

A New Mallophagan from Southeast Asia

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The Ischnoceran genus *Meropoecus* Eichler contains three species found on the avian family Meropidae. The known species and type hosts are: *M. caprai* Conci, 1941, found on *Merops orientalis orientalis* Latham; *M. debeauxi* Conci, 1941, found on *Melittophagus pusillus pusillus* (Müller); and *M. meropis* (Denny), 1842, found on *Merops apiaster* Linnaeus. A fourth species is described from material in the United States National Museum and from material recently collected in Thailand by one of the authors.

Material has been examined from sixteen species and subspecies of Meropidae. That all specimens examined were similar in general form is indicative of an exceptionally compact genus. The specific characters which appear to be of value are: size, chaetotaxy of sternites and tergites, chaetotaxy of abdominal terminal segments, and male genitalia. In addition to the new species described, several other forms, not discussed, appear to be new.

Key to the Species of *Meropoecus*

Males

1. Tergite IX with 26 or more setae on posterior margin ... 2
Tergite IX with less than 26 setae on posterior margin ... 3
2. Terminal abdominal segment with 14 to 16 long
setae *smithi*
Terminal abdominal segment with 8 to 10 long setae
..... *meropis*
3. Tergite IX with 14 to 16 medium-length and 4 long
setae on posterior margin *debeauxi*
Tergite IX with 18 to 20 medium-length and 4 long
setae on posterior margin *caprai*

Females

1. Margin of genital opening with more than 30
medium-length setae *smithi*
Margin of genital opening with less than 30 medium-
length setae 2

2. Margin of genital opening with 26 to 28 medium-length setae *caprai*
 Margin of genital opening with less than 26 medium-length setae 3
3. Ventrally, a tubercle on each side of abdominal segment IX, each with 3 or 4 long, inward pointing, setae *meropis*
 Ventrally, a tubercle on each side of abdominal segment IX, each with 5 or 6 long, inward pointing, setae *debeauxi*

Meropoecus smithi n. sp.

Male. Head short and broad. Hyaline margin wide, expanded laterally. Dorsal anterior plate indistinct. Temples rounded and expanded. Antennae filiform, second segments elongated; without noticeable sexual dimorphism. Prothorax short and narrow. Pterothorax broad; lateral margins expanded posteriorly, with one row of medium-length setae on the posterior margin. Legs normal. Abdomen short and broad. Tergites II-IX with one row of closely set medium-length setae on the posterior margins. Sternites I-VI with one row of sparsely set medium-length setae on the posterior margin. Genital plate bare. Male genitalia as illustrated in figure 3. Chaetotaxy, general shape, and size as shown in figure 2.

Female. Larger, but bearing a general resemblance to the male. Anterior margin of the vulva with a row of twenty-six medium-length setae and a row of fourteen short stout setae. Lateral margins of the vulva each with nine medium-length setae. Chaetotaxy, general shape, and size as shown in figure 1.

Type host: *Merops leschenaulti leschenaulti* Vieillot.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

Meropoecus smithi n. sp., drawn to the same scale.

FIG. 1. Dorsal-ventral view of female.

FIG. 2. Dorsal-ventral view of male.

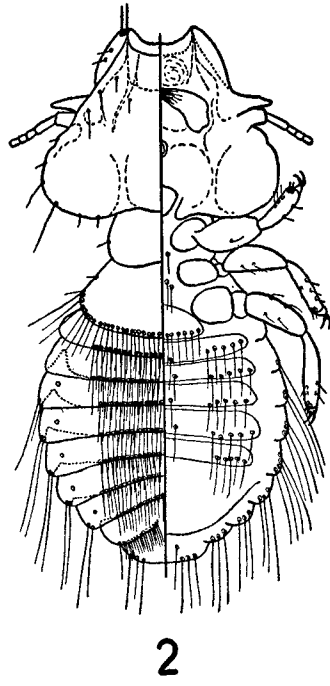
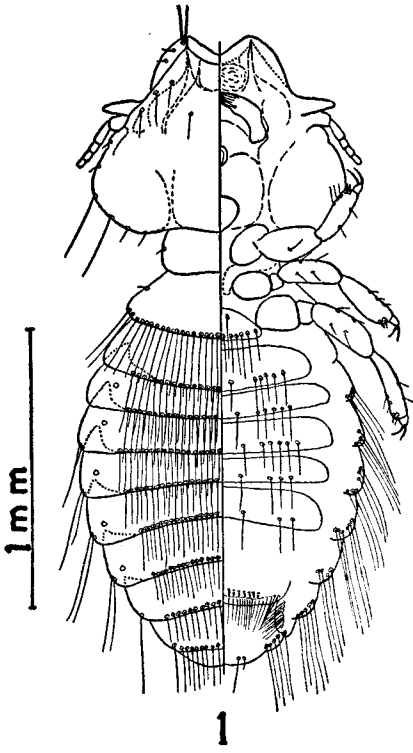
Meropoecus species, male genitalia, drawn to the same scale.

FIG. 3. *M. smithi* n. sp.

FIG. 4. *M. caprai* Conci.

FIG. 5. *M. meropis* (Denny).

FIG. 6. *M. debeauxi* Conci.



Type material: *Holotype* male and *allotype* female collected at Arakan, BURMA in April, 1952 by H. M. Smith are in the United States National Museum. *Paratypes*: two males and one female collected at Arakan, Burma in April 1952 by H. M. Smith; two males and one female collected at Hinlaem, Trakhanun, Kanachanaburi, Thailand in November, 1952; two males and two females collected at Ban Khlua Klang, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Thailand in December, 1952; six males collected at Chiang Saen Kao, Chiang Rai, Thailand in February, 1953. All collections from Thailand were from the type host and made by Robert E. Elbel and H. G. Deignan.

The male genitalia serve as an additional means of separating the species. These have been drawn to the same scale to illustrate the differences.

REFERENCES

- CONCI, C. 1941. Boll. Soc. Ent. Ital., 73: 99-107, pls. I-II.
EICHLER, W. 1940. Zool. Anzeiger, 130: 97-103.