

RESEARCH PAPER

A new *Aristogethes* pollen beetle from Oman, with a commented and updated checklist of the species (Coleoptera: Nitidulidae)

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Abstract. An unexpected new species of the genus *Aristogethes* Audisio & Cline, 2009, *A. pelikani* sp. nov., is described from southern Oman (Arabian Peninsula). This new species appears to be morphologically rather closely related to a couple of species known from southern Africa (northern South Africa, Botswana and southern Namibia): *A. eremita* (Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs & Kirejtshuk, 1998) and especially *A. rufofuscus* (Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs & Kirejtshuk, 1998), with which it shares several morphological traits and some interesting eco-ethological adaptations; these three species are, in fact, all specialized to live in stony sub-desert environments, with phenology mostly in August-September in both areas (southern Africa and southern Arabian Peninsula); they are also all associated for larval development with sub-desertic Malvaceae: Sterculioideae of the genus *Hermannia* L. The new species is otherwise easily distinguished from its two southern African relatives by the peculiarly shining and coarsely punctuated elytral surface, smaller average body sizes, narrower and at base much more acutely toothed tarsal claws, and the different male and female genitalia, more like those of *Aristogethes rufofuscus*. The larval hostplant of the new species is represented by *Hermannia* (*Mahernia*) *paniculata* Franch., a small eremic southern Arabian and Northeast African species, typically growing at low altitude in stony sub-desert habitats, close to the sea. An updated and commented checklist to known species of *Aristogethes* is presented.

Key words. Coleoptera, Nitidulidae, *Aristogethes*, desertic habitats, new species, taxonomy, host plants, Malvaceae, Oman, Afrotropical Region

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Introduction

The genus *Aristogethes* Audisio & Cline, 2009 was recently established to include an interesting species group of African Meligethinae, previously placed in the obviously polyphyletic (at that time) genus *Meligethes* Stephens, 1830, now delimited to some 70 species mostly distributed in the eastern Palaearctic (AUDISIO et al. 2015,

LIU et al. 2021), and all associated as larvae with flowers of Rosaceae. Members of *Aristogethes* were first treated by SPORNRAFT & KIREJTSHUK (1993) as part of the polyphyletic “*Meligethes clavatus* Reitter, 1872” species-group, later better circumscribed and formalized by SPORNRAFT & AUDISIO (1995) as the “*Meligethes pubescens* Reitter, 1872” species-group (which at that time included half a dozen species, all from South Africa), probably not dis-



tantly related to the “*Meligethes incognitus* Grouvelle, 1910” species-group (which at that time tentatively included four species from Namibia, and from Eastern and Central Africa). The former group was then revised by AUDISIO et al. (1998), with a further addition by AUDISIO & DE BIASE (2007). AUDISIO et al. (2009) first tentatively formalized the erection of a distinct genus *Aristogethes* to include all these taxa; it presently contains some twenty species, mostly distributed in Southern Africa, with a few taxa also known from Central and Eastern Africa (the four purported members of the above cited “*Meligethes incognitus* Grouvelle, 1910” species-group), whose biology is unfortunately unknown, and whose phylogenetic position is still incompletely defined (see Table 1). “*Aristogethes incognitus*”, however, based on recently acquired material found in south-eastern Kenya, although still pending any bionomic information, could be probably referred to the genus *Rubiogethes* Audisio & Cline, 2009, whose species are all associated with Rubiaceae.

Most of the species of the genus are associated with xeric environments, in particular stony-rocky environments of sub-desert areas, sandy soils along the dry beds of small periodic watercourses, clearings in fynbos and thicket environments, and xeric grasslands, especially in coastal and low-altitude areas; the species whose biology is presently known all appear to be associated for larval development (SPORNRAFT & AUDISIO 1995; AUDISIO et al. 1998, 2009) with xerophilous Malvaceae of the genus *Hermannia* L. (VERDOORN 1980, ARNOLD & DE WET 1993, GWYNNE-EVANS 2015), until a few years ago included in Sterculiaceae; the latter family was recently reunited with Malvaceae (as subfamily Sterculioideae) on the basis of clear molecular evidence (WHITLOCK et al. 2001, WILKIE et al. 2006, GWYNNE-EVANS 2015, CVETKOVIC et al. 2021). Most *Aristogethes* species exhibit a spring phenology (September–November), only a few taxa from northern South Africa and Eastern Africa probably develop also during summer months (SPORNRAFT & AUDISIO 1995; AUDISIO et al. 1998, 2009; AUDISIO & DE BIASE 2007).

From an integrative taxonomy perspective (LIU et al. 2019, SABATELLI et al. 2020), some preliminary molecular results on a few studied South African members of the genus *Aristogethes* [*A. pubescens* (Reitter, 1872), *A. translatus* (Grouvelle, 1913), and *A. hermanniae* (Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs & Kirejtshuk, 1998)] were discussed by TRIZZINO et al. (2009) and by AUDISIO et al. (2011, 2014), to test some previous hypotheses (AUDISIO et al. 2009) on the phylogenetic positioning of this peculiar genus. The first preliminary results of these analyses (based on mitochondrial COI, nuclear PEPCK gene sequences, and secondary structures of the rRNA internal transcribed spacer 2 – ITS2) have in particular highlighted that members of *Aristogethes* exhibit and share a few specific conserved motifs, with characteristic signature sequences in both domains A and B in secondary structures of the rRNA ITS2, also exhibiting short signature sequences partly shared with some members of the probably related genus *Afrogethes* Audisio & Cline, 2009 (TRIZZINO et al. 2009). Further molecular investigations using CAD and

a wider range of mitochondrial and nuclear markers are under way, to better define the phylogenetic positioning of *Aristogethes* and of the other ca. 30 Meligethinae genera (out of a total of 47 currently recognized) for which we have material suitable for molecular studies (LIU et al. 2024); the results of this research will be the subject of a forthcoming *ad hoc* contribution.

Herein, we describe a new and unexpected species from the southern Arabian Peninsula, *Aristogethes pelikani* sp. nov. based on a series of specimens recently collected by the Czech entomologist Jan Pelikán during a field trip to Oman in September 2022; this new species, despite exhibiting some univocal and peculiar character states, also combines a remarkable series of synapomorphies shared with a couple of suberemic species described from South Africa, Botswana and western Namibia, *A. eremita* (Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs & Kirejtshuk, 1998) and *A. rufofuscus* (Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs & Kirejtshuk, 1998) (AUDISIO et al. 1998), as discussed below.

An updated and commented checklist of the currently known *Aristogethes*, now tentatively including 19 described taxa [comprised the above-mentioned short series of African species whose phylogenetic position is not completely defined, pending molecular and biological data (GROUVELLE 1910; EASTON 1960; KIREJTSHUK 1990, 1996; AUDISIO et al. 2009)], is also presented herein (Table 1).

Materials and methods

Examination, dissection and measurements were completed using an Olympus SZX7 stereomicroscope with an ocular micrometer. Body length was measured from the anterior margin of the clypeus to the apex of the elytra, and body width as the maximum width of the elytra combined.

Habitus photographs were taken using a Canon EOS 550D digital camera with an attached Canon MP-E65mm f/2.8 1–5× macro lens as numerous separate images at different focal planes and subsequently combined using Helicon Focus 8.2.0 software. The male genitalia were studied and illustrated in temporary euparal mounts using an Olympus BX41 transmitted light microscope, associated with a drawing system lens tube; they were subsequently cleaned in pure ethanol and mounted in euparal on the same card as the beetle.

The following acronyms are used for morphological terms:

DTIN/LETE	length of distal excision of tegmen / tegmen length;
ELLE/ELWI	elytral length / combined elytral width (ELLE measured from posterior edge of scutellar shield to posterior edge of elytra);
HEWI/ANLE	head width / antennal length (HEWI measured at outer apex of eyes);
LEAE/WIAE	length / width of median lobe of aedeagus;
LELY/WELY	length / combined width of elytra;
LETE/WITE	length / width of tegmen;
MTLE/MTWI	length / width of metatibiae;
OVPL/GONL	ovipositor length / gonocoxites length (i.e., relative position of “central point”);
PRLE/ELLE	pronotal / elytral length;
PRWI/ELWI	pronotal / elytral width;
PRWI/PRLE	maximum pronotal width / pronotal length;
PTLE/PTWI	length / width of protibiae (excluding teeth);

STLE/CGOW styli length / gonocoxites width;
 STLE/DSIA styli length / distance between point of insertion
 of styli and apex of ovipositor.

Specimens included in this study are deposited in the following institutional or private collections:

CAR-MZUR collection of Paolo Audisio, presently housed in the Zoological Museum of the Sapienza Rome University, Rome, Italy;
 JPHK private collection of Jan Pelikán, Hradec Králové, Czech Republic;
 NMPC National Museum of the Czech Republic, Prague, Czech Republic.

Taxonomy

Aristogethes Audisio & Cline, 2009

Aristogethes pelikani Audisio, Jelínek & Liu, sp. nov.

(Figs 1–7)

Type locality. Oman, Dhofar Governorate, Mughsayl [= Maghsail], 2 km W of Wadi Ashawq [= Athwaq], 16°53'45.693"N, 53°46'23.940"E.

Type material. HOLOTYPE: ♂ (NMPC), labelled: "South Oman, Dhofar Gov., Maghsail, 2 Km W of Wadi Athwaq, 16°53.45.693N, 53°46.23.940E, 13 m a.s.l., 15.IX.2022, wadi rocks, beating small flowering Malvaceae, J. Pelikán lgt." PARATYPES: 4 ♂♂ 11 ♀♀, same data as holotype (CAR-MZUR, JPHK, NMPC).

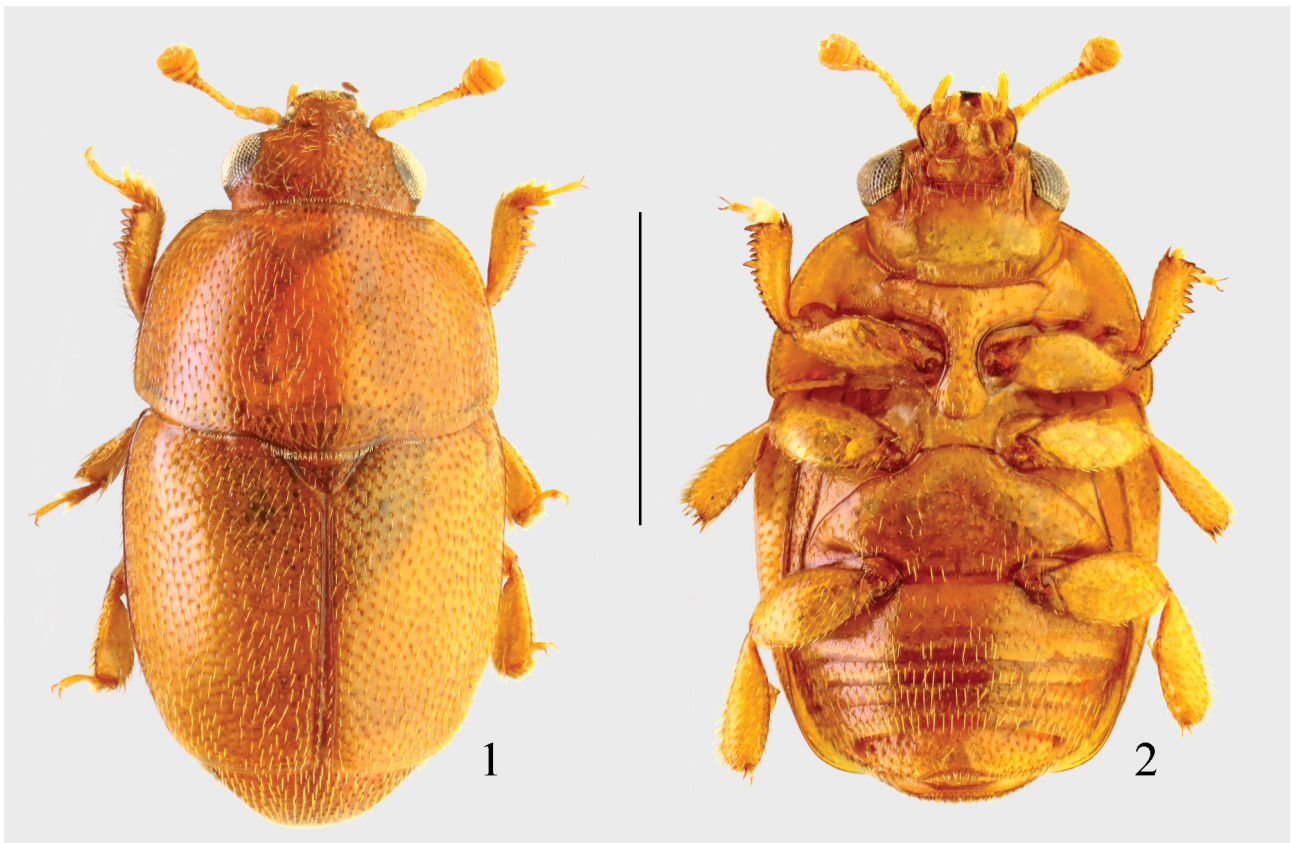
Description. Male (holotype). Body rather short, oval, and transversely convex (Figs 1–2). Colouration uniformly orange-yellowish both dorsally and ventrally, legs, antennae and mouth parts uniformly yellowish-orange, testaceous (Figs 1–2).

Dorsal punctation. Surface moderately densely and

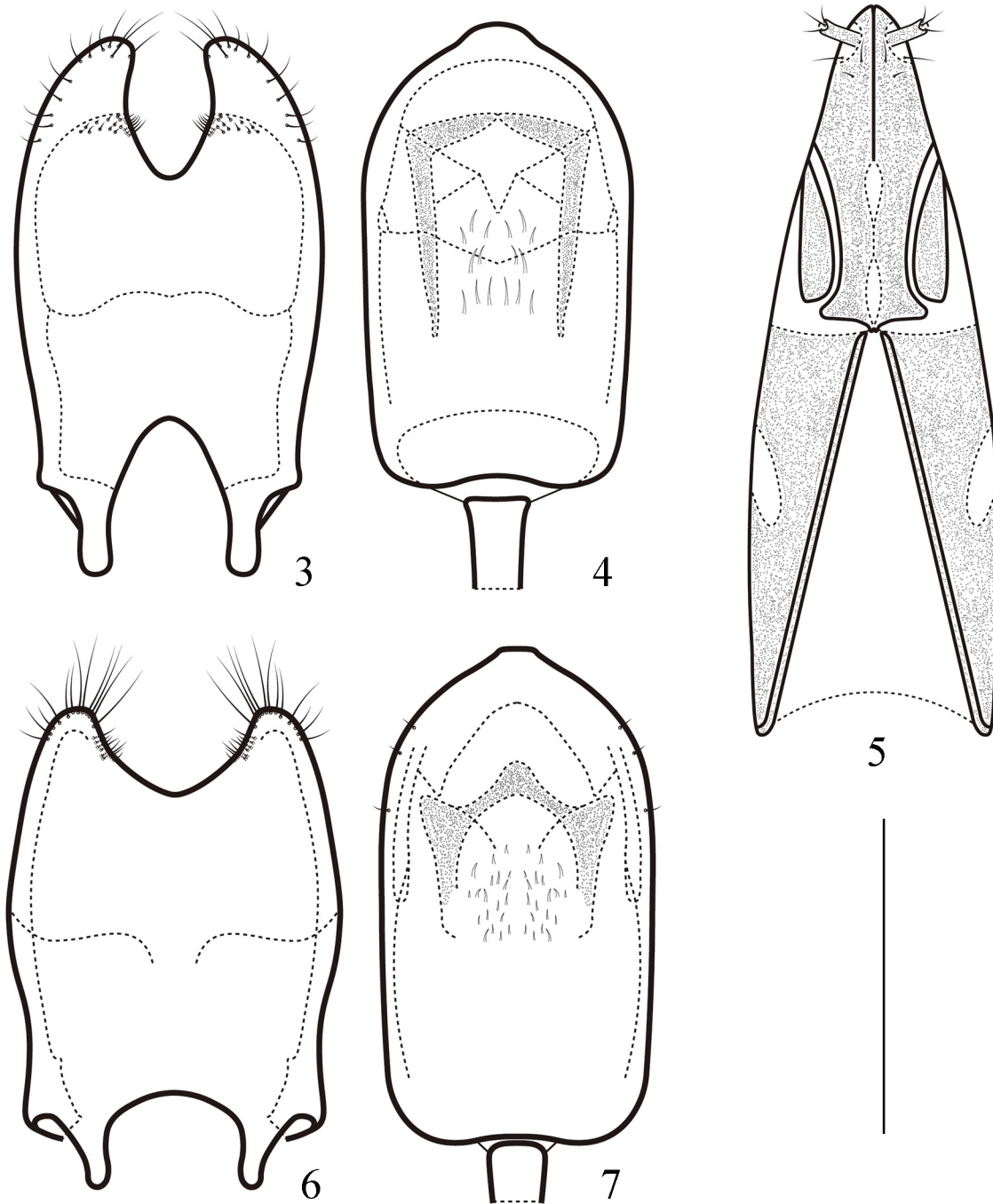
not deeply punctate on pronotum (spaces between pronotal punctures ca. 1.0–1.5× their diameter), interspaces exhibiting feeble but distinct traces of shagreened surface, the latter however quite bright; elytra without traces of transverse strigose sculpturing, but with feeble traces of orange-peel like surface; surface densely, coarsely, and deeply punctate (spaces between elytral punctures ca. 1.0–1.5× their diameter), with very shining interspaces.

Head transverse, without dorsal fronto-genal and periorcular grooves (Fig. 1). Clypeus distinctly but regularly arcuately emarginate. Pubescence rather sparse and conspicuous, moderately long. Antennal grooves on ventral side of head long and nearly parallel (Fig. 2). Antennae with club small, moderately elongate, symmetrical, without any sexual differentiation; HEWI/ANLE = 1.2; flagellar antennal portion with peculiarly short antennomeres IV to VIII (Fig. 1).

Prothorax. Pronotum with trapezoidal shape, widely arcuated lateral sides, maximum width nearly at its obtusely rounded posterior angles (Fig. 1); PRLE/ELLE = 0.77; PRWI/ELWI = 0.95; PRWI/PRLE = 1.55. Pubescence golden, rather sparse but conspicuous, each individual seta nearly as long as antennomere III. Notosternal sutures distinctly raised, short, on both sides delimiting barely distinct oval impression which houses antennal club when antennae are at rest. Flat portion of peculiarly wide prosternal process widely rounded distad, its maximum width nearly in distal two thirds of its whole length, here nearly 1.6× as wide as antennal club (Fig. 2).



Figs 1–2. Habitus of *Aristogethes pelikani* sp. nov. 1 – dorsal view (male holotype). 2 – ventral view (male paratype). Scale bar = 1 mm



Figs 3–7. Genitalia of *Aristogethes*. 3–5 – *Aristogethes pelikani* sp. nov. (paratypes, Oman); 6–7 – *A. rufofuscus* (Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs & Kirejtshuk, 1998) (male paratype, Namibia). 3, 6 – tegmen in dorsal view; 4, 7 – median lobe of aedeagus in dorsal view; 5 – ovipositor in ventral view. Scale bar = 0.2 mm.

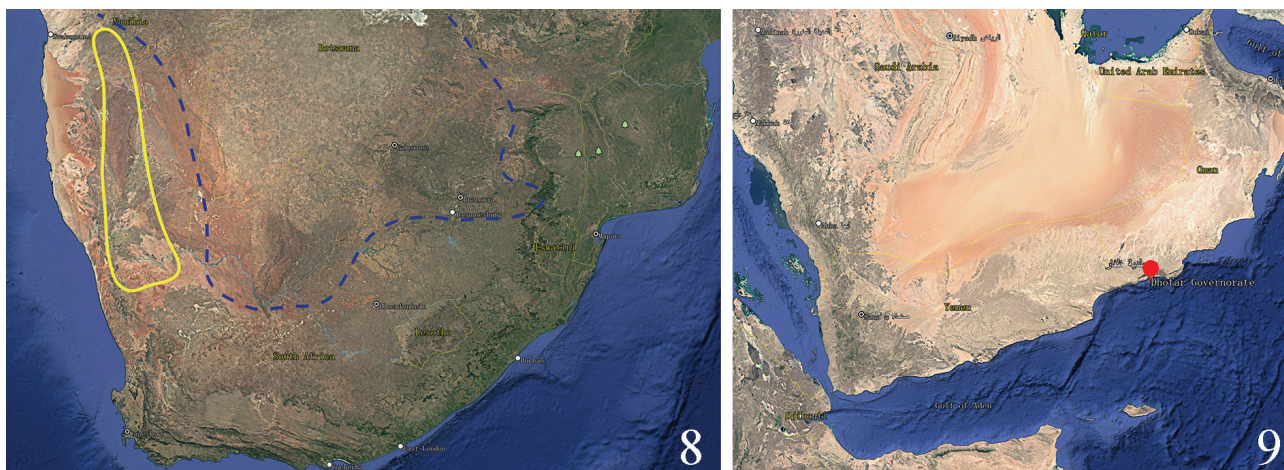
Elytra rather wide and short, oval (especially posteriorly), ELLE/ELWI = 0.89 (Fig. 1). Pubescence as on pronotum or slightly longer.

Pygidium. Proximal base of pygidium with short, normal, “V” shaped carina in middle, directed backwards. Pygidium widely rounded distad (Fig. 1).

Metaventrite and abdominal ventrites (Fig. 2). Metaventrite wide, flat, without any impression. “Axillary line” on abdominal ventrite I simple, closely following posterior margin of metacoxae. Apical abdominal ventrite (hypopygidium) with distinct, flatly triangular, distal gibbosity. Lateral semicircular impressions close to penultimate

ventrite’s posterior margin moderately deep, slightly larger than antennal club.

Legs. Protibiae rather narrow, long, PTLE/PTWI = 2.8, with series of five sharp almost perpendicular teeth placed on outer edge in distal half, with two large perpendicular teeth separated by series of three smaller teeth (Fig. 1); protarsi nearly 0.75× as wide as antennal club (Fig. 1); meso- and metatibiae rather wide, simple, not sinuated (Fig. 1), their regularly arcuate outer edge with distinct series of moderately long spinules (MTLE/MTWI = 2.5). All tarsi characterized by exhibiting their ultimate tarsomeres with long, fine, and at base acutely toothed tarsal claws (Fig. 1).



Figs 8–9. Distribution maps of *Aristotogethes* species. 8 – *Aristotogethes rufofuscus* (Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs & Kirejtshuk, 1998) (blue dotted line) and *A. eremita* (Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs & Kirejtshuk, 1998) (yellow solid line); the northern distribution limit of *A. rufofuscus* in Botswana is not known with certainty. 9 – *Aristotogethes pelikani* sp. nov. (red dot).

Male genitalia. Distinctly shaped, rather small, with tegmen elongate, only slightly arcuate on sides, with maximum width near middle (Fig. 3), and roundly pointed apex of each paramere; DTIN/LETE = 0.26–0.27, excision's inner margins nearly U-shaped, rather narrow, parameres distad slightly but distinctly convergent towards middle; LETE/WITE = 1.78. Aedeagal median lobe moderately long and subparallel-sided, markedly narrowed in its distal fifth, with maximum width near its distal third; roundly pointed distad (Fig. 4); LEAE/WIAE = 1.70.

Female. Protarsi narrower than in male, more distinctly narrower than antennal club. Ovipositor of intermediate size, rather conically pointed distad, uniformly coloured, hyaline, with moderately long styli placed at a distance from apex that is slightly lower than their length (STLE/DSIA = 1.28; Fig. 5). “Central point” placed ca. at its distal four ninths (OVPL/GONL = 0.43), without any distinct spicule directed proximad. STLE/CGOW = 0.40.

Variation. In some specimens the number of smaller teeth between the two larger ones on outer edge of protibiae is four instead of three (Fig. 2).

Measurements. Body length 1.8–2.3 mm (holotype 2.2 mm); width 1.0–1.2 mm (holotype 1.1 mm).

Differential diagnosis. As reported above, the new species certainly belongs to the *Aristotogethes fuerschi/eremita* species group (as first outlined by AUDISIO et al. 1998), more closely related to *A. rufofuscus* [from dry areas of northern South Africa, southern Namibia, and Botswana (Fig. 8); Table 1], sharing with this species the peculiar shape of the front tibiae, the pale body color, and the general shape of both male and female genitalia. The new species is otherwise unmistakable due to its smaller (on average) body sizes (body length: 1.8–2.3 mm in *A. pelikani* sp. nov., 1.9–2.6 mm in *A. rufofuscus*), body color constantly and uniformly yellowish, more convex pronotum and elytra (the latter more oval distad), markedly deeper and coarser elytral punctuation, narrower and at base much more acutely toothed tarsal claws, as well as by distinctly narrower median distal incision of the tegmen.

Habitat. Locality data and the collector's memories indicate that the new species prefers sub-desert or dry shrublands

among rocks, along dry wadi close to the sea (Fig. 11).

Phenology. The type series was collected in mid-September, which likely indicates adult local activity in early spring (probably from late August to early October).

Host plant. All specimens of the new species were collected on flowering shrublets of *Hermannia (Mahernia) paniculata* Franch. (Malvaceae). The native range of this species is NE Tropical Africa to NE Kenya, and south of the Arabian Peninsula (GHAZANFAR 2003, GWYNNE-EVANS 2015). It is a subshrub and grows primarily in the desert, sub-desert or dry shrubland biome (Figs 10–11).

Etymology. The specific epithet is derived from the surname of the collector, the Czech entomologist Jan Pelikán (Hradec Králové).

Distribution. Known so far only from the type locality in Dhofar Governorate, Southern Oman (Fig. 9).

Discussion

It is interesting to note that the most known species of the *Aristotogethes fuerschi/eremita* group (Table 1; comprising *A. fuerschi* (Spornraft & Audisio, 1995), *A. pecten* (Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs & Kirejtshuk, 1998), *A. rufofuscus*, *A. eremita*, and *A. pelikani* sp. nov.) are associated (excluding *A. eremita*: AUDISIO et al. 1998) as larvae with *Hermannia* of the subgenus *Mahernia* K. Schum. (see also GWYNNE-EVANS 2015), while all remaining *Aristotogethes* (including *A. eremita*) seem to develop as larvae on *Hermannia* s. str.

Aristotogethes rufofuscus, *A. eremita*, and *A. pelikani* sp. nov. seem to share almost the same phenology (mostly in August–September, although *A. rufofuscus* shows a broader phenology between September and early May, especially in Namibia) in their different areas of distribution (southern Africa and southern Arabian Peninsula).

Currently, the Meligethinae fauna of the Arabian Peninsula (including Socotra Island) comprises at least 13 species, distributed in the genera *Meligethinus* Grouvelle, 1906 (1), *Pria* Stephens, 1830 (3), *Afrogethes* (5), *Thymogethes* Audisio & Cline, 2009 (1, probably a new and undescribed taxon), *Fabogethes* Audisio & Cline, 2009 (1, probably introduced with cultivated Fabaceae) and

Table 1. Genus *Aristogethes* Audisio & Cline, 2009: list of the 19 tentatively included species (in alphabetical order), with available data on their geographic distribution, habitat, hostplants, and phenology. Species marked with an asterisk (*) are those whose taxonomic placement in *Aristogethes* is still not defined, pending any biological and molecular data, and any definite morphological relationship with other species of this genus. Information on habitat, altitudinal range, and larval hostplants are from AUDISIO et al. (1998) and from recent unpublished field data. All known larval hostplants belong to Malvaceae: Sterculioideae.

Species	Distribution (habitat); phenology; hostplant
<i>A. argentarius</i> (Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs & Kirejtshuk, 1998)	South Africa (Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal) (montane xeric grasslands at the edge of indigenous forests); ca. 1000–2000 m a.s.l.; IX–II; probably on flowers of <i>Hermannia</i> sp.
<i>A. aurivestis</i> (Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs & Kirejtshuk, 1998)	South Africa (Western Cape) (inland hills with fynbos vegetation); ca. 300–1200 m a.s.l.; IX–X; biology unknown
* <i>A. bisignifer</i> (Kirejtshuk, 1996)	Northern Namibia (dry open habitats); ca. 1200–1700 m a.s.l.; II–III; biology unknown
<i>A. colonnellii</i> (Audisio & De Biase, 2007)	South Africa (Western Cape) (xeric and sandy localities in karoo and fynbos areas, close to dry riverine habitats); ca. 200–700 m a.s.l.; V–X; probably on flowers of <i>Hermannia</i> (s. str.) sp.
<i>A. confertus</i> (Reitter, 1872)	South Africa (Western and Eastern Cape) (subcoastal tickets and inland hills with fynbos); ca. 10–300 m a.s.l.; IX–X; on yellow flowers of a couple of unidentified <i>Hermannia</i> (s. str.) spp.
<i>A. eremita</i> (Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs & Kirejtshuk, 1998)	South Africa (Western Cape, North West Province), Southern Namibia (Fig. 8) (karroid and sub-desertic vegetation); ca. 800–1700 m a.s.l.; IX–X and II–III; on flowers of <i>Hermannia</i> (<i>H.</i>) <i>trifurca</i> L. and of other unidentified <i>Hermannia</i>
<i>A. fuerschi</i> (Spornraft & Audisio, 1995)	South Africa (Mpumalanga, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, northern Eastern Cape) (low rocky grasslands and xeric clearings at the upper edges of indigenous afro-montane forests); ca. 1000–1800 m a.s.l.; IX–III; on flowers of <i>Hermannia</i> (<i>Mahernia</i>) <i>woodii</i> Schinz and <i>H.</i> (<i>M.</i>) <i>geniculata</i> Eckl. & Zeyh.
<i>A. hermanniae</i> (Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs & Kirejtshuk, 1998)	South Africa (Western and Eastern Cape) (subcoastal tickets with fynbos); ca. 10–200 m a.s.l.; IX–X; on flowers of <i>Hermannia</i> (<i>H.</i>) <i>salviifolia</i> L.f.
<i>A. marshalli</i> (Grouvelle, 1914)	South Africa (Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga) (rocky grasslands and xeric clearings at the upper edges of indigenous afro-montane forests); ca. 0–1800 m a.s.l.; IX–XI; likely on flowers of <i>Hermannia</i> sp.
<i>A. massivus</i> (Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs & Kirejtshuk, 1998)	South Africa (Northern Limpopo) (low rocky grasslands and xeric areas); ca. 800–1300 m a.s.l.; XI–XII; probably on flowers of <i>Hermannia</i> sp.
<i>A. namaqwaensis</i> (Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs & Kirejtshuk, 1998)	South Africa (northern Western Cape, Northern Cape), southern Namibia (disturbed riparian vegetation on sandy slopes near dry riverbanks, sub-desertic areas); ca. 0–200 m a.s.l.; VIII–IX; on flowers of <i>Hermannia</i> (<i>H.</i>) <i>gariiepina</i> L.f. and <i>H.</i> (<i>H.</i>) <i>scordifolia</i> Jacq.
<i>A. pecten</i> (Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs & Kirejtshuk, 1998)	South Africa (Western and Eastern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal) (from coastal grasslands and clearings in fynbos vegetation, to xeric Afroalpine grasslands); ca. 0–2000 m a.s.l.; VII–III; on flowers of <i>Hermannia</i> (<i>Mahernia</i>) spp.
<i>A. pelikani</i> Audisio, Jelínek & Liu, sp. nov.	Arabian Peninsula (Southern Oman) (sub-desert or dry shrublands among rocks, along dry wadi close to the sea); ca. 0–100 m a.s.l.; IX; on flowers of <i>Hermannia</i> (<i>Mahernia</i>) <i>paniculata</i> Franch.
* <i>A. pilosus</i> (Easton, 1960)	Tanzania, Kenya, Somaliland, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Cameroon (clearings in forest habitats, and savannah); ca. 1000–2000 m a.s.l.; X–VI; biology unknown¹⁾
<i>A. plumbeus</i> (Reitter, 1872)	South Africa (western portion of Western Cape) (sandy habitats along dry river banks); 0–200 m a.s.l.; X; probably on flowers of <i>Hermannia</i> sp.
<i>A. pubescens</i> (Reitter, 1872)	South Africa (Western Cape, southern-western Eastern Cape) (xeric habitats in fynbos vegetation); 0–1300 m a.s.l.; IX–XI; on flowers of <i>Hermannia</i> (s. str.) spp., e.g., on <i>H. angularis</i> Jacq. and allied species
<i>A. rufofuscus</i> (Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs & Kirejtshuk, 1998)	South Africa (Limpopo, Gauteng, North West, eastern Northern Cape); Namibia (Kunene, Erongo, Oshikoto, Caprivi and Otjozondjupa provinces) (Fig. 8) (arid and subarid savannah areas, suberemic localities); ca. 800–1600 m a.s.l.; IX–V; on flowers of <i>Hermannia</i> (<i>H.</i>) <i>eenii</i> Baker and related species
<i>A. translatus</i> (Grouvelle, 1913)	South Africa (western Western Cape, Northern Cape) (arid environments with Nama-Karoo vegetation); ca. 300–1100 m a.s.l.; VIII–XI; on flowering bushes of <i>Hermannia</i> (<i>H.</i>) <i>disermifolia</i> Jacq.
* <i>A. verniceus</i> (Kirejtshuk, 1990)	Central-Western Namibia (xeric sandy and suberemic areas, dry savannah areas); ca. 0–2000 m a.s.l.; I–V; biology unknown

¹⁾ The male holotype of this little-known species was collected on flowers of *Pentas* sp. (Rubiaceae) (EASTON 1960: 302), a plant genus which is attractive in general for adult Meligethinae when their larval hostplants are not in flowers; therefore, this meagre biological information alone cannot be considered very significant.



Figs 10–11. 10 – flowering plant of *Hermannia (Mahernia) paniculata* Franch. (Malvaceae: Sterculioideae) (Oman, Dhofar Gov., Fizayah), the hostplant of *Aristogethes pelikani* sp. nov.; 11 – habitat of *Aristogethes pelikani* sp. nov. at the type locality (Oman, Dhofar Gov., Maghsall, 2 km W of Wadi Athwaq). Photos by Vit Grulich, <https://botany.cz/cs/hermannia-paniculata> (10) and by Jan Pelikán (11).

Lamiogethes Audisio & Cline, 2009 (2) (EASTON 1954, 1959, 1960; COOPER 1982; JELÍNEK 1979, 1988; AUDISIO et al. 2009; AUDISIO 2012), then reaching 14 with the addition of the new species described herein. Considering the remarkable floristic richness of the Arabian Peninsula (MILLER et al. 1996; COLLENETTE 1999; GHAZANFAR 2003, 2007, 2015, 2018; THOMAS et al. 2014), counting more than 2000 known native species, we can believe that the number of Meligethinae species in the entire region is still strongly underestimated, and that any specialist research will result in a significant increase in the locally known species. As discussed by AUDISIO (2012), in fact, in Northern Hemisphere this group of specialized anthophagous beetles rarely exhibits an average local species number below 1.5% of the number of known native plant species.

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