

THE GENUS *PHALEROMELA* REITTER IN NORTH AMERICA (TENEBRIONIDAE)

By C. A. TRIPLEHORN

Among North American workers in the Tenebrionidae, Nearctic members of the tribe Phaleriini have heretofore been restricted to but a single genus, *Phaleria* Latreille, containing twelve described species, most of which appear to be valid. Typically, the species of *Phaleria* have the anterior tibiae broadly expanded apically and all of the tibiae coarsely and densely spiny; the mesosternal groove into which the erect prosternal process fits is deep and acutely V-shaped and the antennae are short and stout, rarely extending caudad beyond the middle of the pronotum; the eyes are large, transverse and broadly emarginate anteriorly.

Horn (1870:377) suggested that *Phaleria globosa* LeConte and *P. humeralis* Horn differed sufficiently from other species of *Phaleria* known to him to warrant the recognition of a separate genus but neglected to name it.

In 1916, Reitter erected the genus *Phaleromela* to receive *Phaleria subhumeralis* Marseul, which thus became the monobasic type of the genus. Reitter's primary criteria in separating *Phaleromela* from *Phaleria* were the smaller, rounded eyes with entire anterior margins and . . . less strongly excavated mesosternum.

Gebien (1939) lists the genus *Phaleromela* Reitter and includes *subhumeralis* (Marseul), *humeralis* (Laporte), *picta* (Mannerheim) and *globosa* (LeConte), but offers no explanation for the transfers. However, there seems but little doubt that this assemblage of species forms a natural group. Reitter's description, based as it is upon a single species, is not sufficiently general to characterize all the included species. It therefore seems in order to present a broader redescription of *Phaleromela* in which all of the known species may be included.

Phaleromela Reitter

Elongate-oval to broadly oval, convex, glabrous, shiny. Head with anterior margin evenly arcuate from eye to eye; clypeus poorly defined; eyes small, widely separated both above and below, anterior margin entire; terminal segment of maxillary palpus narrowly elongate, obliquely truncate apically; antennae long, extending well beyond base of pronotum, feebly clavate. Pronotum narrower than elytra at base. Elytra finely punctate-striate, striae sharply incised but feebly impressed, each elytron with eight discal striae, no short stria paralleling margin of scutellum; intervals subconvex, finely, asperately punctured. Ventral surface of pronotum finely, longitudinally wrinkled; prosternal process convex between front coxae, slightly prolonged behind, deflexed apically; mesosternum rather deeply but not abruptly excavate anteriorly; epipleura entire but very narrow and everted at elytral apices, anterior tibiae conspicuously flattened and expanded apically, margined externally with flat, stiff spines; all tibiae rather densely spiny with prominent apical spurs.

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This genus is very similar to *Phaleria* in general appearance and has many characters in common with it (i.e. expanded front tibiae, entire epipleura, spiny tibiae, etc.). It is readily separable from *Phaleria* on the basis of the longer antennae which extend well beyond the pronotal base, the deflexed prosternal process, much smaller and rounded eyes and the absence of short elytral striae paralleling the margin of the scutellum.

During the author's studies in the Nearctic components of the closely related tribe Diaperini, it was concluded that *Scaphidema pictum* Horn (1874) actually belonged to the Phaleriini. The front tibiae are expanded apically and all of the tibiae are densely spiny, the mesosternum is shallowly excavated anteriorly and the eyes are small and rounded with entire anterior margins. Its general habitus is clearly *Phaleria*-like but the structure of the mesosternum, eyes and antennae place it more properly in *Phaleromela*.

Since *Phaleromela* already contains *pictum* (Mannerheim), the transfer of Horn's *Scaphidema pictum* to this genus results in homonymy and a new name is required for the latter species. It is proposed that it henceforth be known as *Phaleromela variegata* NEW NAME.

An additional case of homonymy in *Phaleromela* must be resolved. In 1870, Horn published a brief comparative description of a species which he called *Phaleria humeralis*. Gebien lists this as another reference to *humeralis* Laporte. It is probable that Horn missed Laporte's earlier description and use of the same name and it is entirely possible that they had reference to the same insect. Nevertheless, until such time as the identity of these two nominate species is established, a new name will be required to replace that of Horn, for which *Phaleromela prohumeralis* NEW NAME is proposed.

In order to clarify the existing situation in regard to the genus *Phaleromela* and the North American species which it is now considered to include, the following catalog has been prepared:

Genus PHALEROMELA Reitter

Phaleromela Reitter, 1916. Ent. Blätter 12:4.

Type: *Phaleria subhumeralis* Marseul, 1876. Ann. Soc. Ent. France (5)6:102. (Japan) Monobasic.

1. *variegata* NEW NAME. Oregon.

Scaphidema pictum Horn, 1874. Trans. American Ent. Soc. 5:36 (nomen preocc.).

Phaleromela variegata Triplehorn. NEW NAME

2. *globosa* (LeConte). California.

Phaleria globosa LeConte, 1857. Rept. Ins. Surv. [Rept. Exp. Surv. RR Miss. R. to Pacific] :51, pl. 2, fig. 4.

Phaleromela globosa (LeConte), Gebien, 1939. München. Ent. Ges. 29:743.

3. *humeralis* (Laporte). California, Asia.

Phaleria humeralis Laporte, 1840. Hist. Nat. Ins. Coleop. 2:219.

Phaleromela humeralis (Laporte), Gebien, 1939. München Ent. Ges. 29:743.

4. *picta* (Mannerheim). Sitka, Alaska.

Phaleria picta Mannerheim, 1843. Bull. Soc. Imp. Nat. Moscou 16:277.

Phaleromela picta (Mannerheim), Gebien, 1939. München Ent. Ges. 29:743.

5. *prohumeralis* NEW NAME. California.

Phaleria humeralis Horn, 1870. Trans. American Phil. Soc. n.s. 14:375,377 (nomen preocc.).

Phaleromela prohumeralis Triplehorn. NEW NAME.

Two of the species mentioned above, *P. variegata* and *P. globosa*, have recently been illustrated by Papp and Pierce (1960). Both were found associated with stored grain products in the Mojave Desert, California.

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LITERATURE CITED

- PAPP, CHARLES S. and PIERCE, HAROLD D. 1960. Ecological remarks on some tenebrionids connected with stored animal food in the Mojave Desert, California. Journ. Kansas Ent. Soc. 33(4):154-156.

A FEW TENEBRIONIDS NEW TO CUBA

Sr. Fernando de Zayas, of Cuba, recently gave me the opportunity to study some of the beetles he collected on Cuba. He has a few species not previously recorded from the island, so I present the data below as a contribution to our knowledge of beetle distribution in the Caribbean area.

Tribe STENOSINI. Specimens of *Rhyasma haitianum* Marcuzzi, 1953 (Atti Mus. Civ. Stor. Nat. Trieste 19(2):82, 84, fig. 3), were labeled as follows: Cuabitas, Oriente Prov., IX-1948. In addition, specimens of this species in the U. S. National Museum are labeled Jobabo, Cuba. Unfortunately a Province is not indicated on these labels; according to my gazetteers the name Jobabo is used for localities in several Provinces. This species was previously recorded only from Haiti.

Tribe BRANCHINI. A specimen of *Branchus woodi* LeConte, 1866 (Smithsonian Misc. Coll. 6(140):111), was labeled as follows: Litoral de la Hab. Marianao, La Habana Prov. The head and legs were missing when it was collected. The condition of the specimen and the situation in which it was found necessitate only tentative inclusion of the species in the Cuban faunal list. The species was previously recorded from New Providence Island of the Bahama Islands.

Tribe OPATRINI. Specimens of *Leichenium canaliculatum variegatum* (Klug), 1833 (Ins. Madagascar, p. 418), were labeled as follows: Península de Guanacahabibes, Pinar del Río Prov., VII-1955; Paredon de los Acosta, Pinar del Río Prov., V-1953. This species was probably introduced into the United States from Madagascar. In the United States it has been recorded from the Gulf Coast areas of Mississippi and Alabama, from a few places in North and South Carolina and Georgia, and throughout much of Florida. It is suspected of feeding on the roots of grasses.

Tribe DYSANTINI. Specimens of *Calymmus cucullatus* Pascoe, 1871 (Ann. Mag. Nat. Hist. (4)8: 349, pl. 14, fig. 8), were labeled as follows: Camagüey, Camagüey Prov.; Península de Guanacahabibes, Pinar del Río Prov., VII-1955; Cumanayagua, Santa Clara Prov., VI-10-33. This species was previously recorded from Mexico, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Colombia, Brazil, and Argentina.—T. J. SPILMAN, Entomology Research Division, A.R.S., U.S.D.A., Washington, D. C.



Triplehorn, Charles A. 1961. "The Genus *Phaleromela* Reitter in North America (Tenebrionidae)." *The Coleopterists' Bulletin* 15(4), 125–127.

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