Article

A revision of the genus *Protomicroplitis* Ashmead (Hymenoptera, Braconidae, Microgastrinae), with the description of a new species

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Abstract

The New World genus *Protomicroplitis* is revised. One new species is described from Central America, a dichotomous key and extensive illustrations for the three known species are provided. The genus has a restricted distribution, from Canada (45° N) to Costa Rica (10° N). Two species of *Condica* (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae) are the only known hosts. The following new taxonomic and nomenclatural acts are made. **New species:** *Protomicroplitis centroamericanus* Fernandez-Triana. **New combinations:** *Diolcogaster alce* (Nixon, 1965), *Diolcogaster breviterebrus* Rao & Chalikwar, 1970, *Diolcogaster coenonymphae* (Watanabe, 1937), *Diolcogaster erro* (Nixon, 1965), *Diolcogaster glaphyra* (de Saeger, 1944), *Diolcogaster integra* (Wilkinson, 1929), *Diolcogaster medon* (Nixon, 1965), *Diolcogaster melleus* (Nixon, 1965), *Diolcogaster nephele* (Nixon, 1965), *Diolcogaster orientalis* (Rao & Chalikwar, 1970), *Diolcogaster pyrene* (Nixon, 1965), *Diolcogaster rugulosus* (Rao & Chalikwar, 1970), *Diolcogaster urios* (Nixon, 1965). **Revised combinations:** *Choeras tegularis* (Szépligeti, 1905), *Diolcogaster seriphus* (Nixon, 1965).

Key words: *Protomicroplitis*, Microgastrinae, Neotropical region, taxonomic revision, DNA barcoding

Introduction

The New World genus *Protomicroplitis* Ashmead, 1898 (Hymenoptera, Braconidae, Microgastrinae) has had a rather complex taxonomic history. After it was described by Ashmead (1898), it was considered a synonym of the genus *Microgaster* Latreille (Muesebeck 1922), then elevated again to generic status (Nixon 1965), and finally its limits revised by Mason (1981). Mason restricted *Protomicroplitis* to just two species from one of the many species groups defined by Nixon in 1965, while actually considering all other "*Protomicroplitis*" (*sensu* Nixon) as belonging to different genera, mostly the diverse genus *Diolcogaster* Ashmead [*Diolcogaster*, in turn, was resurrected as a genus by Mason in that same 1981 paper].

The type species of *Protomicroplitis* has also had a complicated taxonomic history. The original paper from Ashmead (1898: 167) described the genus in a key, without further information, and without associating any species to the genus. Two years later, Ashmead dealt with two species of *Protomicroplitis* in two separate works: he transferred the species *Microgaster mediatus* Cresson, 1865 to *Protomicroplitis* in a paper published in July 1900 (Ashmead 1900a: 292), and in another paper published in October 1900 he designated "*Protomicroplitis germani*" as the type species of the genus (Ashmead 1900b: 132). However, he did not provide any description of '*germani*' [Furthermore, that paper had a typographic error—as the species was intended to be named '*garmani*', after Professor Garman; Muesebeck (1922) provided the first description of that species and amended its specific name, the currently accepted named being *Diolcogaster garmani* (Ashmead)]. Because Ashmead (1900b) did not provide any description for *garmani*, Viereck (1914) correctly considered that name to be a *nomen nudum* and untenable to be the type species of *Protomicroplitis*. Viereck then selected *Protomicroplitis mediata* (Cresson, 1865) as the first species to be included in the genus and to become its type species, based on the other Ashmead's paper (Ashmead 1900a). This decision has been widely accepted (e.g., Nixon 1965, Mason 1981, Whitfield 1995, Yu *et al.* 2012).

Because the name "*Protomicroplitis*" has been associated in the past with two relatively large and diverse genera of Microgastrinae (*Microgaster* and *Diolcogaster*), confusion remains about the actual limits of