



Redescription of the Hispaniolan ladybird genus *Bura* Mulsant (Coleoptera: Coccinellidae) and justification for its transfer from Coccidulinae to Sticholotidinae

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Abstract

The Hispaniolan genus *Bura* Mulsant is removed from Coccidulinae and placed in Sticholotidinae. The characteristics which justify this transfer are discussed and an historical review of the classification of the Sticholotidinae is presented. *Bura* is diagnosed and redescribed, and its affinities to other Sticholotidini are discussed. Illustrations of key generic characters are provided.

Key words: taxonomy, phylogeny, Coccinellidae, Sticholotidinae, Coccidulinae, Hispaniola

Introduction

The ladybirds of Hispaniola comprise a neglected fauna whose critical study promises to bring to light many new and interesting forms. Nonetheless, the authors were surprised to encounter in recently collected material a rather abundant and good sized (2.8–3.2 mm) metallic green to blue sticholotidine that was not listed among the documented species from the island. This puzzling omission was soon explained when a matching series from the Smithsonian National Insect Collection labeled "*Bura cuprea* Mulsant" was discovered with curated material placed in the subfamily Coccidulinae.

In the current work, we discuss the features of *Bura* Mulsant that justify its transfer from Coccidulinae to Sticholotidinae, speculate on circumstances that led to its prior misclassification, and highlight current problems in the delineation of the aforementioned ladybird subfamilies.

Historical review

Ladybird higher classification suffers from the presence of para- and polyphyletic taxa (Vandenberg 2002). These problems are especially prevalent with the so-called "primitive" subfamilies (Sticholotidinae, Coccidulinae), and with the fauna of poorly studied regions like the Neotropics. Both of these conditions have evidently factored into the current misplacement of the endemic Hispaniolan genus *Bura*.

Most contemporary concepts of Sticholotidinae derive from the work of Sasaji (1968, 1971) who recognized four tribes within this subfamily: Sticholotini (=Sticholotidini, emended by Gordon 1977), Shirozuel-