SYNONYMIC NOTE ON COELOXENUS GUENTHERI WASMANN (COLEOPTERA, CARABIDAE)

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Through the courtesy of Prof. J. K. A. van Boven, curator of the Wasmann and Willemse collections (Naturhistorisch Museum, Maastricht, Holland), I have been able to study the types of Coeloxenus guentheri Wasmann. This genus and species of myrmecophile carabid was very briefly described by Wasmann in his "Ameisenmimikry" (1925:75), who noted his intention to describe it more completely later. This never happened, and therefore Coeloxenus is very poorly characterized, and almost unrecognizable.

Coeloxenus guentheri was not listed in the supplement to the Coleopterorum Catalogus (1933:1677). Blackwelder (1944) listed the genus and species twice, on page 70 in the tribe Orthogoniini (to which the new genus had been assigned by Wasmann), and on page 72 under "incertae sedis". Blackwelder and later authors completely overlooked the following statement by van Emden (1936:255): "...Physea scitosa Chaud., die Wasmann (1925) bereits von Atta besass und als deren groesste bis dahin bekannte Symphile erwahnte (freilich ohne sie und ihre richtige systematische Stellung zu erkennen, so dass er sie als Coeloxenus Guentheri kurz neu beschrieb)". Van Emden does not mention whether or not he had seen the type of Wasmann's species, however, as shall be seen, he was right.

Two "types" of Coeloxenus guentheri are preserved in Wasmann's collection. They bear the following data: "b. Atta sexdens L. (C. Guenther!) Tapera (Pernambuco) 27.9.23" (Tapera is a railroad station about 35 km west of Recife). The identification label on each specimen is different, one reading "Coeloxenus Guentheri Wasm., n.g. n. sp. Typus", and the other one "Coeloxenus atticola n.g. n. sp. Typus". These two specimens are obviously conspecific and the latter name was probably a manuscript name which Wasmann replaced later by guentheri. Both speci-
mens were most probably used by Wasmann at the time of his drafting the original description, although he did not mention how many individuals were studied.

I have compared these "types" with material of Physea setosa Chaudoir from Villarrica, Paraguay (in the Museum of Comparative Zoology), and no differences are apparent, thus proving van Emden was correct in suggesting their synonymy in 1936.

Accordingly, the taxonomic status of Coeloxenus Wasmann, as a synonym of Physea Brullé, is settled. Consequently, true Orthogoniini, the Old World tribe of Carabidae to which Coeloxenus had been assigned by Wasmann, do not occur in the New World.

Jeannel (1946:47) with reference to Physea states: "Les quelques espèces connues du genre Physea Brullé sont sans doute toutes myrmécophiles...". There really seems to be no doubt about the myrmecophilous habits of Physea; however, a search in the literature showed that actually only one of the six species (setosa Chaudoir) has been collected with Atta sexdens Linnaeus (see Wasmann, 1925:75 and van Emden, 1936:251).

References


