



Additional data to the genus *Baezia* with description of a new species from a cave on El Hierro, Canary Islands (Coleoptera, Curculionidae, Molytinae)

RAFAEL GARCÍA¹, HERIBERTO LÓPEZ² & PEDRO OROMÍ²

¹*C/. San Miguel 9, 38700 Santa Cruz de La Palma, La Palma, Canary Islands*

²*Depto. Biología Animal, Universidad de La Laguna, 38206 La Laguna, Tenerife, Canary Islands. E-mail: poromi@ull.es*

Abstract

The weevil *Baezia bimbache* **n. sp.** from El Hierro is described and compared to its closest allies. Some biological data are also provided, and considerations on the particular fauna of Cueva de la Curva lava tube are made. Additional records and comments as well as an identification key to the species of the genus are given.

Key words: Curculionidae, *Baezia bimbache* **n. sp.**, cave fauna, Canary Islands, identification key

Resumen

Se describe y compara con sus especies emparentadas la nueva especie de gorgojo *Baezia bimbache* de El Hierro. Se proporcionan datos biológicos y algunas consideraciones sobre la fauna del tubo volcánico Cueva de la Curva. Además, se aportan nuevos datos de distribución, comentarios faunísticos y una clave de identificación de las especies de este género.

Palabras clave: Curculionidae, *Baezia bimbache* **n. sp.**, fauna cavernícola, Islas Canarias, clave de identificación

Introduction

The genus *Baezia* Alonso Zarazaga and García, 1999 is endemic to the Canary Islands and includes small, closely related eyeless species apparently endogean and rhizophagous. The type species and first to be discovered was *Baezia litoralis* Alonso Zarazaga and García, 1999 occurring under stones on clayish soils at 4 to 20 m a.s.l. on coastal cliffs of Tenerife. The remaining three species have been found at higher altitudes in volcanic caves, mostly associated to the roots hanging inside lava tubes of La Palma: *Baezia vulcania* Alonso Zarazaga and García, 2002 was discovered in caves of the southern part of this island, *Baezia martini* García, 2003 is known from two caves in Cueva de las Cáscaras and Cueva de la Mamona in the northwest, and remains of a third species not yet described have been found in Cueva de Ciro in the northeast (García unpublished data). Although the only species so far known from Tenerife was found in a different habitat than those of La Palma, the other *Baezia* have similar morphological adaptations and can be considered as soil-dwelling (i.e. endogean) weevils. All *Baezia* are eyeless, but their small size and short antennae and legs are typical of endogean (i.e. edaphobitic) rather than hypogean (i.e. troglobitic) insects. In the Canary Islands these weevils and the also Molytinae *Oromia hephaestos* Alonso Zarazaga, 1987 are mostly found in caves, mainly because the lava tubes are shallow and closely connected to the overlying soil, in such way that the roots easily reach the caves. Only two of the species belonging to these endemic genera have never been collected in caves: *Bae-*