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**The first subanophthalmous species of *Oxypoda*
Mannerheim from the Canary Islands
(Coleoptera: Staphylinidae: Aleocharinae)**

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ASSING, V. (2005). La primera especie subanoftalma de *Oxypoda* Mannerheim de las islas Canarias (Coleoptera: Staphylinidae: Aleocharinae). *VIERAEA* 33: 151-154.

RESUMEN: Se describe e ilustra *Oxypoda (Baeoglana) caeca* sp. n, la primera especie subanoftalma de este género. Fue descubierta en el Medio Subterráneo Superficial (MSS) de El Cedro, La Gomera (islas Canarias).

Palabras clave: Coleoptera, Staphylinidae, *Oxypoda*, *Baeoglana*, islas Canarias, taxonomía, nueva especie, hábitat endogeo, subanoftalmo.

ABSTRACT: *Oxypoda (Baeoglana) caeca* sp. n., the first subanophthalmous representative of the genus from the Canary Islands, is described and illustrated. It was discovered in the mesocavernous shallow substratum (MSS) of El Cedro, La Gomera (Canary Islands).

Key words: Coleoptera, Staphylinidae, *Oxypoda*, *Baeoglana*, Canary Islands, taxonomy, new species, MSS, endogean habitat, subanophthalmous.

INTRODUCTION

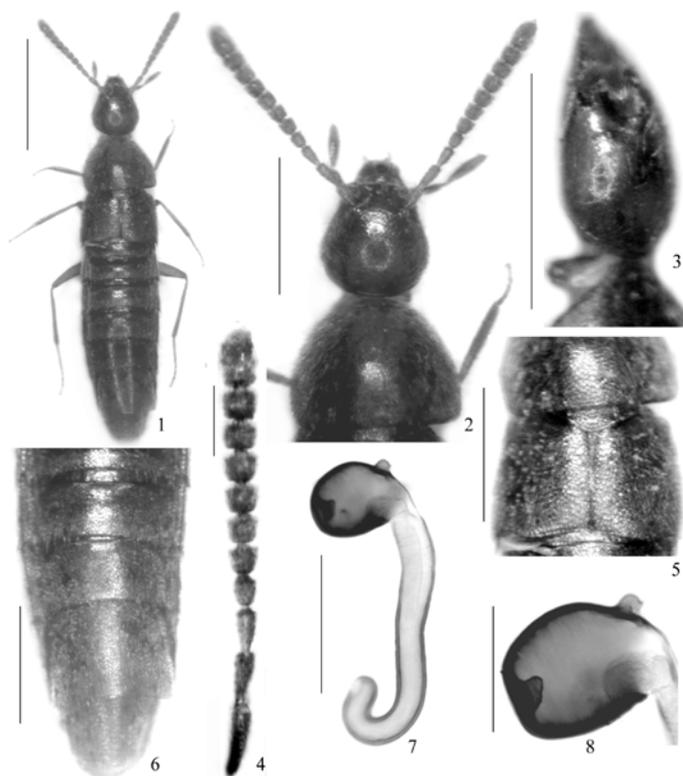
Oxypoda Mannerheim, 1830, one of the most diverse genera of Staphylinidae, is currently represented in the Palaearctic region by nearly 400 species. The Canarian archipelago is inhabited by 25 described species, 20 of which are island endemics. Thus, *Oxypoda* includes more Canarian endemics than any other genus of Staphylinidae. The *Oxypoda* species of the Canary Islands belong to five subgenera, among them *Baeoglana* Thomson, 1867, which includes six Canarian endemics, four from Tenerife and two from La Gomera (Zerche, 1996; Assing & Wunderle, 1999; Machado & Oromí, 2000; Assing, 2003). According to Bordoni & Oromí (1998), *Oxypoda* species have not been observed to be associated with caves. Similarly, endogean species with almost or completely reduced eyes are, to my knowledge, unknown, except for *O. weiratheri* Bernhauer, 1929.

Quite recently, Pedro Oromí, La Laguna, sent me two subanophthalmous aleocharines for examination, which were collected with an MSS (= mesocavernous shallow substratum) trap in La Gomera. They proved to refer to an undescribed species of *Oxypoda*, subgenus *Baeoglana*, the first blind representative not only of the subgenus, but also of the genus as a whole.

SPECIES DESCRIPTION

Oxypoda (Baeoglana) caeca sp. n. (Figs. 1-8)

Holotype ♀: La Gomera, Campamento Viejo, El Cedro MSS, 21-VI-2004, H. López leg. / Holotypus ♀ *Oxypoda caeca* sp. n. det. V. Assing 2005 (deposited in Departamento de Biología Animal - Zoología, Universidad de La Laguna). **Paratype** ♀ [teneral, heavily damaged]: same data as holotype (author's collection).



Figs. 1 - 8: *Oxypoda caeca* sp. n., holotype. 1: habitus; 2: head and pronotum; 3: head in lateral view; 4: antenna; 5: elytra; 6: abdomen; 7: spermatheca; 8: capsule of spermatheca. Scale bars: 1: 1.0 mm; 2-3, 5-6: 0.5 mm; 4, 7: 0.1 mm; 8: 0.05 mm.

Description: Measurements and ratios of holotype: head length from anterior margin of clypeus (HL): 0.47 mm; head width (HW): 0.42 mm; pronotal length (PL): 0.51 mm; pronotal width: 0.65 mm; elytral length at suture from apex of scutellum to posterior margin (EL): 0.33 mm; combined width of elytra (EW): 0.68 mm; length of metatibia (TiL): 0.53 mm; length of metatarsus (TaL): 0.47 mm; total length: 3.3 mm; HL/HW: 1.11; PW/HW: 1.54; PW/PL: 1.26; EL/PL: 0.65; EW/PW: 1.06; TiL/TaL: 1.13.

Habitus as in Fig. 1. Coloration almost uniformly brown, with the posterior margins of the anterior abdominal segments, the abdominal apex, and the appendages indistinctly paler.

Head of ovoid shape; eyes reduced to minute rudiments, without ommatidia and pigmentation (Fig. 3); microsculpture shallow, but distinct; puncturation very shallow and ill-defined. Antennae moderately incrassate apically, preapical segments barely 1.5 times as wide as long (Fig. 4). Maxillary palpus of similar morphology as in other species of the subgenus, though even more elongated than is usually the case.

Pronotum much larger than head (see ratio PW/HW and Fig. 2), about 1.25 times as wide as long, maximal width behind middle; posterior angles broadly rounded; puncturation very fine and dense; pubescence short and depressed.

Elytra only indistinctly wider than pronotum (see ratio EW/PW and Fig. 5) and at suture about 0.65 times as long as pronotum; puncturation dense, weakly granulose, and slightly more distinct than that of pronotum. Hind wings reduced. Legs long and slender; metatarsus almost as long as metatibia (see ratio TiL/TaL); metatarsomere I very long, nearly as long as the combined length of metatarsomeres II-V.

Abdomen tapering posteriad (Fig. 6); tergites III-V with very shallow anterior impressions; puncturation extremely dense and fine; pubescence very dense, short, and depressed; posterior margin of tergite VII without palisade fringe.

♂: unknown.

♀: posterior margin of sternite VIII convex and with rather long modified marginal setae; spermatheca as in Figs. 7-8.

Etymology: The specific epithet is a Latin adjective and denotes “blind”.

Comparative notes: *Oxypoda caeca* is readily distinguished from all other species of the subgenus by the almost completely reduced eyes, large body size, reduced hind wings, and the absence of a palisade fringe at the posterior margin of tergite VII. From the two (much smaller!) *Baeoglana* species occurring in La Gomera, *O. (B.) gillerforsii* Zerche, 1996 and *O. (B.) wunderlei* Zerche, 1996, it is additionally separated by relatively longer legs, antennae, and maxillary palpi, as well as by the different shape of the spermatheca. For illustrations of the spermathecae of *O. gillerforsii* and *O. wunderlei* see Zerche (1996). Assessing the phylogenetic affiliations with other Canarian representatives of *Baeoglana* is difficult, since the male sexual characters are unknown.

Distribution and bionomics: *Oxypoda caeca* is the 26th representative (21st endemic) of the genus to become known from the Canarian archipelago and the third subanophthalmous staphylinid to become known from the Gomeran MSS. The other two Gomeran staphylinids with strongly reduced eyes occurring in this endogean stratum are *Scopaeus bifossicapitata* (Outerelo & Oromí, 1987) and *Domene jonayi* Hernández &

Medina, 1990. *Alevonota sollemnis* Assing, 1999, a fourth species with somewhat reduced eyes, inhabits the deep humus layers of the proper soil of the laurisilvan forest floor. There is little doubt that *Oxypoda caeca* is confined to the MSS of La Gomera, as is suggested not only by the adaptive reductions of eyes, wings, and palisade fringe at the posterior margin of tergite VII, but also by the elongated body appendages, the relatively large body size, and finally by the absence of records from other habitats.

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