

## A NEW GENUS AND SPECIES OF TERMITOPHILOUS STAPHYLINIDAE (Coleoptera) ASSOCIATED WITH *TERMES* IN AUSTRALIA<sup>1</sup>

By David H. Kistner<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this paper is to describe a new genus and species of termitophilous Staphylinidae from Australia. This is a highly unusual staphylinid and belongs to the tribe Aleocharini of the subfamily Aleocharinae, because of its 5-5-5 tarsal formula. Its mouthparts would place this new genus near the genus *Ocalea* Erichson but it is easily distinguished from *Ocalea* by its pronotal shape with its deep fossa and the peculiar abdominal segment IX with its median lobe developed into a pointed tube. One does not like to erect a separate tribe for a single genus and species, but this genus clearly deserves this status. Description of a separate tribe will be deferred until later when more of the aleocharine tribes have been revised.

Very few termitophiles have been reported from nests of the genus *Termes* Linnaeus in the past. So far as I know, the staphylinid, *Millotoca mirotermitidis* Paulian (1948) reported from a nest of *Termes baculiformis* (Holmgren) in Madagascar is the only other species. Since *Millotoca* belongs to a tribe and subtribe usually associated with the Nasutitermitinae, most of us agree with Seevers (1957: 120) who thought this did not represent the true host of the species. If this ultimately proves true, then the species described below would represent the first termitophile associated with *Termes*.

The genus, *Melvilloxenus*, is unrelated to any other termitophilous group and hence represents an entirely new invasion of termite nests by yet another group of staphylinids.

### Genus *Melvilloxenus* Kistner, new genus

Not very closely related to any known genus. Distinguishable from all other aleocharine genera by the large fossa in the pronotum and the pointed shape of the median lobe of abdominal segment IX.

Overall shape as in fig. 1. Head capsule slightly wider than long. Epicranium evenly rounded anteriorly, not produced into a long triangle anteriorly. Head capsule otherwise oval in shape with large oval eyes with many laterally and anteriorly directed facets. Antennae 11-segmented, shaped as in fig. 2D, with the 1st segment enlarged and rounded and all segments with distinct and naked petioles. Antennae inserted between eyes, very near to the medial border of eyes and between the eyes and the anterior tentorial pits. Gula with sides subparallel anteriorly; diverging slightly posteriorly. Submentum expanded anteriorly, fused to gula.

1. This study was financed in part by the National Science Foundation (Grant No. GB-6284).
2. Shinner Institute for the Study of Interrelated Insects, Department of Biology, Chico State College, Chico, Calif. 95926

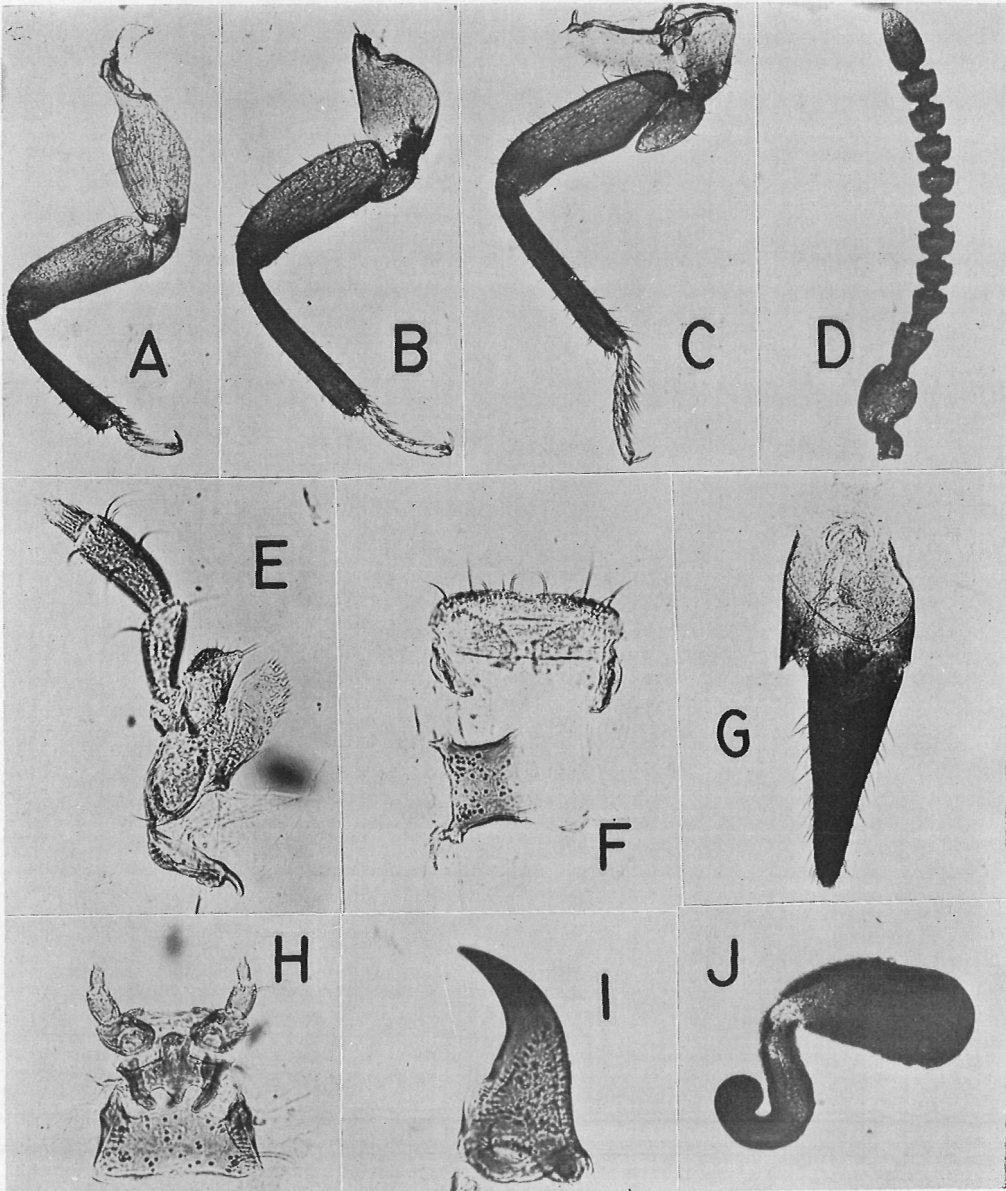


Fig. 2. *Melvilloxenus retmes*: A, proleg; B, mesoleg; C, metaleg; D, antenna; E, maxilla; F, labrum; G, abdominal segment IX; H, labium; I, mandible; J, spermatheca. Scale arbitrary.

determined as *Termes melvillensis* (Hill) by Mr F. J. Gay. Melville Island is the type locality of this termite. The termite sample is in the Australian National Insect Collection, Canberra.

*Acknowledgments*: I wish to thank Mr F. J. Gay, Division of Entomology, C.S.I.R.O.,

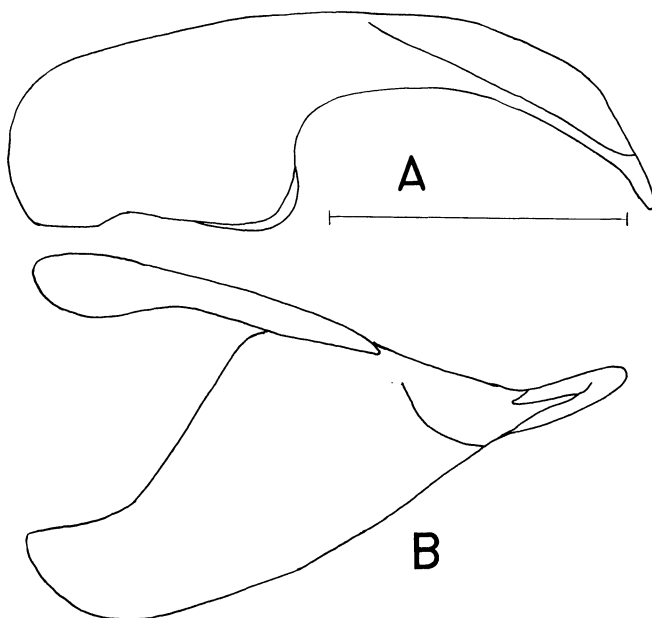


Fig. 3. ♂ genitalia of *Melvilloxenus retmes*: A, median lobe; B, lateral lobe. Scale represents 0.25 mm.

Canberra, Australia, for the privilege of studying these specimens. For technical assistance I am indebted to Mr David Harwood, Miss Lynette Hawver, Mr Herbert Jacobson, Miss Lynn Royce, and Miss Virginia Sleppy, all of Chico State College.

#### LITERATURE CITED

- Paulian, Reynaud** 1948. Un remarquable Staphylinide termitophile de Madagascar (Coléoptères). *Mém. Inst. Sci. Madagascar* **1A**: 15-17, 8 fig.
- Seevers, Charles H.** 1957. A monograph on the termitophilous Staphylinidae (Coleoptera). *Fieldiana Zool.* **40**: 1-334, 42 fig.