

# Remarks on *Conophorus heteropilosus* (Diptera: Bombyliidae)

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**Abstract.** Comparison of the original descriptions and examination of the holotype of *Conophorus mauritanicus* Bigot, 1892 have revealed that *Conophorus heteropilosus* Timon-David, 1952 is a junior subjective synonym of *C. mauritanicus* Bigot, 1892.

**Samenvatting.** Bemerkingen over *Conophorus heteropilosus* (Diptera: Bombyliidae)  
Vergelijking van de originele beschrijvingen en studie van het holotype van *Conophorus mauritanicus* Bigot, 1892 hebben aangetoond dat *Conophorus heteropilosus* Timon-David, 1952 een jonger, subjectief synoniem is van *C. mauritanicus* Bigot, 1892.

**Résumé.** Remarques sur *Conophorus heteropilosus* (Diptera: Bombyliidae)  
La comparaison des descriptions originales et l'examen de l'holotype de *Conophorus mauritanicus* Bigot, 1892 ont montré que *Conophorus heteropilosus* Timon-David, 1952 est un synonyme subjectif, plus récent de *C. mauritanicus* Bigot, 1892.

**Key words:** *Conophorus heteropilosus* – *Conophorus mauritanicus* – New synonymy.

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## The status of *Conophorus heteropilosus* Timon-David, 1952

In the description of *Conophorus heteropilosus*, Timon-David (1952) compares this new species with *Conophorus mauritanicus* Bigot, 1892. Basically, the description of *C. heteropilosus* is based only on the colour of the hairs on the inner underside of the scape: "Espèce tres voisine de *Conophorus mauritanicus* Bigot, 1892, de Tunisie ; s' en distingue essentiellement par la présence de soies jaune d'or sur les articles 1 et 2 de l' antenne". Unfortunately, the whereabouts of the personal collection of the late Jean Timon-David could not be retrieved.



Fig. 1. Holotype of *Conophorus mauritanicus* Bigot, 1892, Algeria, leg. Sériziat, University Museum, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK (Photograph A. Pont).

Bigot (1892: 360–361), in the original description of *Conophorus mauritanicus* Bigot, 1892, writes about the hairs on the antennae: "Antennis nigris, basis, cinereo pruinosis et longe nigro pilosis" translated in French in the same paper: "Antennes noires, le 1er segment couvert d'une pruinosis grise, et garni de longs poils noirs mélangés de gris". The addition "mélangés de gris" is confusing, and is not present in the original Latin description.

Engel (1932–1937) follows the original Latin description of Bigot: "Das 1ste und 2de Fühlerglied, Bestäubung mit schwacher graugelber Bestäubung und ausschliesslich schwarzen Haaren".

The holotype (Fig. 1) of *Conophorus mauritanicus* Bigot, 1892, Algeria, leg. Sériziat, was deposited in the University Museum, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK (Evenhuis & Greathead 1999), and examined, on my request to Amoret Spooner, by the university honorary associate, Dr. Adrian Pont, who wrote the following: "Scape with golden hairs amongst the black ones on dorsal surface and elsewhere, and a few golden ones also on pedicel, from this I can only conclude that the two species are indeed the same".



Fig. 2. Holotype of *Conophorus mauritanicus* Bigot, 1892, detail of antennae showing mixed black and ochreous hairs, University Museum, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK (Photograph A. Pont).

The specimen is in good condition and also the photographs send to me by Mr. D. J. Gibbs revealed that the scape, very clearly, has long stiff yellow/golden hairs mixed with the black ones on the lower inside surfaces (Fig. 2).

We collected *C. mauritanicus* and/or *C. heteropilosus* in several localities in Morocco, including the type locality of *C. heteropilosus* and more to the North East near Mrirt close to the Algerian border. We noticed that within the same colony, some specimens have the black hairs on the inner underside of the scape intermingled with a few and other specimens with a considerable amount of golden-yellow hairs.

Considering that the holotype of *Conophorus mauritanicus* Bigot, 1892 in Oxford also bares yellow-golden hairs on the inner underside of the scape and that Bigot himself, in his French translation writes "de longs

poils noirs mélangés de gris" indicates that *Conophorus mauritanicus* Bigot, 1892 is a variable species and therefore, the distinction of *C. heteropilosus*, based on this character alone (Timon-David 1952) does not hold any longer. As other distinctive characters are also absent, we have to conclude that *Conophorus heteropilosus* Timon-David, 1952 is a junior subjective synonym of *Conophorus mauritanicus* Bigot, 1892.

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