



A new species of *Merobruchus* Bridwell near *Merobruchus boucheri* Kingsolver (Coleoptera:Chrysomelidae:Bruchinae)¹

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Abstract

A new species, *Merobruchus santiaoi* Ribeiro-Costa **sp. nov.**, is described from Brazil and Bolivia in seeds of *Pithecellobium scalare* Griseb (= *P. tortum* Mart.). Comparisons are made with its closely related species, *M. boucheri* Kingsolver 1980, presenting illustrations for both including male genitalia.

Key words: Bruchinae, *Merobruchus*, new species, taxonomy, *Pithecellobium scalare*, Neotropical Region, Brazil

Introduction

The American genus *Merobruchus* Bridwell has been included in a group of genera *Merobruchus* in the tribe Bruchini Pic, the largest tribe of Bruchinae Latreille. This group is composed of *Caryedes* Hummel, *Ctenocolum* Kingsolver & Whitehead, *Gibbobruchus* Pic, *Meibomeus* Bridwell, *Merobruchus*, *Penthobruchus* Kingsolver and *Pygiopachymerus* Pic (Whitehead and Kingsolver 1975; Silva 2005).

Merobruchus was proposed in a dichotomous key, by Bridwell (1946). He designated *Bruchus julianus* Horn, 1894 as the type species and did not assign additional species to the genus. In the same year, 1946, Bradley transferred *Bruchus major* Fall, 1912 to *Merobruchus*.

Kingsolver's contributions (1980, 1988) were the most relevant to study of genus *Merobruchus*. He treated the fauna of United States, Central America and West Indies. In the first paper Kingsolver (1980) described six species, and in the second seven more, besides redescribing 13 species including the six ones described earlier. Moreover, Kingsolver transferred the Brazilian species *Pseudopachymerus pickeli* Pic, 1927 to *Merobruchus* (1988).

There are currently 24 species in *Merobruchus*. Three of them, *M. boucheri* Kingsolver, 1980, *M. bicoloripes* (Pic, 1927), *M. paquetae* Kingsolver, 1980, have been recorded from Brazil and other New World countries; a fourth, *M. pickeli* (Pic, 1927) is known only from Brazil. Specimens from Brazil previously identified as *M. boucheri* were compared to paratypes of *M. boucheri* (Mexico, Costa Rica) and found to be a distinct undescribed species.

Therefore, the goal of this paper is to describe this new species and perform a detailed comparison to its closest relative, *M. boucheri*, to avoid future misidentifications and so provide a valid name for future papers on comparative morphology and cladistic analyses of the *Merobruchus* group of genera.

Even then, with one more species described for *Merobruchus*, the number of species recorded from Brazil continues to be four, since *M. boucheri* should be considered as restricted to North and Central America.