



***Lactistes obesipes* Signoret, 1879 (Hemiptera: Cydnidae) — the burrower bug enigma: redescription, synonymy, and remarks on its distribution and taxonomic status**

JERZY A. LIS¹ & BARBARA LIS²

Department of Biosystematics, Opole University, Oleska 22, 45-052 Opole, Poland, <http://www.cydnidae.uni.opole.pl>.

E-mail: ¹cydnus@uni.opole.pl, ²canta@uni.opole.pl

The genus *Lactistes* Schiødte, 1847 (Cydnidae: Cydninae: Geotomini *sensu lato* – for a new classification of the Cydnidae, see Pluot-Sigwalt & J.A. Lis, 2008) comprises 15 species distributed in the Palaearctic, Afrotropical, and Oriental Regions, and only a single species reported from the Australian Region (J.A. Lis 1996, 1999; Cassis & Gross 2002). This species, named *Lactistes obesipes*, was described three times by Signoret in three different papers (1879, 1880, 1881) from an unknown locality in Australia (firstly as “Nouvelle-Hollande”, then as “Australie”) on the basis of the same single female specimen.

Its anterior leg, head with a rostrum (in lateral view), and the peritreme of the evaporatorium were figured only in the Signoret’s revision of the World Cydnidae (1881) (Fig. 1c–f); unfortunately, the peritreme (Fig. 1c) was incorrectly drawn and the proper taxonomic status of this species was unclear till its type specimen had been studied (J.A. Lis 1996). Thus, for more than a hundred years, the species was not redescribed nor any other specimens have been found; during last twenty years, pending revisional studies on the Australian Cydnidae, the senior author (JAL) has studied more than 10,000 Australian specimens, but not a single individual of *L. obesipes* was found.

When preparing this paper we were suggested, by an unknown Australian systematics authority (information from John Matthiessen, CSIRO, e-mail dated June, the 13th, 2008), that the type specimen of *L. obesipes* may have been mislabeled, a common problem with specimens of this age, and may not have come from Australia at all; we have also been suggested that this single specimen is probably not Australian in origin. Many of these older specimens were collected on excursions to “Nouvelle Hollande” but were collected at various places along the way. When they return to Europe, many were simply labeled from New Holland, which appears to have been close enough for European collectors.

Therefore, we assumed that the type female of *L. obesipes* was mislabeled, and have precisely examined all species of *Lactistes* described from the Oriental Region. As a result, we have found that the holotype of *L. chinensis* J.A. Lis, 1994 (described from Guangdong, China) appeared to be the same species as that described by Signoret (1879) from “Nouvelle Hollande”, and we decided to synonymize both species.

Taxonomy

***Lactistes obesipes* Signoret (Fig. 1a, b)**

Lactistes obesipes Signoret, 1879: 234 [1880: CLXXII, 1881: 52; both these subsequent descriptions are objective synonymy based on the same female specimen].

Lactistes chinensis J.A. Lis, 1994: 203, **new synonym**.

Redescription. **Body** clearly broadened posteriorly, its dorsal surface castaneous or dark castaneous with head and anterior half of pronotum almost blackish brown.

Head distinctly punctured on paraclypei, clypeus, and vertex impunctate or almost impunctate; paraclypei longer than clypeus and joined or almost joined in a front of the latter, each paraclypeus submarginally with 3 setigerous punctures; eyes brown or blackish brown, ocular index 2.3–4.4; ocelli reddish brown, interocellar index about 5.0–8.5; antennae and rostrum brown or yellowish brown; the latter long, reaching posterior coxae.