

REMARKS ON SOME AUSTRALIAN *LAIUS* GUÉR. (COL.: MALACHIIDAE).

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(Communicated by J. W. T. Armstrong.)

(One Text-figure.)

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Synopsis.

The Australian species hitherto placed in *Laius* are distributed amongst five genera of which two, *Troglolaius* and *Flabellolaius*, are described as new. Only one, possibly two, species are retained in *Laius*; the majority are transferred to *Dicranolaius* Champ.; two to *Simoderus* Ab.; the *armicollis* group is placed in the new genus *Troglolaius* and one new species added, while *microcerus* is made the genotype of *Flabellolaius*. One synonym is noted *L. rugulipennis* Fairm. = *nodicornis* Blackb.

This note has been made possible through the kindness of Mr. J. W. T. Armstrong, from whom I received a rich collection of Australian Malacoderms, and the comparison of Fairmaire's holotypes in the Paris Museum and paratypes of several Australian species in the British Museum, London, which I had the opportunity to study in 1950. This study showed that the genus *Laius* Guér. contains elements which are foreign to *Laius*, and this to the extent that only one, or eventually two, species will remain in this genus as far as can be seen from the material so far received. The different genera can be easily recognized in the male through the key which follows. I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Armstrong, of Nyngan, Dr. Balfour-Browne (British Museum), and Prof. Jeannel and M. G. Colas (Paris Museum), who helped me generously by lending me the material of the respective museums. As I am continuing my studies on *Laius* and allied forms, I should welcome the opportunity of examining additional material from Australia.

Key to Genera (males only).

1. Anterior tarsi simple in both sexes, second (third) joint of the antennae strongly dilated in male *Laius* Guér.
Anterior tarsal joints 2 thickened, prolonged over 3 and nigropectinate at the tip in male, second (third) joint of the antennae simple or strongly dilated 2
2. Second (third) antennal joint strongly dilated 3
Second (third) antennal joint simple 4
3. Remaining joints of antennae simple *Dicranolaius* Champ.
Remaining joints of antennae flabellate *Flabellolaius*, nov.
4. Prothorax simple, without apical process, head simple, vertex not excavated .. *Simoderus* Ab.
Prothorax with an apical process, hornlike, more or less extended over the head, head excavated at vertex *Troglolaius*, nov.

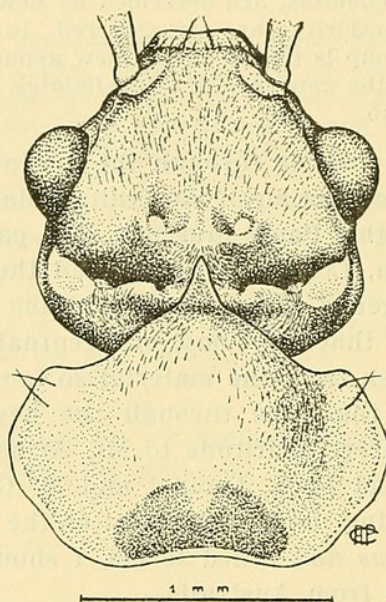
LAIUS Guér.

Among the material examined only *L. filamentarius* Lea was found to belong to this genus, but according to Lea's description *L. minutus* Lea might also belong to this section.

DICRANOLAIUS Champ.

To this genus all those forms belong which have the general appearance of *Laius* but the second anterior tarsal joint thickened, prolonged over the third and nigropectinate at the tip in the male. The great majority of the Australian forms of *Laius* belong in this group. Lea ("Revision of the Australian and Tasmanian Malacodermidae", *Trans. Ent. Soc. London*, 1909, p. 151) says "... and the second joint of the front tarsi in the males is always of peculiar shape and tipped with black". It can therefore be assumed that all the species mentioned in his revision, except the few referred to in the next two genera, will have to be placed in *Dicranolaius* Champ. The following

were added by me on account of the character of this tarsal character, as described: *pallidus* Lea, *janthinipennis* Lea, *sordidus* Lea, *bellulus* Guér., *flavifrons* Lea, *cinctus* Redt., *plagiaticollis* Fairm., *conicicornis* Blackb., *major* Blackb., *sinus* Lea, *villosus* Lea, *carus* Lea, *nidicola* Lea, *alleni* Lea, *orthodoxus* Lea, *tarsalis* Lea, *cavicornis* Lea, *cianocephalus* Lea, *rugiceps* Lea, *intermedius* Lea, *planiceps* Lea, *orcicornis* Lea, *intricatus* Lea, *trifoveicornis* Lea, *albomaculatus* Lea, *inconstans* Lea, *semimaculatus* Lea, *v-flavus* Lea, *maculiventris* Lea, *longus* Lea, *fimbriceps* Lea, *curvicornis* Lea, *tetrasticus* Lea, *c-purpureus* Lea, *acervatus* Lea, *flavonotatus* Lea, *stenotarsus* Lea, *concavifrons* Lea, *aulacophoroides* Lea and *rugulipennis* Fairm. The type of *L. rugulipennis* Fairm. (*Pet. Nouv.*, 2, 1877, p. 174) is identical with specimens of *L. nodicornis* Blackb. contained in the collection of the British Museum. *L. nodicornis* Blackb. (*Trans. R. Soc. S. Austr.*, 10, 1886, p. 263) must therefore be considered as synonymous with *rugulipennis* Fairm. (n. syn.).



Text-fig. 1.—*Troglolaius armstrongi*, n. sp.

SIMODERUS Ab.

This genus was erected by Abeille de Perrin in 1891 for one species from Siberia. The Australian *Laius flavopictus* Lea (*Trans. Ent. Soc. London*, 1909, pp. 152 and 166, figs. 148 and 149) and *L. effeminatus* Lea (*Trans. R. Soc. S. Austr.*, xlv, 1921, p. 86) have all the characters of *Simoderus* and must therefore be referred to it.

TROGLOLAUS, n. gen.

Several Australian species are characterized, in the male, by the prothorax provided with a hornlike process extended more or less over the head and the head excavated at the vertex with two or more foveae or impressions. Antennae, simple, 10-jointed, sometimes joints 8 to 10 curved and atrophied (*armicollis*). Second tarsal joint of anterior tarsi thickened, prolonged over third and nigropectinate at the tip. Last abdominal tergite deeply excavated in some species. The following species can be included in this genus: *Laius armicollis* (Lea), *Trans. Ent. Soc. London*, 1909, pp. 152 and 161, figs. 4 and 50; *Laius apicicollis* (Lea), *Trans. R. Soc. S. Austr.*, xli, 1917, p. 128; *Laius miraculus* (Lea), *l.c.*; *Laius sculptus* (Lea), *Trans. Ent. Soc. London*, 1909, pp. 152 and 162, figs. 61 and 144.

Genotype, *Troglolaius armicollis* (Lea).

TROGLOLAUS ARMSTRONGI, n. sp.

♂. Head black, sometimes with a faint bluish metallic shine, except genae, one very small spot on the outer border of the two small interocular foveae and hind border of the deep, transversal frontal excavation, reddish. Antennae black with the first and second joints rufous underneath. Prothorax orange-red with a square black basal spot.

Elytra bright metallic blue or purple with a transverse, complete antemedian orange-red fascia, which is a little broader on the sides and suture than in the middle of each elytron and a small orange-red spot on the suture at the apex. Legs and abdomen black with a faint metallic shine.

Head with the eyes almost as broad as the prothorax, two small interocular foveae and a quite deep transversal excavation on the front, less deep in the middle (Text-fig. 1). Antennae short, serrate. Prothorax moderately transverse, hind angles rounded, base feebly marginate, apex rounded and in the middle with a pointed process extended over base of head, punctures small and sparse, surface clothed with a few erect black hairs near the middle towards the pointed process, and several very long setae on the side border. Elytra almost parallel, strongly wrinkled, clothed with long blackish hair intermixed with shorter whitish pubescence.

♀. Head simple, slightly transversely depressed on the front.

Length, 4.5 mm.

Hab.—Bogan River, N.S.W., Australia, on *Acacia pendula* leg. J. W. T. Armstrong. Holotype and allotype in Australian Museum collection (Nos. K.67692-3), paratypes in my collection. I have much pleasure in dedicating this very interesting species to its discoverer.

T. armstrongi is very closely allied to *T. sculptus* (Lea) and can be easily separated by the orange spotted apex of the elytra, which is metallic in *sculptus*.

FLABELLOLAIUS, n. gen.

Genotype of this division is *Laius microcerus* (Lea) (*Trans. R. Soc. S. Austr.*, xli, 1917, p. 130), characterized by having the antennae strongly flabellate from the fourth joint onwards in male. Anterior tarsal joint 2 thickened, prolonged over 3 and nigropectinate at the tip.



Wittmer, W. 1952. "Remarks on some Australian *Laius* Guer. (Col.: Malachiidae)." *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales* 76, 187–189.

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