et le second pour les îles du Golfe de Guinée.

Mots-clés. – Coleoptera, Scarabaeoidea, Hybosoridae, Ceratocanthinae, *Melanophilharmostes*, *gillesi*, nouvelle espèce, systématique, taxonomie, Afrique, São Tomé.

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Cabosse de cacao, São Tomé.

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