



A revision of the African species of *Odontolochini* Stebnicka & Howden, 1996 (Coleoptera: Scarabaeidae: Aphodiinae)

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Abstract

The taxonomic position and synonymy of 11 native afrotropical species of *Odontolochini* Stebnicka & Howden, 1996 are discussed and re-descriptions are provided. Lectotypes are here designated for *Odontolochus sulcatus* Endrödi, 1964 and *Loeblietus sulcatus* Endrödi, 1979. The genus *Loeblietus* Endrödi, 1973 is formally synonymized with *Odontolochus* Schmidt, 1916 and seven new species level synonyms are proposed: *Odontolochus chevalieri* Paulian, 1942 **syn. n.**, *O. parcepunctatus* Petrovitz, 1956 **syn. n.**, *O. sulcatus* Endrödi, 1964 **syn. n.**, and *Loeblietus sulcatus* Endrödi, 1979 **syn. n.** are found to be junior synonyms of *O. raffrayi* Paulian, 1942. *Odontolochus granulipennis* Petrovitz, 1956 **syn. n.** and *O. heyrovskyi* Balthasar, 1963 **syn. n.** are considered conspecific with *O. spinicollis* (Harold, 1871) and *Odontolochus elgonensis* Balthasar, 1961 **syn. n.** conspecific with *O. oberthueri* (Clouët, 1900). The name *Anodontolochus* Paulian, 1942 is determined to be unavailable as no type species was designated with the original description. A key to the 11 species of *Odontolochus* is provided, sexual dimorphic characters are described and illustrated for the first time, and a general diagnosis of the tribe on the world basis is included.

Key words: Scarabaeidae, Aphodiinae, *Odontolochini*, lectotypes, synonymy, equatorial Africa

Introduction

The relatively small tribe *Odontolochini* (Scarabaeidae: Aphodiinae) is noteworthy because of its apparent rarity, strikingly peculiar body form, and widely disjunct global distribution. The tribe currently includes seven genera with 25 species distributed in Australia (Stebnicka & Howden 1996), South America (Stebnicka 2003, Stebnicka & Galante 2007) and Africa (Endrödi 1964, 1967, 1971, 1973). Skelley (2007) summed up the present state of knowledge of the Neotropical *Odontolochini* in the context of the worldwide fauna of the tribe. Stebnicka (2009) transferred a single Asian species to the Eupariini that was long considered to be in the tribe *Odontolochini*.

While identifying and comparing the odontolochine specimens among materials from various collections, I found that African taxa are misinterpreted and need a careful revision. Previous interpretation of defining characters of particular species proved to be questionable with no reference to the existing, name-bearing types. It appeared necessary to revise these taxa in order to provide a reliable means of identification, to stabilize nomenclature through lectotype designations, and to improve the published record of species distributions. As a result of the present study, the total number of 18 names used for African *Odontolochini* decreases to 11 valid species names all placed in the genus *Odontolochus* Schmidt. These species are concentrated in the equatorial zone and ranging from Ethiopia in the east to Senegal in the west.

Members of the tribe *Odontolochini* are nearly pantropical in distribution but are apparently absent from tropical Asia. As suggested by Stebnicka & Howden (1996), it is replaced in the mentioned area with the morphologically similar and seemingly related psammidine genus *Odochilus* Harold (*Odochilinae* sensu