

The enigmatic species *Gastropacha protracta* Herrich-Schäffer, [1856] identified as senior synonym of the Neotropical *Prorifrons hoppi* Draudt, 1927 (Lepidoptera: Lasiocampidae)

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Abstract

The identity, provenance and placement of *Gastropacha protracta* Herrich-Schäffer, [1856] as a member of *Prorifrons* Barnes & McDunnough, 1911, comb. nov., and senior synonym of *P. hoppi* Draudt, 1927, syn. nov. is established. Illustrations are provided to enable its identification. *Gastropacha protracta* was erroneously described from South Africa, but the species is known from the Andes of South America.

Keywords: Lepidoptera, Lasiocampidae, *Gastropacha*, *Prorifrons*, synonymy, Neotropical.

La enigmática especie *Gastropacha protracta* Herrich-Schäffer, [1856] identificada como sinónimo mayor de la neotropical *Prorifrons hoppi* Draudt, 1927 (Lepidoptera: Lasiocampidae)

Resumen

Se establece la identidad, procedencia y colocación de *Gastropacha protracta* Herrich-Schäffer, [1856] como miembro de *Prorifrons* Barnes & McDunnough, 1911, comb. nov., y sinónimo principal de *P. hoppi* Draudt, 1927, syn. nov. Se proporcionan ilustraciones para permitir su identificación. *Gastropacha protracta* se describió erróneamente de Sudáfrica, pero la especie se conoce de los Andes de Sudamérica.

Palabras clave: Lepidoptera, Lasiocampidae, *Gastropacha*, *Prorifrons*, sinonimia, Neotropical.

A enigmática espécie *Gastropacha protracta* Herrich-Schäffer, [1856] identificada como sinónimo sênior da espécie neotropical *Prorifrons hoppi* Draudt, 1927 (Lepidoptera: Lasiocampidae)

Resumo

É estabelecida a identidade, proveniência e localização de *Gastropacha protracta* Herrich-Schäffer, [1856] como membro de *Prorifrons* Barnes & McDunnough, 1911, comb. nov., e sinónimo sênior de *P. hoppi* Draudt, 1927, syn. nov. São fornecidas ilustrações para permitir a sua identificação. *Gastropacha protracta* foi erroneamente descrita da África do Sul, mas a espécie é conhecida dos Andes da América do Sul.

Palavras-Chave: Lepidoptera, Lasiocampidae, *Gastropacha*, *Prorifrons*, sinonímia, Neotropical.

Introduction

Gastropacha protracta Herrich-Schäffer, [1856] has remained unrecognized and unplaced since its description. One of the reasons was the wrong type-locality, misleading all subsequent authors to look for specimens in the wrong places. The elucidation of these issues is the subject of this article.

Results and discussion

Examination of the images and the material available in the author's (VOB) collection revealed the identity, provenance, and placement of this species.

Prorifrons protracta (Herrich-Schäffer, [1856] 1855), **comb. nov.** (Figures 1- 3)

Gastropacha protracta Herrich-Schäffer, [1856] 1855. *Samml. aussereur. Schmett.*, 1(1), 473, pl. 82, fig. 473 LT: [VENEZUELA]: SOUTH AFRICA, "Port Natal", holotype ♂, no further data (ZMHB) [not examined]. = *Prorifrons hoppi* Draudt, 1927, in Seitz. *Die Gross-Schmett. Erde*, 6, 570, pl. 77. **syn. nov.**
LT: COLOMBIA, Chachatoý [Nariño], 2300 m, holotype ♂, ex Hopp col. [not examined].

Remarks: *G. protracta* was described from an unspecified number of specimens, presumably the single male referred to above. In the index of the same work ([1856], p. 83) Herrich-Schäffer synonymized it under *Lebeda bipars* Walker. Apparently, all the subsequent authors who listed the name, often in a different genus, had no further specimens available. Walker (1865, p. 551) listed it under *Gastropacha* Ochsenheimer, 1816, Kirby (1892, p. 815); under *Dendrolimus* Germar, 1812, Aurivillius (1927, p. 233) and Collier (1936, p. 302), under *Metanastris* Hübner, [1820] 1816). All these authors mentioned "Africa ?" as the type-locality. The type-locality "Port Natal" [S. Africa] is certainly wrong, as none of the authors who studied the fauna of this region (Aurivillius, 1927; Lajonquière, 1979), had any specimens available. Aurivillius (1927, p. 233) stated: "Herrich-Schaeffer places his *Gastropacha protracta* to *Chadisra bipars* Walker, 1862. This identification can, however, not be correct, and Herrich-Schäffer's species probably does not originate from South Africa, but from Asia, the *Metanastris*-species of which it resembles very much". However, none of the works that treat Asian or Indo-Australian Lasiocampidae include this species either (Inoue, 1982; Holloway, 1987, Kishida, 1992; Edwards, 1996). The figure presented by Herrich-Schäffer is excellent, and shows, with no doubt, a species of *Prorifrons* Barnes & McDunnough, 1911, a Neotropical Lasiocampidae genus, which species range from Mexico South to Argentina and Brazil. It is a good match in wing pattern and shape to *P. hoppi* Draudt, 1927, p. 570, pl. 77a, b), a species known from Colombia and Ecuador, at high elevations in the Andes. Considering that nearly all species described by Herrich-Schäffer came either from Venezuela (mostly from around Merida, also at high elevation, in the Andes) and from Brazil, supports the synonymy proposed here. In the author's collection there is a series of seven males and two females, from Ecuador, a pair of which is illustrated here (figures 2-3).

Requests for an image were made to the Martin-Luther-Universität, Halle, Germany (MLUH), and to the Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin (MNHU). The first informed that no material was found in their collections. From the second, no answer was received so far. Fortunately, the excellent image (figure 1) in Herrich-Schäffer's work, reproduced here, allows the species identity.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there are no known financial interest or personal relationships that could have influenced the work presented in this article.

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Figures 1-3. *Prorifrons protracta* (Herrich-Schäffer). **1.** Herrich-Schäffer's original illustration. **2.** Male, dorsal view, Ecuador. **3.** Female, dorsal view, Ecuador, from the Sehested & Tonder collection

