

A NEW SPECIES OF *PYROTA* FROM ARGENTINA
(COLEOPTERA: MELOIDAE)

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Abstract.—*Pyrota horacioi*, new species, is described from adults from Salta, Argentina. The species is structurally similar to *P. muelleri* Borchmann, presently known from the states of Pernambuco and Bahia, Brazil, but is easily distinguished from it and other species of *Pyrota* in possessing a quadrivittate elytral color pattern.

Several years ago in the northwestern province of Salta, Argentina, Dr. Horacio Martínez collected at light three adult blister beetles which are structurally similar to adults of *Pyrota muelleri* Borchmann (1927) but distinctive in coloration. *Pyrota muelleri* was described from the state of Pernambuco on the northeastern coast of Brazil and, as far as we know, has since been taken only once, in the adjacent state of Bahia, Brazil (Selander, in preparation). Although the distance between Pernambuco/Bahia and Salta is about 3000 km, we do not discount the possibility that geographically intermediate populations exist and that Dr. Martínez' specimens may ultimately prove to represent a western race of *P. muelleri*. At the same time, in the absence of any indication of intergradation between the two known populations in available material (we have examined 11 specimens of *P. muelleri*), we are inclined to treat the Salta population as a separate species, which we have the pleasure of dedicating to its discoverer.

Pyrota horacioi, NEW SPECIES

Figs. 1-4

Adult.—Head, pronotum, and elytra largely bright medium orange. Front of head with heavy black streak on each side, distinctly separated from ocular margin, extending from level of middle of eye to frontoclypeal suture and then continuing onto sclerotized portion of clypeus, where it expands to cover lateral $\frac{1}{3}$; vertex with large brown postocular spot on each side, reaching ocular margin and extending more than halfway to dorsal margin of head; underside of head with smaller brown spot on anterior margin next to base of maxilla, this spot produced laterally as brown suffusion encompassing antennal socket. Labrum orange, variably marked laterally with dark brown. Antenna black with segments I-II or I-III bright orange; IV sometimes suffused with orange basally. Maxilla dark brown except palpal segment II orange. Labium orange with fine lateral margin of mentum

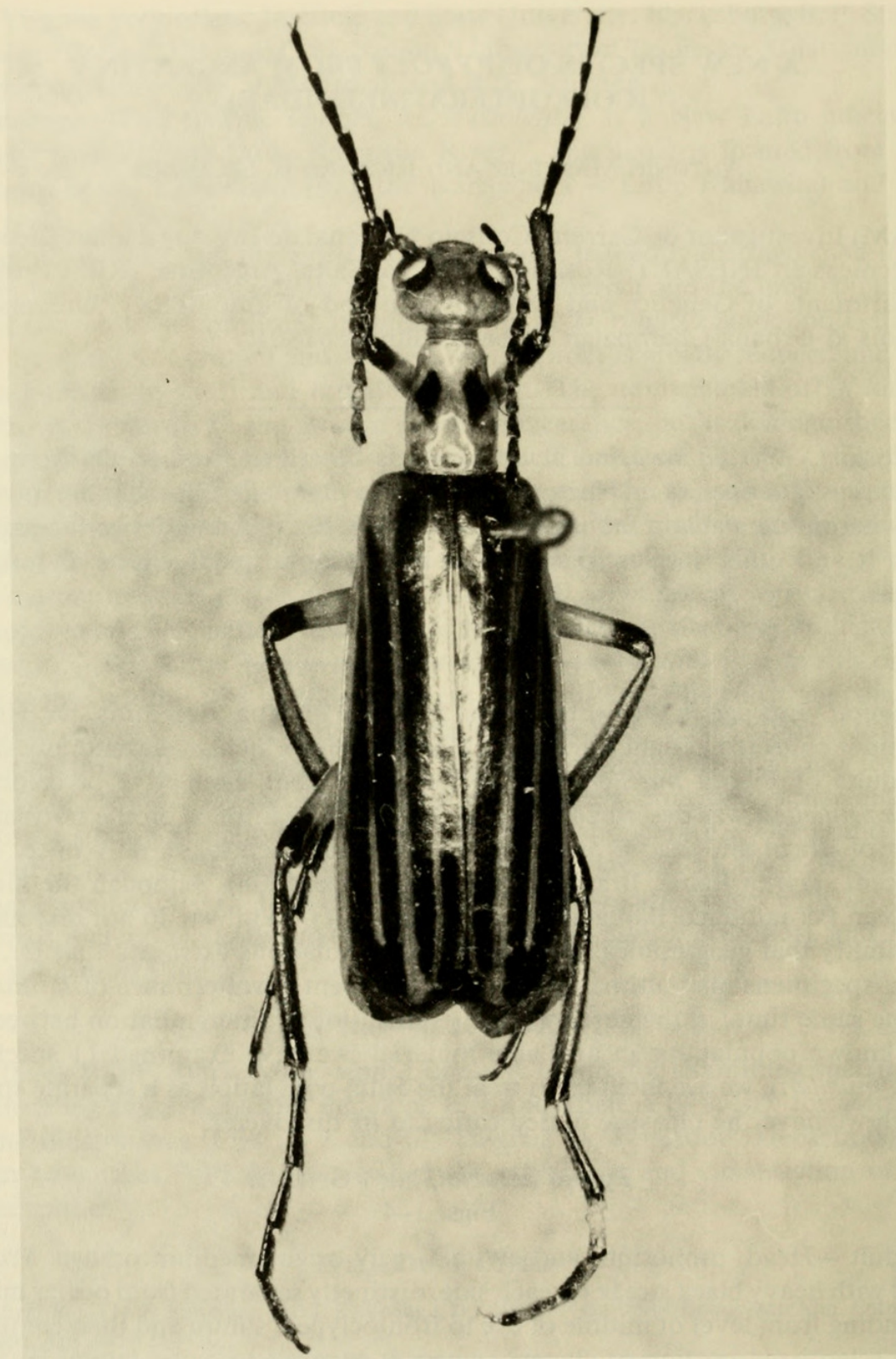
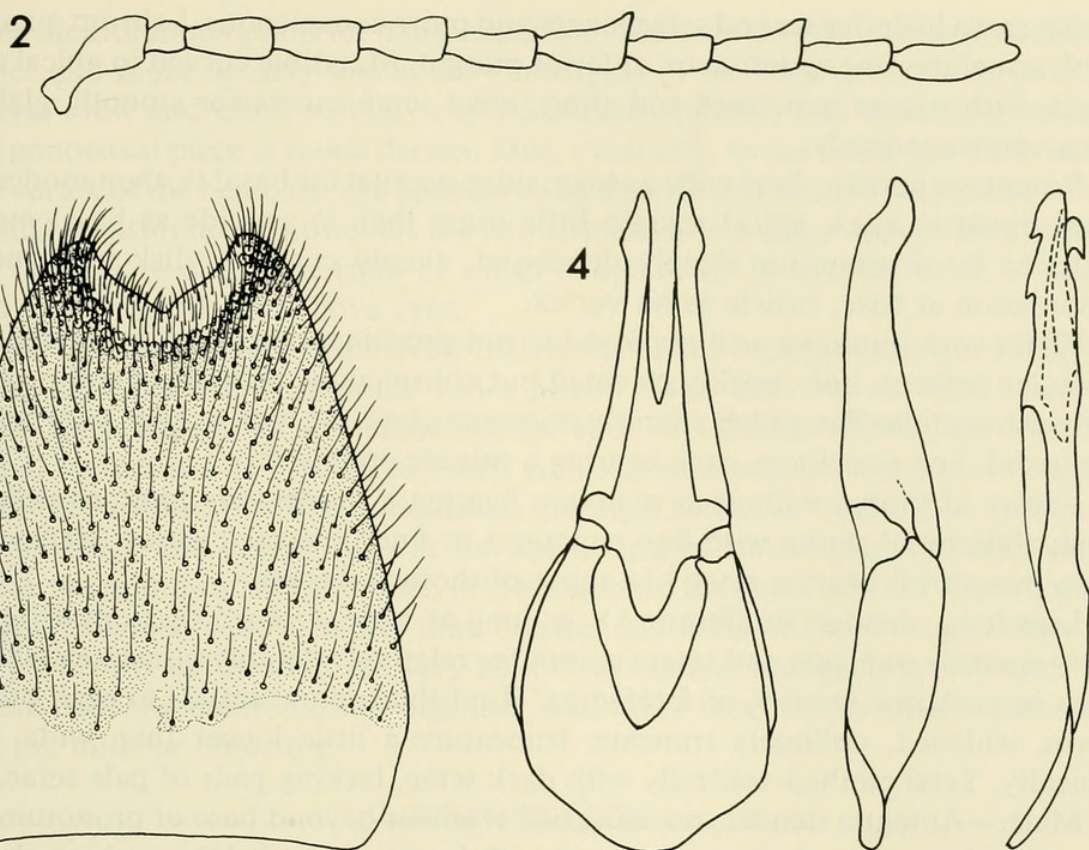


Fig. 1. *Pyrota horacioi*, male.

and entire palpal segment III dark brown. Pronotum with pair of elongate brown discal spots centered in apical $\frac{1}{3}$, these about $2 \times$ as long as wide, tapered apically and basally, less than $\frac{1}{2}$ as long as pronotum, separated from each other by about width of one spot, extending to basal $\frac{1}{3}$ of pronotum. Elytron with four long,



Figs. 2-4. *Pyrota horacioi*, male. 2, Antenna. 3, Sixth (visible) abdominal sternum. 4, Genitalia (ventral and lateral views of gonoforceps and lateral view of aedeagus).

narrow, brown vittae separated by costulae; space between lateralmost costula and lateral elytral margin lacking a vitta; inner pair of vittae arising from base of elytron, with innermost vitta weakened or broken near base; outer pair arising behind humerus; near apex of elytron, where costulae disappear, inner pair of vittae fuse together, as do lateral pair, without reaching apex (fusion of inner pair incomplete on one elytron in one specimen). Venter dark brown except for prosternum, which is yellow brown. Coxae dark brown. Trochanters orange, with black basal spot. Femora orange with apical $\frac{1}{4}$ dark brown. Tibiae largely or entirely dark brown; midtibia may be lightened to chestnut medianly on posterior surface; hindtibia distinctly lightened medianly on posterior surface, just appreciably so on anterior surface. Tarsi dark brown. Setae of body golden yellow; setae of legs golden yellow on orange areas, piceous on brown areas. Length: 16 mm.

Head, pronotum, and elytra smooth, waxy, very shiny, appearing impunctate (or nearly so) and glabrous under low magnification; venter of body and the legs finely punctate, conspicuously pubescent.

Head with length (to base of labrum) $1\frac{1}{10} \times$ width across eyes, which is nearly $2\frac{1}{2} \times$ interocular distance (ID); dorsal margin above eyes less evenly rounded than in *P. muelleri*, tempora weak but distinct; eye large, prominent, width about $\frac{2}{3}$ length, nearly $\frac{9}{10}$ ID; front weakly convex between antennae, with deep lateral depression on each side between eyes, not reaching ocular margin; vertex with few scattered, very fine punctures, each bearing an extremely short seta, elsewhere

punctures a little denser and setae longer and more conspicuous. Labrum quadrate, with a shallow emargination on anterior margin. Mandible curved in apical third. Neck with rugose punctures and short, erect setae except for smooth, glabrous area ventromedianly.

Pronotum narrow, $\frac{2}{3}$ as wide as long; sides parallel for basal $\frac{1}{2}$, then moderately convergent to apex; apical margin little more than $\frac{1}{2}$ as wide as basal margin; anterior $\frac{1}{2}$ of pronotum deeply depressed, evenly concave; disk with median impression at base; cuticle as on vertex.

Elytra with humerus well marked but not prominent; apex well rounded; four costulae present, only weakly elevated but conspicuous because of color; surface between costulae flat, rather sparsely micropunctate and with evenly, very sparsely scattered, fine punctures, each bearing a minute erect seta.

Venter of thorax with each puncture bearing a moderately long, conspicuous seta; abdominal sterna with fine punctures or fine transverse striae (transversely torn punctures) bearing setae like those of thoracic venter.

Legs long, slender; midfemur $5\times$ as long as wide. Orange portions of femora very sparsely punctate and setate except for relatively densely punctate and setate area in posterior basal $\frac{2}{5}$ of forefemur. Hindtibial spurs similar to each other in form, widened, obliquely truncate; truncature a little longer than wide, acute apically. Tarsi clothed ventrally with dark setae, lacking pads of pale setae.

Male.—Antenna slender, reaching one segment beyond base of pronotum; segments lacking ventral edge; segment I with length about $\frac{4}{5}$ ID, reaching about $\frac{1}{3}$ across eye; II $\frac{1}{2}$ as long as I; III–X each $\frac{7}{10}$ as long as I, about $2\times$ as long as wide, moderately compressed, with anterior face flattened or slightly concave; XI slightly longer than I; VII, IX, and XI strongly produced anteroapically to distinct point; V swollen anteroapically but not drawn to point. Maxillary and labial palpi normal, not expanded or otherwise modified; maxillary palpal segment IV $3\times$ as long as wide. Foretarsus normal, not expanded or distorted. Pygidium with posterior margin broadly curved, with small notch medianly. Fifth (visible) abdominal sternum feebly emarginate; sixth with deep V-shaped emargination, margin rather widely membranous, closely set with long setae, with some even longer setae on lateral apices. Genitalia with gonostylus (paramere) in ventral view relatively slender, expanded laterally at apex to form large, fleshy “foot,” in ventral view rather thick, curved abruptly dorsad at apex, which is obtuse; surface of apical region of gonostylus densely microspinose dorsally, sparsely so laterally; distal separation of gonostyli narrow; gonocoxal (basal) piece with deep, V-shaped emargination that extends beyond middle, emarginate area partly filled by tongue-like extension of basal margin of fused gonostyli; aedeagus slender, straight except at base, with two well-developed ventral hooks of nearly equal size; dorsal hook strongly recurved, not spinose.

Female.—Unknown.

Type material.—Holotype male and two paratype males from Pichanal, Departamento de Orán, Provincia de Salta, Argentina, March 1968, Horacio Martínez. Holotype and one paratype in Martínez collection, Buenos Aires; one paratype in Selander collection, Urbana, Illinois.

Discussion.—The species is immediately distinguished in the adult stage from all other species of *Pyrota* Dejean by its quadrivittate elytral color pattern. The metasternum is somewhat less densely punctate and setate than in *Pyrota muel-*

leri, the membranous posterior marginal area of the male sixth abdominal sternum is wider and more densely setate, the gonostylus of the male genitalia is thicker in lateral view and more strongly curved dorsad apically, and the emargination of the gonocoxal piece is much deeper. Due, evidently, to the more quadrate form of the vertex of the head, the eye appears to be slightly smaller and less prominent. By actual measurement, however, the two species do not differ appreciably in our small samples in either the ratio of width of eye to ID or that of width of head across eyes to width just above eyes.

Pyrota muelleri is more extensively melanistic on the head, pronotum, and legs, and the dark color is commonly more nearly black than brown. The head is entirely black except for a median orange spot of variable size on the vertex; antennal segments I–II or I–III are only suffused with orange, not a pure, bright orange; the labrum, maxilla, and labium are dark brown or black. The pronotal spots are black and extend to near the apical and basal margins; typically each has near the middle a lateral branch projecting onto the deflexed side. The elytron is a light brownish yellow, rather than orange, and lacks vittae, although there is usually a brown suffusion at the very base. The femoral orange area is limited to no more than the basal $\frac{1}{2}$ of the segment, and there is no lightly colored area on either the mid- or hindtibia.

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