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To the knowledge of *Amphidromus Mirandus* Bavay & Dautzenberg, 1912 and *Amphidromus heinrichhuberi* Thach & Huber in Thach, 2016 with comments on the publication by Barna Páll-Gergely et al (2020)

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Introduction: Since the sixties lots of *Amphidromus* species have been described and many of these have their origin in the highlands and high mountain forests of Vietnam. Consequently, disagreements occurred, which have recently resulted in a publication by B. P. Gergely and co-authors (2020). Referring to the general shortcomings of the publications, by Vietnamese malacologist Nguyen Ngoc Thach and the Austrian malacologist Franz Huber in Thach (2014–2019). The low quality of the published photographs and the imprecise locality data, on top of -and we quote- "nearly all taxa were described in self-published books and non-peer-reviewed journals, deficient literature surveys, and the lack of examination of type specimens raise reasonable doubts concerning the validity of these taxa" - B. P. Gergely et al. (2020).

Furthermore, the authors synonymise *Amphidromus heinrichhuberi* Thach & Huber in Thach, 2016 (pp. 65-66, N°.30, figs. 321-324.) with *Amphidromus mirandus* Bavay & Dautzenberg, 1912.

Concerning this statement, we briefly mention that in its original description, *A. heinrichhuberi* was not compared with any other *Amphidromus* species. Moreover, B. P. Gergerly et al. (2020) consider shell shape and colour of *A. heinrichhuberi* nearly conspecific with *A. mirandus*, whose description was based on a subadult specimen. Within the examined material they also report the lectotype of *A. mirandus* stored at MNHN IM-2000-2046 and add Lang-Biang, Annam as type locality. They therefore regard *A. heinrichhuberi* as a junior synonym of *A. mirandus* because the type localities of the mentioned species are also situated within the same province (Lâm Đồng), approximately 110 km apart.

Abbreviations

CLS: Collection Luc Segers
RBINS: Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences Brussels, Belgium
MNHN: Muséum National d' Histoire Naturelle Paris France.

Discussion: Reading the publication of B. P. Gergely et al. (2020), our interest was immediately aroused and we wanted to add some rectifications for both parties.

In Gloria Maris vol. 58(1), 30 April 2019 (peer-reviewed magazine), the present second author (2019: 11) reported the rediscovery of the tree snail *Amphidromus* (*Amphidromus*) *mirandus* Bavay & Dautzenberg, 1912. The specimens were collected in the high mountain forest of Lâm Đồng Lâm (Vien area), Vietnam. To the author's knowledge, two syntypes were known, of which he designated the one in RBINS (reg: IG. 10591, N°. 603458) as the lectotype measuring 40.46 x 19. 2mm and the second one stored in MNHN (reg: IM-2000-20465) paralectotype.

The chosen lectotype is also the specimen depicted by Bavay & Dautzenberg on plate II, figs. 23-24. The drawer drew the shell with an almost precise resemblance as can be judged from the Plate, Fig. 1-2–2a.

Moreover, as already mentioned in the introduction, B. P. Gergely et al. (2020) do not accept *A. heinrichhuberi* as a valid taxon, but consider it a junior synonym of *A. mirandus*. We do not agree with this point of view and regard the former as a separate species. In our opinion and conchologically speaking, both species are indeed

similar, but still clearly distinguishable. The main differences between both specimens are indeed size: *A. heinrichhuberi* varies from approximately 58 to 64 mm, while *A. mirandus* varies from 40 to 55 mm (based on the few specimens known and studied). Secondly, both are *Amphidromus* species and live within a distance of about 110 km away from each other. This fact does not prove them being synonyms, but it supports our opinion that they are different species.

In the original description, Bavay & Dautzenberg describe the colour of *A. mirandus* as, and we quote: "coloration d'un beau vert passant au jaune paille vers le sommet de la spire et devenant plus foncée sur la moitié inférieure du dernier tour. Des lignes vertes encore plus foncées accompagnent par-ci par par-là les stries d'accroissement et on observe sous la suture un filet blanc très étroit. Tout le péristome est d'un beau jaune vif ; le fond de l' ouverture est verdâtre", which translates as following: Beautiful green colour fading to straw yellow towards the top of the whorls and becoming darker on the lower half of the last whorl. Even darker green lines accompany the growth streaks here and there, and a very narrow white thread is observed under the suture. The whole peristome is of beautiful bright yellow; the bottom of the opening is greenish.

Adult shells of *A. mirandus* are easily recognisable because of the permanent characteristics, which are significantly different from its congener's: shell height, thin, fragile, lightweight, protoconch white to yellowish, the teleoconch of 6 to 6½ elongate-ovate whorls ornamented with a fine white subsutural band, which is one of the most important taxonomic characteristics as this subsutural band is constant within live-taken specimens. The overall colour is grass-green, becoming yellowish towards the early whorls. The columella and outer lip (peristome) are bright yellow to orange, the inner aperture is light greenish and the outer lip is slightly reflected. The overall colour of dead-collected specimens is dull and yellowish.

In short, *A. heinrichhuberi* has a continuous variation, but mainly differs from its congener *A. mirandus* by its size, by being heavier in weight ("ponderosus"), by the broad brownish to reddish subsutural band mottled with yellow to white flames, the dark green overall colour of live-taken specimens, usually ornamented with longitudinal lines to rectangular yellowish blotches on the ante-penultimate and succeeding whorls, columella and outer lip, which is white-coloured, strongly recurved and very calloused. Thach et al. (2016) also mentioned the specimens as yellowish white. The overall colour of the specimens figured by Thach & Huber in Thach (2016) can in our opinion be explained by them being dead-collected or discoloured specimens.

Concerning the description and photographic images published by Thach in his books as well as in many peer-reviewed journals: the quality of those photos is embarrassing to say the least. It is not possible to correctly identify type material, sculpture and colour transitions are invisible, transitions of shell edges fade into the background and the size of the shells is out of proportion, yet in accordance with the true shape. Because of all of this, we understand the criticism of B. P. Gergely et al (2020) very well. We do not understand that with the modern photo material and with relatively cheap mobile phones, no better images can be made. Editing these can be done in a simple way with Photoshop or Lightroom. (see specimens figured by L. Segers (2019: pl. 1-2, or in books published by G. Poppe.)

Furthermore, we have also noticed that within the descriptions, several errors occur. For example: in the description of *Amphidromus heinrichhuberi* Thach & Huber in Thach, (2016), of which the holotype is depicted on plate 23, fig. 321 and the paratypes on plate 24 fig.322-323-324 as *Amphidromus heinfrichhuberi.* In this matter, we believe that the name added to the figures is an incorrect spelling and consider the name of the description to be correct.

Conclusion: From the discussion above, it seems reasonable to conclude that the characterristics mentioned are sufficient to identify *A. mirandus* and *A. heinrichhuberi* as two different species.

Moreover, in our opinion, B. P. Gergely et al. (2020) did not study any material regarding *A. mirandus*. They probably assume that the specimens figured by Thach were in fact subadult and conspecific with *A. heinrichhuberi* because of the less good photos depicted by Thach (2016) and from drawing a false conclusion with regard to the lectotype in MNHN. Khoa Nguyen (mail communication Aug. 2020), the collector of the rediscovered species, assured the present second author that all specimens of *A. mirandus* were sent to him and that till today only these specimens and a few fragments have been collected. This confirms our suspicion that B. P. Gergely et al. (2020) did not study any recently collected material.

Secondly, it is not done to comment very critically on matters that you do not explain in detail yourself: reacting ad hominem in the scientific world is not appropriate, even if you are right at some points. Personal attacks and insulting words do not belong in science and are out of place. It is not fitting to a biologist specialised in the systematics and taxonomy of land snails, nor to an independent researcher or retiree from the Florida Museum of Natural History to make such a publication.

In his book, Thach (2020: 46-49) refutes almost all allegations, which was of course to be expected, so it will probably not take long before a reply is followed by yet another reply.

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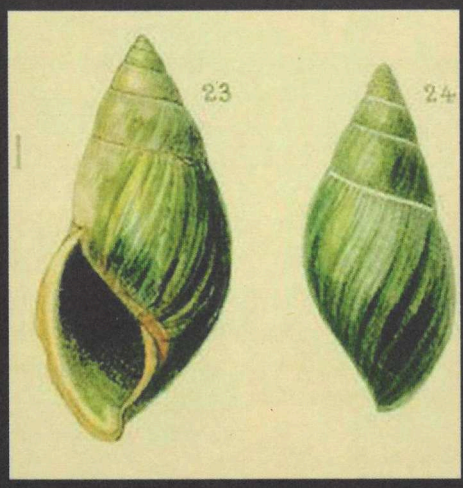
Plate:

1-6, 10-11: ***Amphidromus mirandus***
Bavay & Dautzenberg, 1912

1: Drawing of the Lectotype and Paralectotype
2-3a: Lectotype (reg: IG. 10591, N°. 603458), RBINS.
4-6a: shells in CLS.
10: detail of aperture
11: subsutural band

7-9, 12: ***Amphidromus heinrichhuberi***
Thach & Huber in Thach, 2016

7-9: shells in CLS
12: detail of aperture



1

2 - 2a

3

4 - 4a

5 - 5a

6 - 6a

7 - 7a

8 - 8a

9 - 9a

10

11

12

13