

The first larval description in the genus *Diaphorocera* Heyden (Coleoptera: Meloidae: Cerocomini): *D. chrysoprasis* Fairmaire

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Abstract

The first instar larva of *Diaphorocera chrysoprasis* Fairmaire, 1863, a Western Saharan species, is described and figured for the first time. Adults of *D. chrysoprasis* were collected in Tunisia and larvae were reared *ex ovo* under laboratory conditions. Both egg and triungulin are described and illustrated by SEM and light microscope. The triungulin shows a campodeiform morphology, typical of non phoretic Meloinae. From the comparison between the first instar larvae of *Cerocoma*, the single other genus of the tribe Cerocomini whose larvae were known, and *Diaphorocera*, some distinctive characters are recognised. The phylogenetic placement of the tribe Cerocomini within the family is discussed.

Key words: Meloidae, Meloinae, Cerocomini, *Diaphorocera chrysoprasis*, first instar larva

Introduction

The family Meloidae (Coleoptera, Tenebrionoidea) includes phytophagous beetles that feed on leaves and/or flowers of several plant families. They are characterised by cantharidin production and hypermetamorphic development, except in the primitive subfamily Eleticinae. Immatures feed on the provisions and larvae of Hymenoptera (Apoidea), or on grasshopper (Acridoidea) eggs. First instar larvae, also known as "triungulins", are campodeiform (except in the primitive subfamily Eleticinae: Pinto *et al.*, 1996; Bologna *et al.*, 2001), very active and specialised in dispersion and food searching (Bologna, 1991). In several genera, belonging to various subfamilies, triungulins are highly modified by phoresy and show striking morphological convergence (Bologna & Pinto, 2001).

Four subfamilies are recognised within the family: Eleticinae, Meloinae, Tetraonycinae and Nemognathinae (Pinto & Bologna, 1999; Bologna & Pinto, 2002). The