

## A new species of *Rolaniconus* (Gastropoda: Conidae) from the Philippines

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**Abstract.** *Rolaniconus dedonderi* is described as a new species and compared with *Conus axelrodi* (Walls, 1978) and *Rolaniconus lecourtorum* Lorenz, 2011. The new species has hitherto been confused with *R. axelrodi* and has consistently been identified as an albino form of this species.

### INTRODUCTION

While sorting hundreds of smaller Conidae originating from the Palawan area, southern Philippines, the senior author encountered a number of specimens that were at first identified as *Rolaniconus axelrodi* (Walls, 1978). Yet, a more thorough survey of the original description and figures of the types (Walls, 1978 and 1979; Kohn & Anderson) revealed a number of constant characteristics not encountered in *R. axelrodi* and led to the conclusion that the specimens at hand belonged to a yet undescribed species. They are described here as *Rolaniconus dedonderi* sp. nov.

The terminology used here follows Röckel & al. (1995)

### Abbreviations

MNHN: Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris, France.

DG: Collection Fernand & Rika De Donder - Goethaels, Peutie, Belgium.

DM: Collection David Monsecour, Aarschot, Belgium.

### SYSTEMATICS

Family CONIDAE Fleming, 1822

Genus *Rolaniconus* Tucker & Tenorio, 2009

Type species: *Conus varius* Linnaeus, 1758 by original designation.

*Rolaniconus dedonderi* sp. nov.

Figs 1-5

**Type material.** Holotype MNHN 25879, 20.8 x 11.5 mm. Paratypes 1-3 (from type locality) DG, 20.1 – 22.3 mm, Paratypes 4-5 (Balabac Island, Palawan, southern Philippines) DM, 17.4 and 22.7 mm.

**Type locality.** Coron, Palawan Island, southern Philippines, 20-35m.

**Distribution and habitat.** All available material originates from the Palawan area, southern Philippines. The distributional range is probably limited to these regions, but could be much larger because of the confusion with *R. axelrodi* (see below). No real data about the habitat are available at present, except for a bathymetrical range of 20-35 metres.

**Description.** Shell of rather small size for the genus (about 17-23 mm in length), ventricosely conical, outline slightly sigmoid; shoulder subangulate, undulate; spire slightly concave. Protoconch of about 2 bulbous whorls adorned with microscopic pits, glassy but not translucent (eroded in holotype and most of the paratypes). Teleoconch consisting of 8 whorls with 4 evenly spaced spiral cords on all whorls; shoulders adorned with low, rounded knobs. Spiral sculpture of last whorl consisting of 8-10 cords on abapical 1/3, lower and less distinct adapically, obsolete or microscopic from final visible cord towards shoulder. Visible cords continuous, sometimes with rounded, elongated elevations (only visible under magnification). Lip simple, aperture of nearly uniform width. Outer apertural lip completely smooth. Columella like last whorl: abapical spiral cords continue and run deep into the aperture, remaining part of columella virtually smooth, occasionally with microscopic cords.

Colour of protoconch glassy off-white, sometimes with pale yellowish tinge on it. Rest of shell uniformly white.

**Comparison.** *Rolaniconus dedonderi* has hitherto always been considered a white or even albino form of *R. axelrodi*. White specimens of the latter are known (Raybaudi Massilia: pl. 567, fig. 3), but the new species can easily be distinguished by the weaker spiral sculpture on the last whorl: obsolete or

microscopic between the shoulder and the basal cord, whereas the last whorl of *R. axelrodi* is completely adorned with strong spiral cords of beadlike nodules; the higher onset of the lip at the shoulder, whereas it is usually somewhat lower in *R. axelrodi*; the “straighter” general outline of the body whorl; the less bulbous teleoconch whorls and the pure white colour. Even though both species occur in the southern Philippine region around Palawan, *R. dedonderi* lives in deeper waters (20-35 m as opposed to 8-15 m for *R. axelrodi*), but more accurate data are needed to confirm this.

In fact, *R. dedonderi* cannot be confused with any other known species, but as Lorenz (2011) compared *R. lecourtorum* Lorenz, 2011 with *A. axelrodi* in his original description, we hereby also compare *R. dedonderi* and *R. lecourtorum*: *R. dedonderi* has a weaker spiral sculpture, which does not cover the entire last whorl, the shoulders bear low, rounded knobs and it is completely white, whereas *R. lecourtorum* has a stronger, nodulose spiral sculpture which is present all over the last whorl, a stepped spire with strong coronations and a reddish colour pattern. Moreover, *R. dedonderi* is only known from the Philippines, whereas *R. lecourtorum* is endemic to the Cargados Carajos Shoals (also known as St. Brandon) in the western Indian Ocean.

**Etymology.** The new species is named in honour of Fernand De Donder, the first author’s husband, for his

efforts to draw attention to the smaller, often neglected molluscan species from the Philippines.

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#### Figures 1-8

##### 1-5. *Rolaniconus dedonderi* sp. nov.

1-2. Holotype MNHN 25879, Coron, Palawan Island, southern Philippines. 20-30m deep, 20.8 x 11.5 mm;  
3. Paratype 1. Type locality, 20.0 mm, coll. DG; 4-5. Paratype 2. Type locality, 19.0mm, coll. DG.

##### 6-8. *Rolaniconus axelrodi* (Walls, 1978)

Coron, Palawan Island, southern Philippines. 20-30m deep (Figs. 6-7. 18.8. mm; Fig. 8. 16.9 mm), both coll. DM.

