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A new species of southern African pollen beetle and discussion of the taxonomic position of *Jelinekigethes* Audisio & Cline, 2009 (Coleoptera: Nitidulidae: Meligethinae)

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Abstract

The pollen-beetle *Jelinekigethes dichromus* **n. sp.** from northern South Africa is described. The new species is closely related to the other known species of this genus, *J. danielssoni* (Audisio 1995) from southwestern South Africa. The taxonomic position of *Jelinekigethes* is discussed in the context of presumably related African and Oriental meligethine genera. Larval host plants of both species of *Jelinekigethes* remain unknown, although important cues suggest a relationship of *J. danielssoni* with the problematic and isolated family Montiniaceae.

Key words: South Africa, Limpopo province, host-plants, Montiniaceae, *Montinia*

Introduction

Meligethes Stephens, 1830, was the largest genus of the beetle family Nitidulidae, and included worldwide some 600 pollen-feeding species, associated with flowers of several botanical families. A preliminary re-examination of the genus-level taxonomy of the subfamily Meligethinae (Audisio *et al.* 2009) and recent molecular data (Trizzino *et al*. 2009) strongly supported the delimitation of *Meligethes* into a monophyletic clade including only the *Meligethes atratus* (Olivier) and *M. denticulatus* (Heer) groups, with the remaining 500+ species transferred to other previously described and new genera. Thus *Meligethes* 'sensu stricto' comprises ~40 described and undescribed species distributed mostly in the Eastern Palaearctic, and associated with Rosaceae during larval development. *Jelinekigethes* Audisio & Cline, 2009 was recently described to accommodate a strongly isolated species from southwestern South Africa, i.e. *J. danielssoni* (Audisio 1995), having unclear phylogenetic position and unknown biology (Audisio 1995; Audisio *et al.* 2009).

This paper describes a new southern African species of *Jelinekigethes* recently discovered in Limpopo (Northern South Africa, *olim* Northern Transvaal), with a discussion on the phylogenetic position of *Jelinekigethes* within Meligethinae as inferred from molecular, morphological, and ecological data. The present paper is part of an ongoing series of revisions of the Southern African species of the subfamily Meligethinae as a whole.

Material

The new species described herein was collected during a recent fieldtrip to South Africa (February–March 2007) organized by the senior author and our colleague Professor Maurizio Biondi, Department of Environmental Sci-

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