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# New records of the millipede genus *Aschistodesmus* Pocock, 1898 from the Solomon Islands, Melanesia (Diplopoda: Polydesmida: Paradoxosomatidae)

# Новые находки многоножек-диплопод рода *Aschistodesmus* Pocock, 1898 с Соломоновых островов (Меланезия) (Diplopoda: Polydesmida: Paradoxosomatidae)

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KEY WORDS: taxonomy, faunistics, iconography, new synonym.
КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: таксономия, фаунистика, иконография, новый синоним.

ABSTRACT. Two species of the Papuan genus *Aschistodesmus* are recorded, redescribed and illustrated: *A. vinctus* (Attems, 1934), from Guadalcanal (Isatabu) Island, and *A. spatulifer* Jeekel, 2000, from Choiseul (Lauru) Island, both Solomon Islands. The previously enigmatic provenance of *A. spatulifer* is established to be from Choiseul. The following formal synonymy is advanced: *A. signatus extinctus* (Attems, 1932) = *A. signatus signatus* (Attems, 1897), syn.n.

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РЕЗЮМЕ. Приведены новые находки, переописания и иллюстрации двух видов папуасского рода *Aschistodesmus*: *A. vinctus* (Attems, 1934) с острова Гвадалканал и *A. spatulifer* Jeekel, 2000 с острова Шуазёль (оба Соломоновы острова). Установлено вероятное происхождение вида *A. spatulifer* с острова Шуазёль. Предложена следующая новая формальная синонимия: *A. signatus extinctus* (Attems, 1932) = *A. signatus signatus* (Attems, 1897), syn.n.

## Introduction

According to Jeekel's [2000] review and the catalogue by Nguyen & Sierwald [2013], the Papuan millipede genus *Aschistodesmus* Pocock, 1898 presently contains the following accepted 14 species or subspecies, arranged below in alphabetic order:

*A. albipes* (Silvestri, 1895), western New Guinea, Indonesia;

*A. austerus* (Attems, 1932), western New Guinea, Indonesia;

*A. beauforti* (Attems, 1914), Waigeo (formerly Waigeu) Island, Raja Ampat Islands, Indonesia;

*A. confirmans* (Chamberlin, 1920), "Pamua" (= Pavuvu), Russel Islands, Solomon Islands;

*A. continuus* (Attems, 1914), New Britain Island, Bismarck Archipelago, Papua New Guinea;

*A. didymus* (Chamberlin, 1920), San Cristobal (Makira) Island, Solomon Islands;

*A. maius* (Chamberlin, 1920), Malaita Island, Solomon Islands;

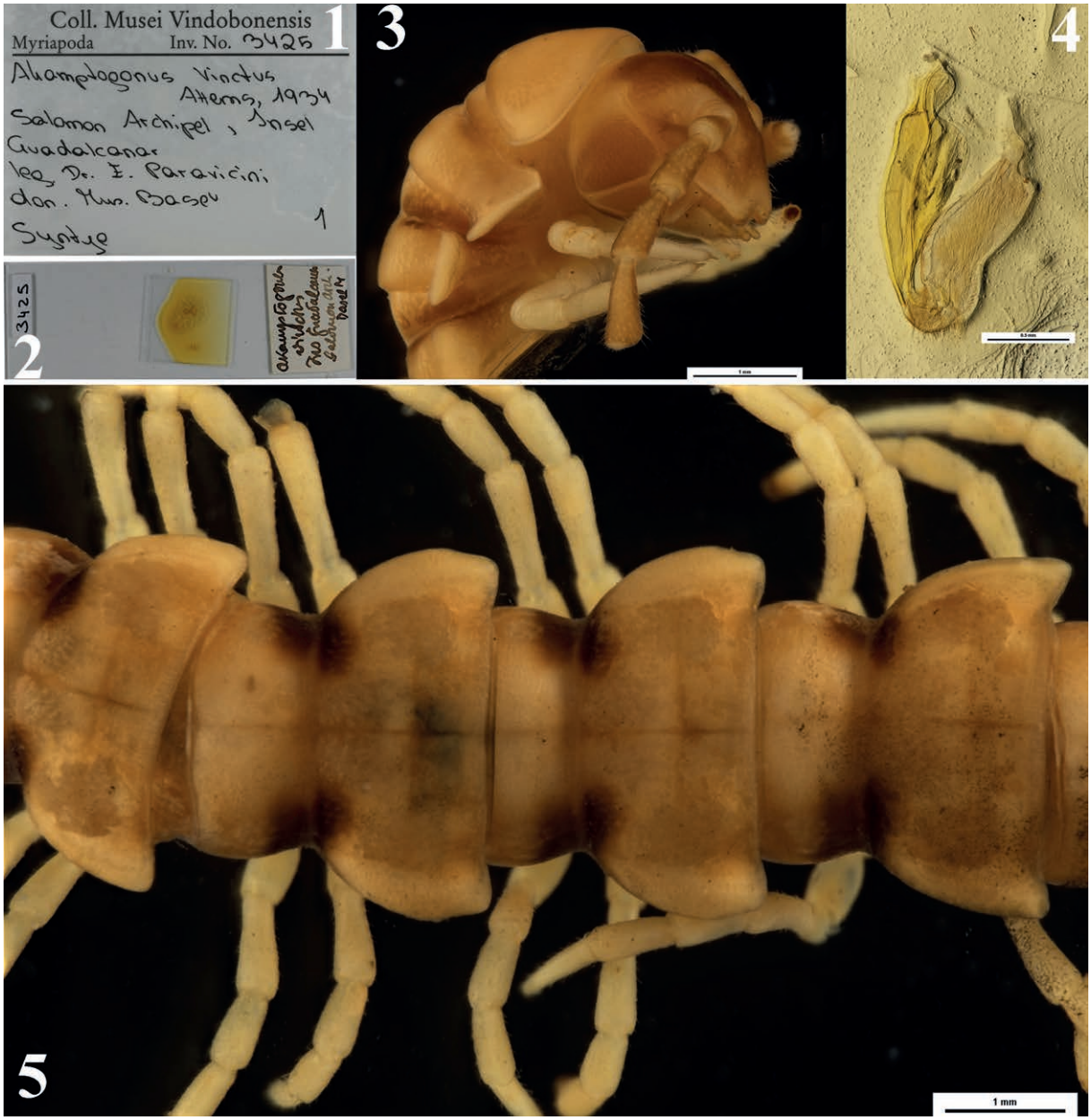
*A. manni* (Chamberlin, 1920), Malaita Island, Solomon Islands;

*A. niger* (Chamberlin, 1920), Malaita Island, Solomon Islands;

*A. sentaniensis* (Attems, 1914), vicinities of Lake Sentani, northern New Guinea, Indonesia;

*A. signatus* (Attems, 1897), widespread in the western Papuan region: Halmahera Island, Great Kai Island and western New Guinea, Indonesia, as well as New Britain Island, Bismarck Archipelago, and Bobo Eina Island, Louisiade Archipelago, Papua New Guinea [Jeekel, 2000; Golovatch, 2017, 2019]. Minor infraspecific variations concern the presence *vs* absence of light mid-dorsal spots on metaterga, coupled with some very fine details of gonopodal structure.

*A. signatus extinctus* (Attems, 1932), it had always been regarded as a variety, i.e. an infrasubspecific category to be discarded by the Code, until suddenly promoted to a subspecies. i.e. a taxon to be considered by the Code, by Nguyen & Sierwald [2013]. Given the dark monochromous dorsum *vs* the presence of light mid-dorsal markings on metaterga occasionally noted in specimens from various populations [Attems, 1932, 1937; Golovatch, 2017, 2019], but a fairly stable gonopodal conformation, the following new synonymy is formally proposed here: *A. signatus extinctus* (Attems, 1932) = *A. signatus signatus* (Attems, 1897), **syn.n.** In other words, *A. signatus* is to




Figs 1–5. *Aschistodesmus vinctus* (Attems, 1934), ♂ syntype of *Akamptogonus vinctus* Attems, 1934, NHMW MY3425. 1 — original label; 2 — original slide preparation containing both gonopods; 3 — anterior part of body, lateral view; 4 — right gonopod, mesal view; 5 — midbody terga, dorsal view. Photographs by O. Macek.

Рис. 1–5. *Aschistodesmus vinctus* (Attems, 1934), синтип ♂ *Akamptogonus vinctus* Attems, 1934, NHMW MY3425. 1 — оригинальная этикетка; 2 — оригинальный микропрепарат, содержащий оба гонопода; 3 — передняя часть тела, сбоку; 4 — правый гонопод, изнутри; 5 — среднетуловищные тергиты, сверху. Фотографии O. Macek.

be considered as a single polymorphous species, perhaps the most widely distributed among congeners.

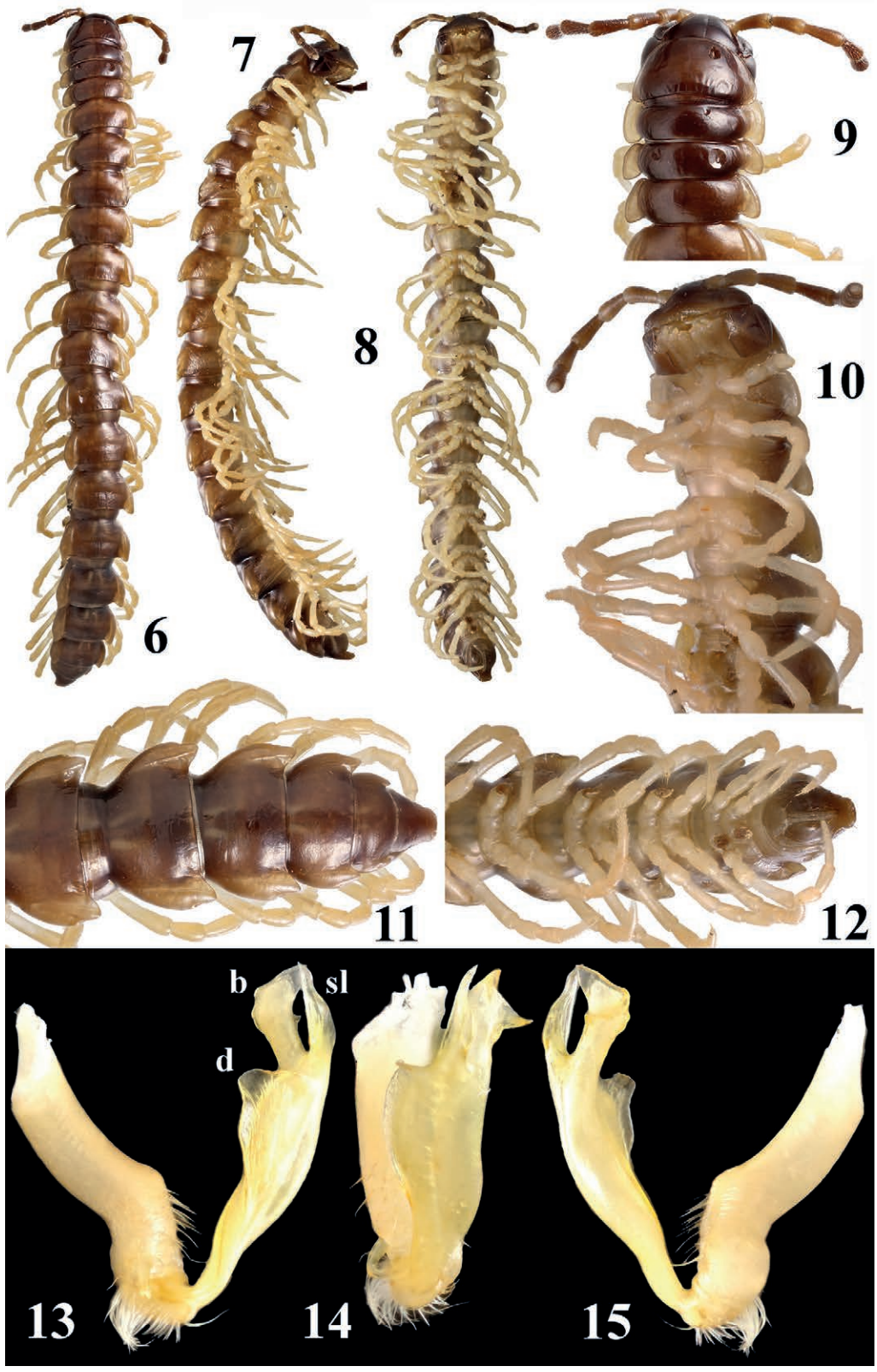
*A. spatulifer* Jeekel, 2000, Solomon Islands (without precise locality);

*A. tridentifer* Jeekel, 2000, Kolombangara Island, Solomon Islands; and

*A. vinctus* (Attems, 1934), Guadalcanal Island, Solomon Islands.

As a result, most of *Aschistodesmus* species diversity is confined to the Solomon Islands. Surprisingly, only a single species, *A. vinctus*, has hitherto been recorded from Guadalcanal, one of the largest islands in the entire archipelago. No *Aschistodesmus* species have been reported yet from Choiseul (Lauru) Island, likewise one of the largest in the Solomons.

The present contribution is devoted to new records of two *Aschistodesmus* species from the Guadalcanal and Choiseul islands. Since Jeekel [2000] provided a very sound and complete review of the tribe Aschistodesmini, only very slightly supplemented since [Golovatch, Stoev,




Figs 6–15. *Aschistodesmus vinctus* (Attems, 1934), ♂ from south of Barana. 6–8 — habitus, dorsal, lateral and ventral views, respectively; 9, 10 — anterior part of body, dorsal and ventral views, respectively; 11, 12 — posterior part of body, dorsal and ventral views, respectively; 13–15 — left gonopod, mesal, ventral and lateral views, respectively. Photographs by K.V. Makarov, taken not to scale.

Рис. 6–15. *Aschistodesmus vinctus* (Attems, 1934), ♂ из южнее Barana. 6–8 — общий вид, соответственно сверху, сбоку и снизу; 9, 10 — передняя часть тела, соответственно сверху и снизу; 11, 12 — задняя часть тела, соответственно сверху и снизу; 13–15 — левый гонопод, соответственно изнутри, снизу и сбоку. Фотографии К.В. Макарова, сняты без масштаба.

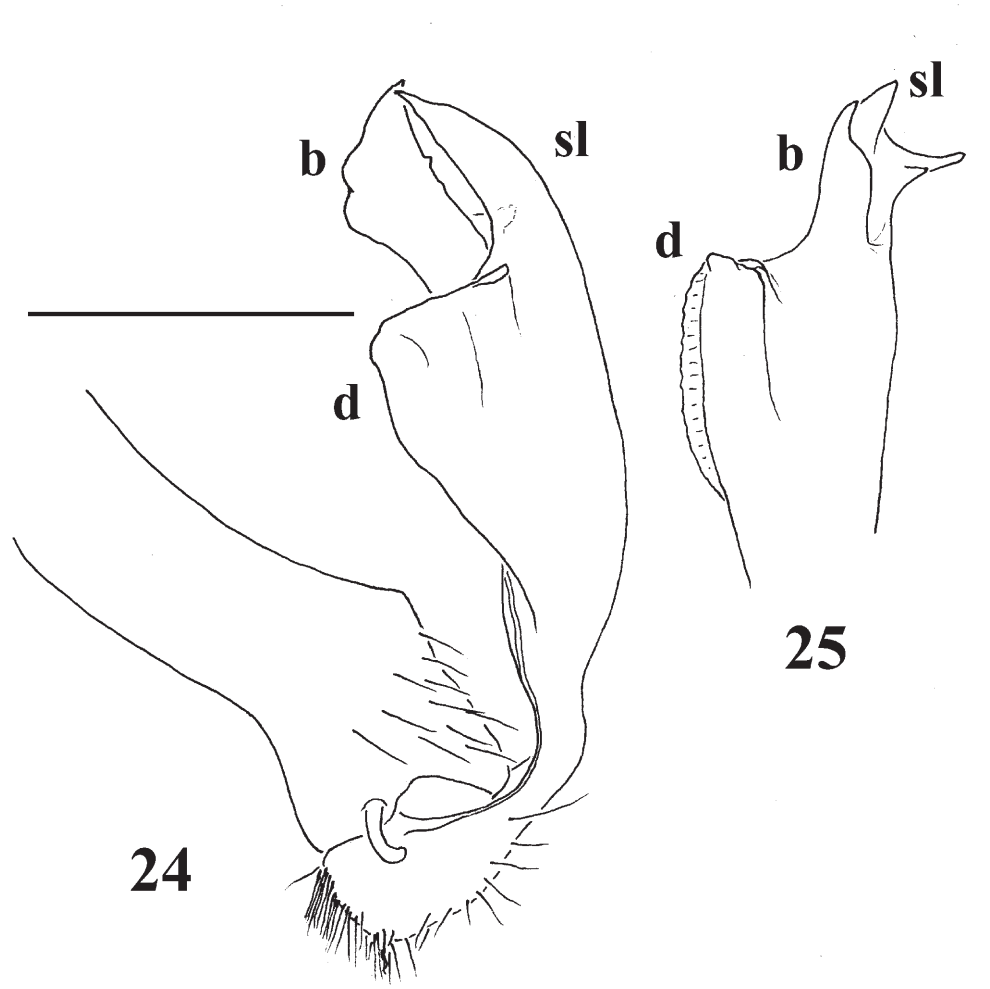

Figs 16–23. *Aschistodesmus vinctus* (Attems, 1934), ♂ from south of Barana. 16–18 — habitus, dorsal, lateral and ventral views, respectively; 19 — both gonopods *in situ*, ventral view; 20, 21 — anterior part of body, dorsal and ventral views, respectively; 22, 23 — posterior part of body, dorsal and ventral views, respectively. Photographs by K.V. Makarov, taken not to scale.

Рис. 16–23. *Aschistodesmus vinctus* (Attems, 1934), ♂ из южнее Barana. 16–18 — общий вид, соответственно сверху, сбоку и снизу; 19 — оба гонопода на месте, снизу; 20, 21 — передняя часть тела, соответственно сверху и снизу; 22, 23 — задняя часть тела, соответственно сверху и снизу. Фотографии К.В. Макарова, сняты без масштаба.

2014; Golovatch, 2017, 2019], no catalogue information referring to the group is reiterated below. The more so as the catalogue by Nguyen, Sierwald [2013] is still fairly complete and relevant.

## Material and methods

All new material reported below was taken recently by Dmitry Telnov, Natural History Museum, London, United Kingdom, presently shared between the collections of the Zoological Museum of the State University of Moscow (ZMUM), Russia and the Natural History Museum, London (NHML), United Kingdom. A syntype of one of the relevant old species, in the Natural History Museum of Vienna (NHMW), was revised to confirm the identity. All new pictures were taken with a Canon EOS 5D digital camera and stacked using Zerene Stacker software. Old images were obtained with a Nikon DS-Ri2 camera mounted on a Nikon SMZ 25 stereo microscope, using NIS-Elements Microscope Imaging Software (version 5.02) with




Figs 24, 25. *Aschistodesmus vinctus* (Attems, 1934), ♂ from south of Barana, left gonopod and its distal part, mesal and dorsal views, respectively. Scale bar: 0.5 mm. S. Golovatch del.

Рис. 24, 25. *Aschistodesmus vinctus* (Attems, 1934), ♂ из южнее Barana, левый гонопод и его дистальная часть, соответственно изнутри и сверху. Масштаб: 0,5 мм. Рисунок С. Головача.

an Extended Depth of Focus (EDF) patch (Nikon Corporation, Tokyo, Japan). Final image processing was performed with Adobe Photoshop CC.

We mostly follow Jeekel's [2000] designations to denote the various outgrowths on the gonopodal telopodite which, according to Jeekel [2000] and his key, are the main diagnostic characters to distinguish between the accepted species of *Aschistodesmus*.

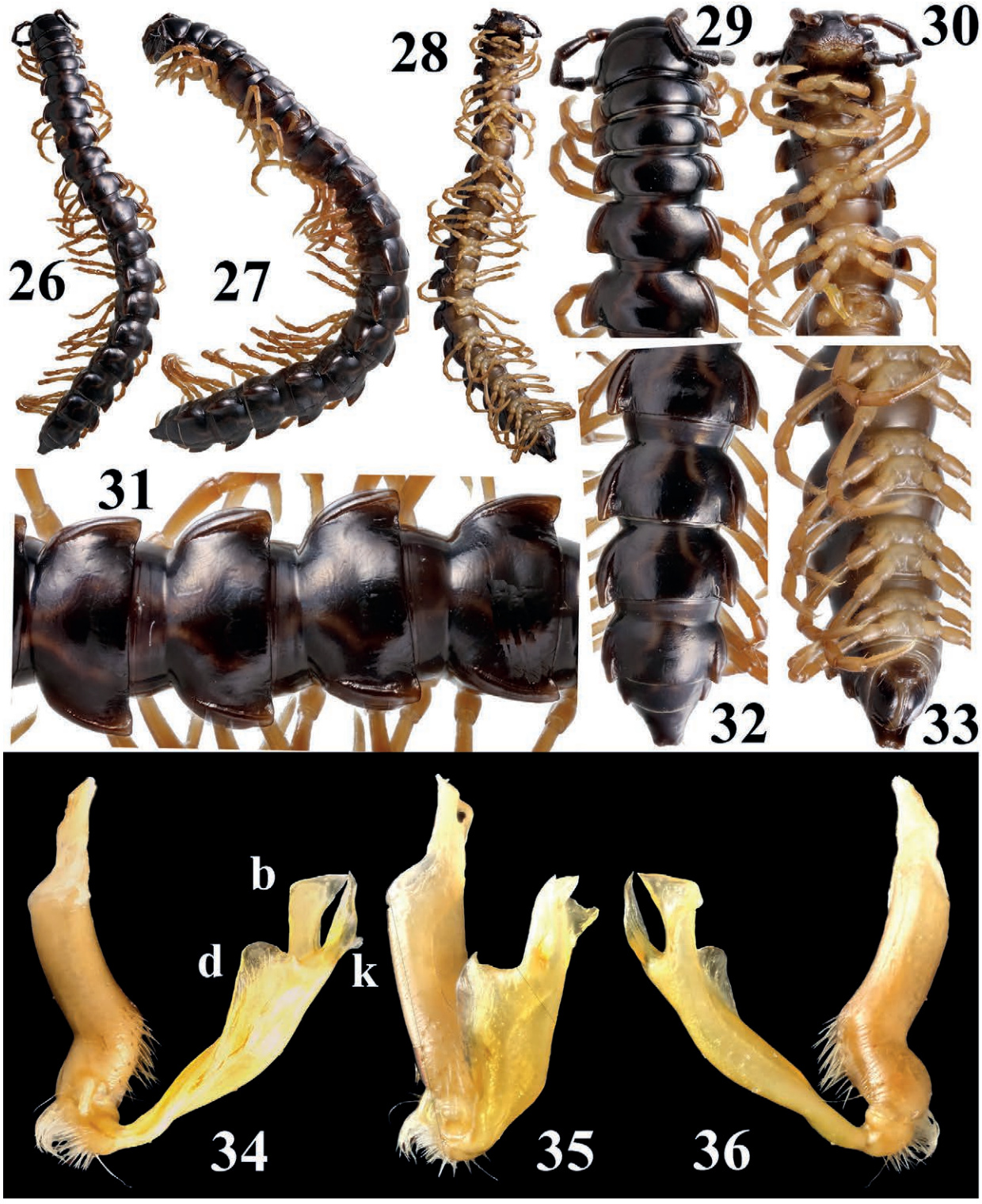
## Taxonomy

### *Aschistodesmus vinctus* (Attems, 1934)
Figs 1–58.

MATERIAL. 1 ♂ syntype of *Akamptogonus vinctus* Attems, 1934, NHMW MY3425, dissected in ethanol + both gonopods in microscopic slide, Salomon Archipel, Insel Guadalcanar [recte: Guadalcanal], leg. Dr. E. Paravicini, don. Mus. Basel (Figs 1, 2); 1 ♂ (NHML), 1 ♂ (ZMUM), Solomon Islands, Guadalcanal Island, S of Honiara, S of Barana, S 9°29′5″, E 159°58′40″, 220–350 m a.s.l., disturbed lowland rainforest on limestone, 5.V.2023; 1 ♂ (ZMUM), same place, 20–23.IV.2023; 2 ♂♂ (ZMUM), Solomon Islands, Guadalcanal Island, Marau area, S of Puatanarau, 9°46′01″S 160°46′24″E, 200–230 m a.s.l., primary lowland rainforest on basalt, 10.V.2023, all D. Telnov leg.

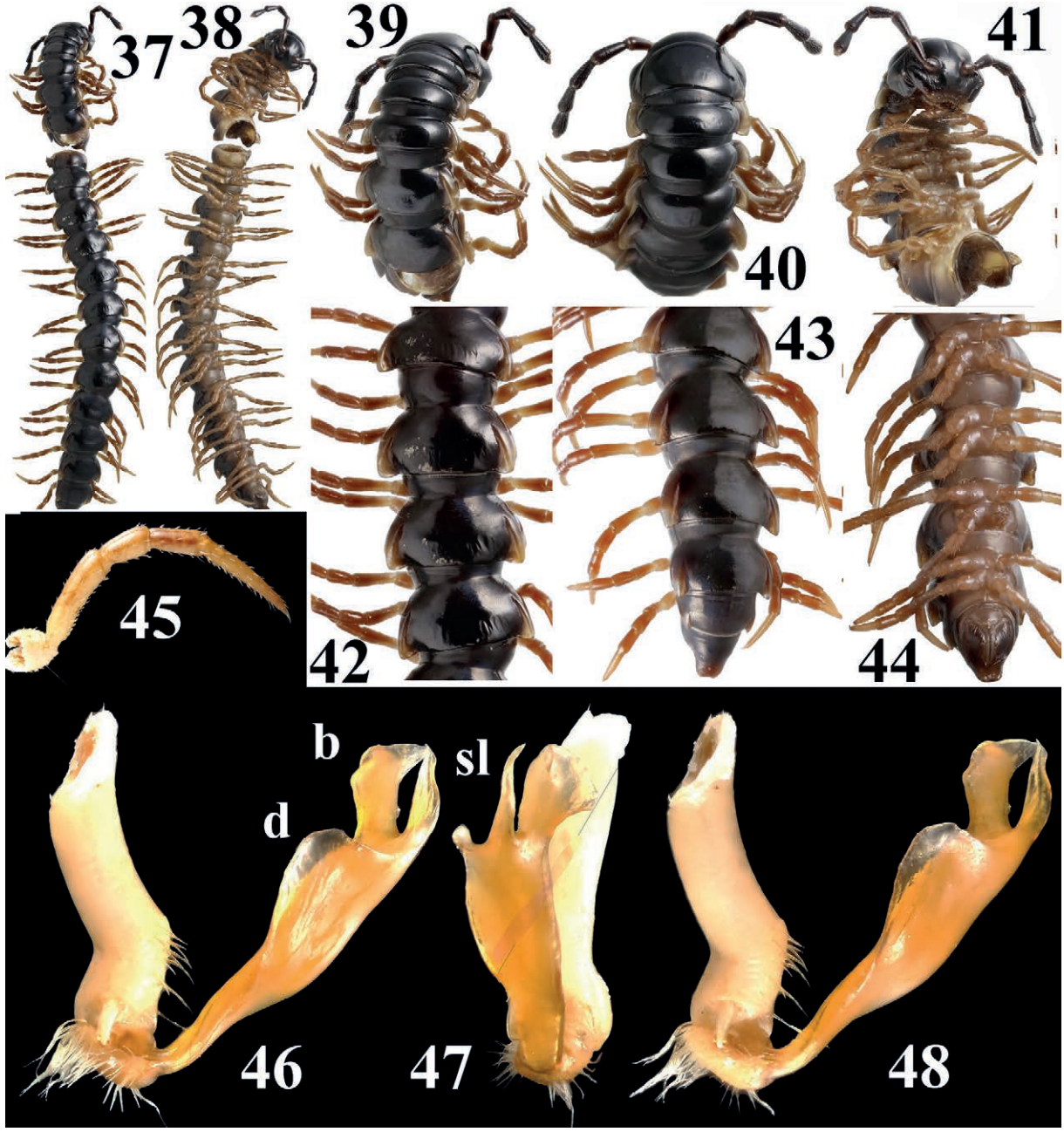
DIAGNOSIS. Differs from congeners primarily by the peculiar array and shapes of the various outgrowths in the distal parts of the gonopodal telopodites, coupled with a usually traceable, horologiform colour pattern on both pro- and metaterga.

DESCRIPTION (combined with the available descriptions by Attems [1934] and Jeekel [2000], based on material from several places in Guadalcanal). Length 32–36 mm, width on midbody pro- and metazonae 2.2–2.5 and 3.0–3.8 mm, respectively (♂, ♀). General coloration brown with yellowish paraterga (old syntype in ethanol apparently somewhat faded), more usually chocolate brown to blackish (Figs 3, 5–12, 16–18, 20–23, 26–33, 37–44, 49–54); pattern often traceable, better visible in posterior 2/3 body, characteristic, horologiform, two more or less vague, thin, light yellow to reddish, paramedian lines on proterga and anterior thirds of metaterga, both converging towards strictures (Figs 11, 22, 31, 32). Collum sometimes also with a traceable paramedian pair of lighter stripes converging cephalad. Caudal halves of paraterga/calluses and venter usually light brownish. Sides, venter and epiproct tip light brownish, reddish to dark.




Figs 26–36. *Aschistodesmus vinctus* (Attems, 1934), ♂ from south of Barana. 26–28 — habitus, dorsal, lateral and ventral views, respectively; 29, 30 — anterior part of body, dorsal and ventral views, respectively; 31 — midbody terga, dorsal view; 32, 33 — posterior part of body, dorsal and ventral views, respectively; 34–36 — left gonopod, mesal, subdorsal and lateral view, respectively. Photographs by K.V. Makarov, taken not to scale.

Рис. 26–36. *Aschistodesmus vinctus* (Attems, 1934), ♂ из южнее Barana. 26–28 — общий вид, соответственно сверху, сбоку и снизу; 29, 30 — передняя часть тела, соответственно сверху и снизу; 32, 33 — задняя часть тела, соответственно сверху и снизу. 34–36 — левый гонопод, соответственно изнутри, почти сверху и сбоку. Фотографии К.В. Макарова, сняты без масштаба.



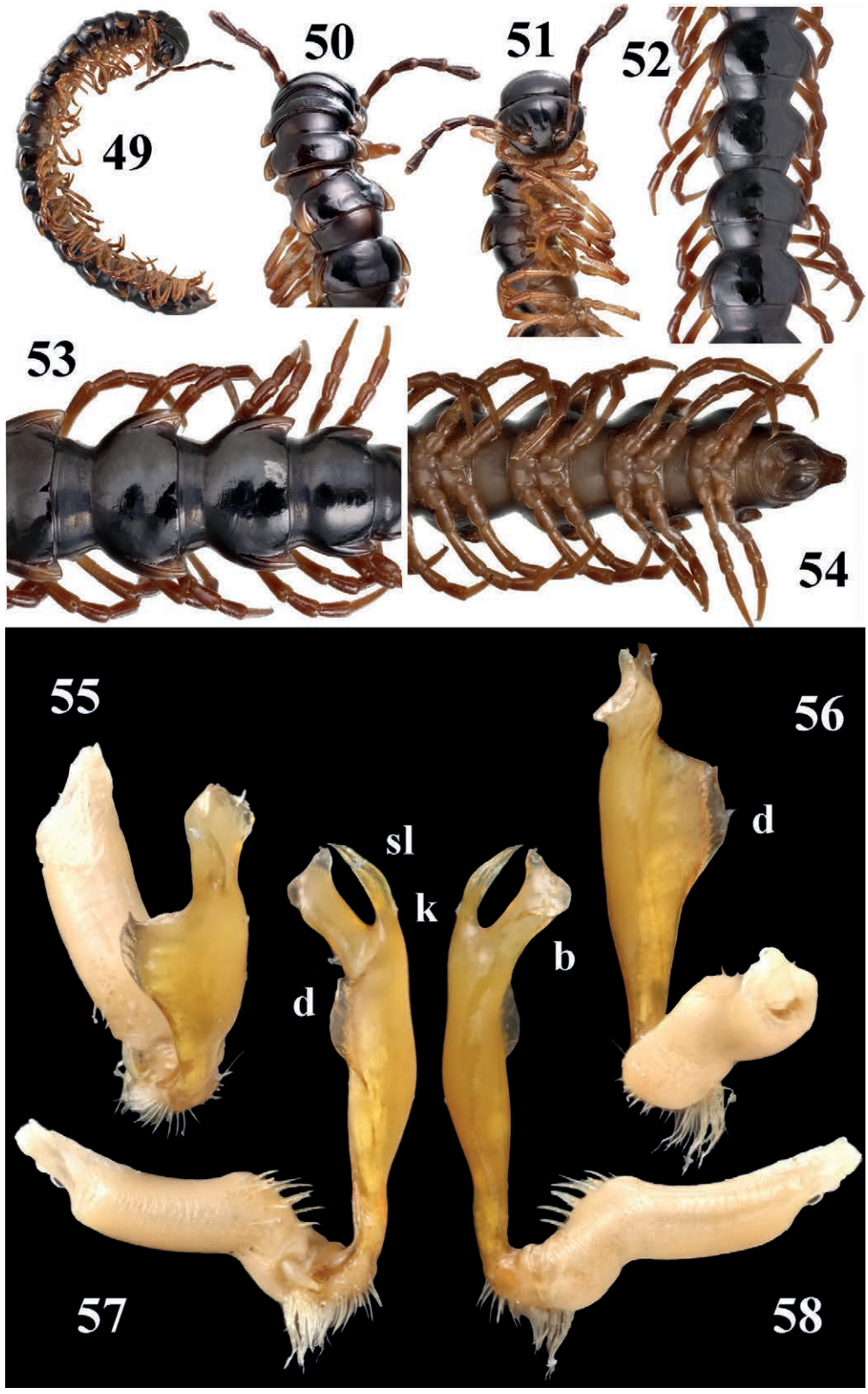

Figs 37–48. *Aschistodesmus vinctus* (Attems, 1934), ♂ from Puatanarau. 37, 38 — habitus, dorsal and ventral views, respectively; 39–41 — anterior part of body, dorsal, subdorsal and ventral views, respectively; 42 — midbody terga, dorsal view; 43, 44 — posterior part of body, dorsal and ventral views, respectively; 45 — midbody leg, lateral view; 46–48 — left gonopod, mesal, ventral and mesal views, respectively. Photographs by K.V. Makarov, taken not to scale.

Рис. 37–48. *Aschistodesmus vinctus* (Attems, 1934), ♂ из южнее Puatanarau. 37, 38 — общий вид, соответственно сверху и снизу; 39–41 — передняя часть тела, соответственно сверху, почти сверху и снизу; 42 — среднетуловищные тергиты, сверху; 43, 44 — задняя часть тела, соответственно сверху и снизу; 45 — среднетуловищная нога, сбоку; 46–48 — левый гонопод, соответственно изнутри, снизу и изнутри. Фотографии К.В. Макарова, сняты без масштаба.

Legs light brownish to red-brown, infuscate distad (Fig. 45). Gonopods yellow.

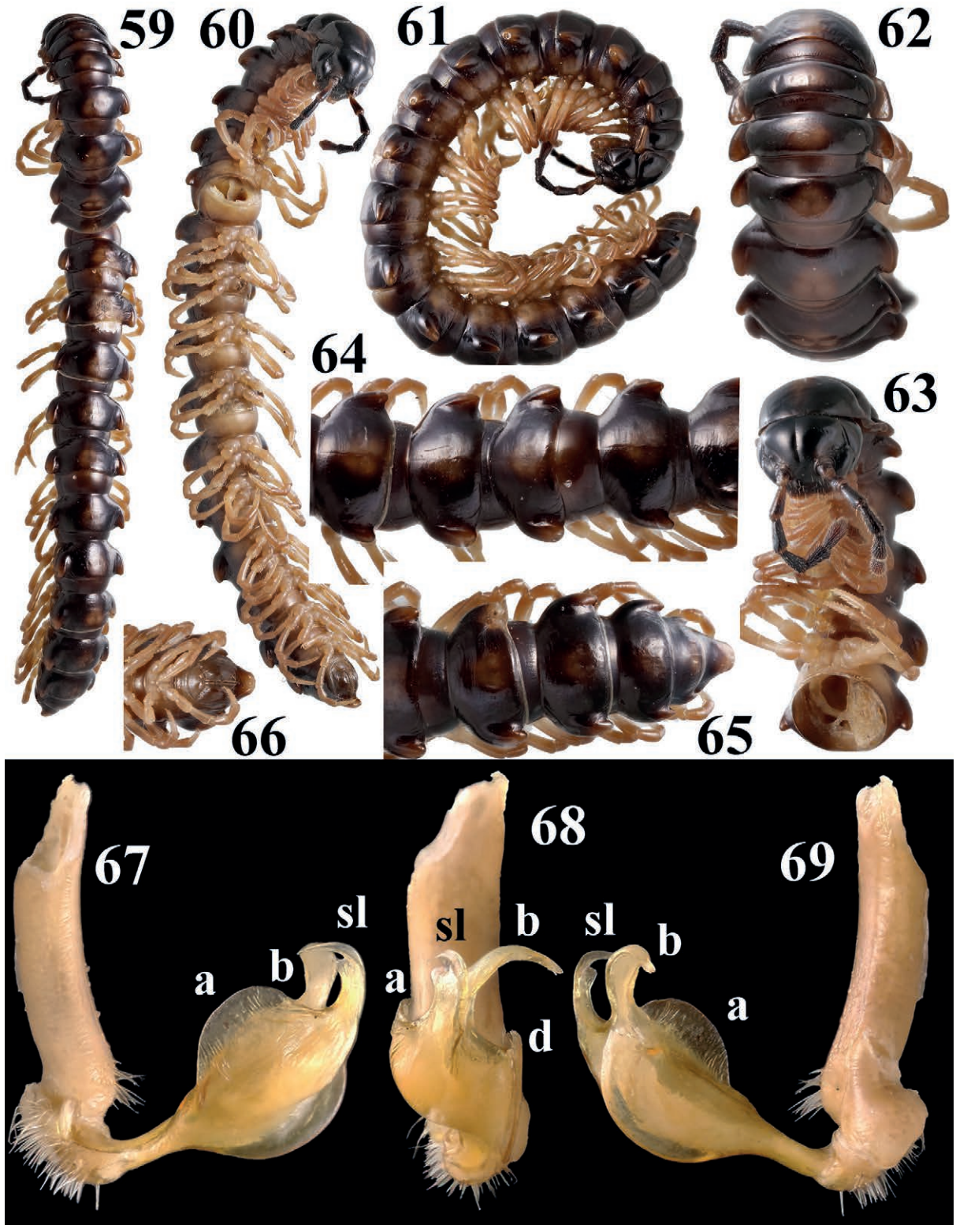
Body with 20 rings. Tegument generally smooth, polished and shining, but metaterga in places faintly rugulose or striate, only surfaces below paraterga 2–4 clearly microgranulate. Clypeolabral region sparsely setose, vertex bare, epicranial suture distinct; interanntenal isthmus about as wide as diameter of antennal socket. Antennae relatively short and slender, slightly clavate, *in situ* extending only past ring 2 dorsally (♂); in length, antennomeres 2=6>1=7. Genae squarish in dorsal or ventral view.

In width, head < collum < ring 2=4 < 5=15, thereafter trunk gradually tapering towards telson. Paraterga on collum broadly and regularly rounded laterally, finely bordered and smooth (Fig. 3). Paraterga 2 bar-shaped, smooth, set much lower than collum or following paraterga, drawn anteriorly beneath collum into a short rounded lappet and into a considerable finger-shaped, apically rounded process caudally (Fig. 3). Following paraterga



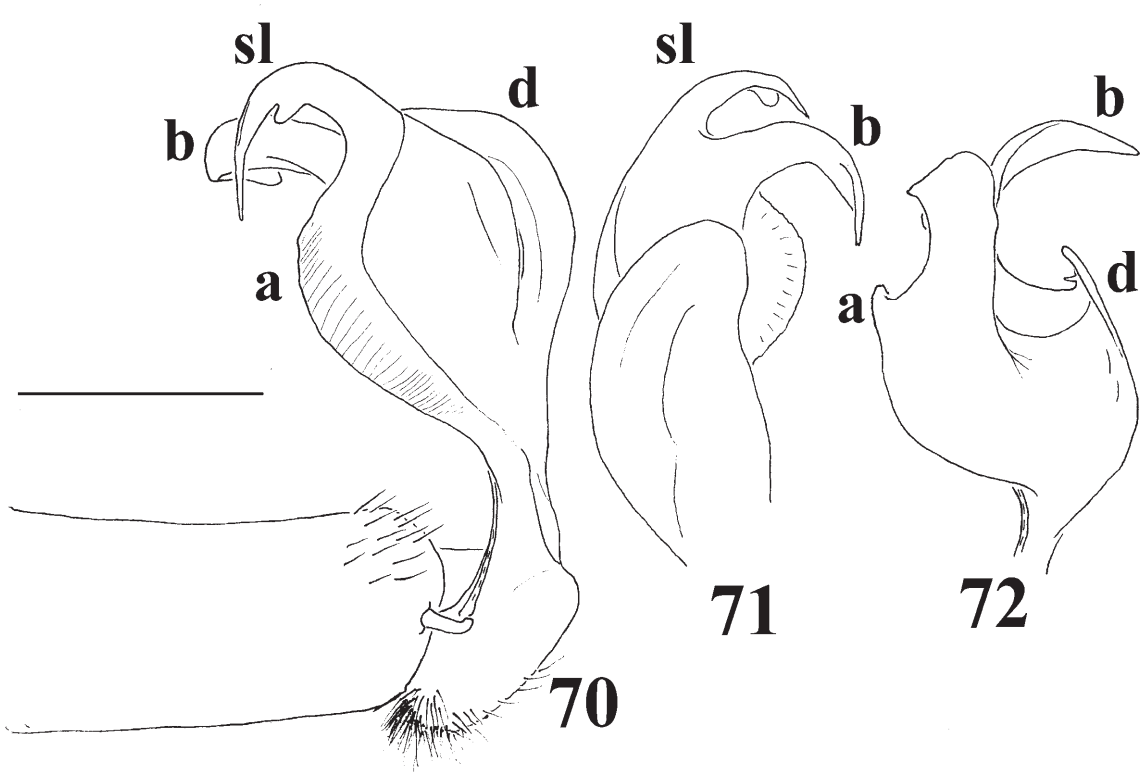

Figs 49–58. *Aschistodesmus vinctus* (Attems, 1934), ♂ from Puatanarau. 49 — habitus, lateral view; 50, 51 — anterior part of body, dorsal and ventral views, respectively; 52 — midbody terga, dorsal view; 53, 54 — posterior part of body, dorsal and ventral views, respectively; 55–58 — left gonopod, subventral, subdorsal, mesal and lateral views, respectively. Photographs by K.V. Makarov, taken not to scale.

Рис. 49–58. *Aschistodesmus vinctus* (Attems, 1934), ♂ из южнее Puatanarau. 49 — общий вид, сбоку; 50, 51 — передняя часть тела, соответственно сверху и снизу; 52 — среднетуловищные тергиты, сверху; 53, 54 — задняя часть тела, соответственно сверху и снизу; 55–58 — левый гонопод, соответственно почти снизу, почти сверху, изнутри и сбоку. Фотографии К.В. Макарова, сняты без масштаба.




Figs 59–69. *Aschistodesmus spatulifer* Jeekel, 2000, ♂ from along Bislata stream. 59–61 — habitus, dorsal, ventral and lateral views, respectively; 62, 63 — anterior part of body, dorsal and ventral views, respectively; 64 — midbody terga, dorsal view; 65, 66 — posterior part of body, dorsal and ventral views, respectively; 67–69 — left gonopod, mesal, ventral and lateral views, respectively. Photographs by K.V. Makarov, taken not to scale.

Рис. 59–69. *Aschistodesmus spatulifer* Jeekel, 2000, ♂ из вдоль ручья Bislata. 59–61 — общий вид, соответственно сверху, снизу и сбоку; 62, 63 — передняя часть тела, соответственно сверху и снизу; 64 — среднетуловищные тергиты, сверху; 65, 66 — задняя часть тела, соответственно сверху и снизу; 67–69 — левый гонопод, соответственно изнутри, снизу и сбоку. Фотографии К.В. Макарова, сняты без масштаба.




Figs 70–72. *Aschistodesmus spatulifer* Jeekel, 2000, ♂ from along Bislata stream, left gonopod, mesal, dorsolateral and subventral views, Scale bar: 0.5 mm. S. Golovatch del.

Рис. 70–72. *Aschistodesmus vinctus* (Attems, 1934), ♂ из вдоль ручья Bislata, левый гонопод, соответственно изнутри, одновременно сверху и сбоку, а также примерно снизу. Масштаб: 0,5 мм. Рисунок С. Головача.

well-developed, set high (at about upper 1/3 midbody height), thus leaving the dorsum clearly convex; paraterga 3 bar-shaped, rounded and clearly drawn caudally past rear tergal margin (Figs 3, 17, 39); paraterga 4(5)–15 blunt, rounded caudally and at most barely produced past caudal tergal margin, but paraterga 16–19 increasingly sharpened and drawn well past rear tergal margin (Figs 5, 11, 16, 22, 31, 32, 42, 43). Lateral calluses of postcollum paraterga thick, arcuated, smooth, delimited by nearly complete and deep sulci dorsally, but incomplete and oblique sulci ventrally (traceable in rear one-third to half). Calluses considerably thicker on pore-bearing rings than on poreless ones.

Pore formula normal; ozopores fully lateral, invisible from above, traceable even dorsally only through a small, rounded, lateral incision in caudal 1/3 to 1/4, mostly lying inside ovoid grooves off caudal corner of poriferous paraterga. Pleurosternal carinae low, simple, microgranulate and subtriangular or squarish ridges present on rings 2–4. Neither tergal setae nor setation pattern traceable. Axial line very fine to absent (Figs 5, 6, 16, 29, 31, 32, 42, 43, 50, 52, 53). Transverse metatergal sulci/impressions very faint, usually traceable on rings 5–18. Stricture between pro- and metazona deep, broad and smooth. Limbus simple, narrow and entire. Epiproct flattened dorsoventrally, long, emarginate apically, with two very small pre-apical lateral papillae (Figs 12, 23, 32, 33, 44, 54). Hypoproct subtrapeziform, with 1+1 small, rounded, setigerous tubercles behind a centrally produced, small, rounded, caudal tip (Figs 12, 23, 33, 44, 54).

Sterna almost bare, with clear cross-impressions, transverse impressions being considerably stronger than axial ones. Sternal cones very faint to nearly absent. A small, roundly subtrapeziform, setose, transverse lobe between ♂ coxae 4 (Figs 8, 10, 21, 30, 41). Legs long and slender, ca 1.5–1.6 times as long as midbody height (♂), not too densely setose even ventrally (Fig. 45), tarsal brushes present only on ♂ legs 1–7 (Figs 8, 10, 21, 30). Each ♂ coxa 2 with a small and rounded gonapophysis (Figs 8, 10). Each ♂ femur 1 with a distinct, rounded, ventral, parabasal tubercle/andenostyle (Fig. 21).

Gonopods (Figs 4, 13–15, 19, 24, 25, 34–36, 46–48, 55–58) with characteristically shaped outgrowths of telopodite: subequally high branch **b** and solenomere (**sl**), with a hyaline mesal lobe **d** at their base; **b** sometimes supplied with a laterobasal outgrowth (**k**), this ranging from a peculiar, round, leaf-shaped lobule (Fig. 19), via a barely visible denticle (Fig. 34) or knob (Figs 57, 58), to virtually missing (Figs 13–15. 24, 25).

REMARKS. Attems [1934] described this species as *Akamptogonus vinctus* from an unspecified series of ♂ and ♀ syntypes coming from an unspecified locality in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. One ♂ syntype, housed in the collection of the Natural History Museum in Vienna, Austria, apparently retained there by Attems, has been revised (Figs 1–5). The remaining syntypes (at least one ♀), not revised here, must be in the Natural History Museum in Basel, Switzerland. Jeekel [2000] provided a detailed and refined redescription, based on new material from several places in Guadalcanal. The above fresh samples perfectly agree with the available descriptions [Attems, 1934, 1937; Jeekel, 2000], thus allowing for a better perception of the infraspecific variation range to be drawn. Variations in gonopodal structure seem to be purely individual and largely concern the presence or absence of outgrowth **k** at the base of the solenomere. A fully developed lobe **k**, as illustrated also by Jeekel [2000], could have also been broken off (e.g., during copulation), thus accounting for such an unexpectedly broad range of variation in gonopodal structure.

This species seems to be endemic to Guadalcanal Island, Solomons.

*Aschistodesmus spatulifer* Jeekel, 2000
Figs 59–72.

MATERIAL. 1 ♂ (ZMUM), Solomon Islands, Choiseul (Lauru) Island, Kolombangara River valley, 500 m around Bislata stream, 40–50 m a.s.l., 6°59′34″S 156°46′33″E, primary lowland rainforest, 28.IV.2023, D. Telnov leg.

DESCRIPTION (combined with the available description by Jeekel [2000]). Length 32–40 mm, width on midbody pro- and metazona 2.5 and 3.1–3.8 mm, respectively (♂). General coloration brown and devoid of a distinct pattern (apparently faded through long preservation in ethanol) to dark chocolate brown (fresh material) with lighter brown to red-brown caudal parts of paraterga, epiproct tip, hypoproct and a pattern of marbled light brown pleurosternal regions; an axial, yellowish, anteriad attenuating stripe on collum, and vague, rounded, middorsal spots on metaterga (Figs 59–65); legs and venter light yellow-brown, legs infuscate reddish distad.

All other characters as in *A. vinctus*, except as follows.

Clypeolabral region more densely setose (Figs 59–61, 63). Antennae a little longer, *in situ* extending past ring 3 dorsally. Paraterga generally thicker and more strongly rounded, clearly drawn past rear tergal margin only on rings 2, 3 and 18 (Fig. 61). Transverse metatergal impressions weaker (Figs 59, 61, 62, 64, 65). Legs very densely setose, prefemora, tibiae and tarsi with ventral brushes until about midbody legs (♂) (Fig. 60). Sternal cones absent.

Gonopods (Figs 67–72) with the following characteristically shaped outgrowths of telopodite: lobes **a** and **d** conspicuously expanded; solenomere (**sl**) unciform, gradually attenuating, regularly curved, pointed apically, near midway with a small rounded lappet; branch **b** similarly long, likewise regularly curved, gradually attenuating and pointed at tip.

REMARKS. Jeekel [2000] described this species from a single ♂ holotype coming from an unspecified locality in the Solomon Islands. The above fresh sample generally agrees with the available description by Jeekel [2000], yet differing in two minor details of the gonopodal structure. Thus, the gonopod of the fresh ♂ differs in the non-sigmoid, rather regular curve of branch **b** and by the presence of a small midway lobule on the solenomere (**sl**). However, these small variations definitely fail to question the identity of the new sample as representing *A. spatulifer*.

This species seems to be endemic to Choiseul Island, Solomons.

**Compliance with ethical standards**

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

**Ethical approval:** No ethical issues were raised during our research.

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