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A NEW *SPHAERICUS* WOLLASTON FROM THE AZORES (COLEOPTERA,
PTINIDAE)

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With 3 figures

SUMÁRIO. Neste trabalho é descrito uma nova espécie para a ciência, do género *Sphaericus* Wollaston, *S. velhocabrali* (Coleoptera, Ptinidae) colhida nos Açores.

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The vast majority of the known species of *Sphaericus* are endemics of Macaronesia. Most of them were described by Wollaston already in his works on the fauna of the Madeiras, the Canaries, or the Cape Verdes. Recently a representative of the Salvages has been recorded (Bellés 1982). The only one of the five archipelagos from where no endemic *Sphaericus* had yet been published is the Azores. By the find of the new species proposed below this gap will be filled.

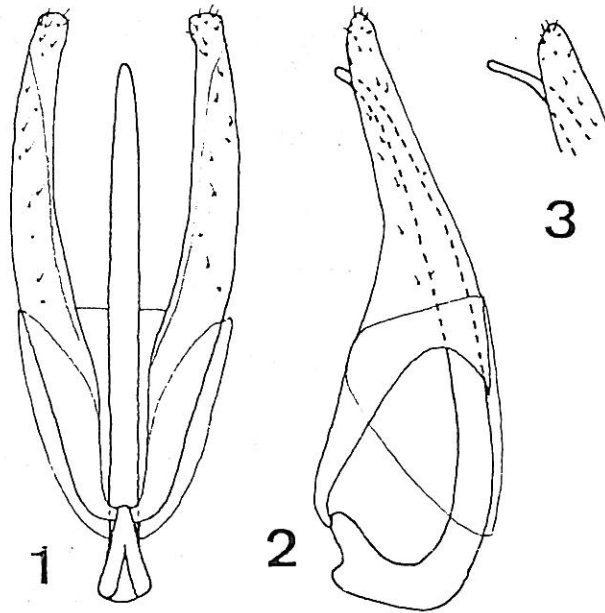
Sphaericus velhocabrali n. sp.

Figs. 1 and 2

Holotype, ♂ : Azores, Santa Maria, São Lourenço, 9.7.1982, G. Israelson (in author's collection). Paratypes : 13 specimens, same data as holotype; 2 specimens, same data but in the collection of T.-E. Leiler, Vallentuna.

The new species is named after the Portuguese seafarer Frei Gonçales Velho Cabral who is said to have been the first to go ashore on the island about 550 years ago.

Sphaericus velhocabrali belongs to a group of about a dozen species distinguished from other forms of the genus by their distinct and non-striate elytral macropunctuation. The group is known from all the Macaronesian archipelagos and also from Mauretania, the western part of the Mediterranean basin, and Syria. The richest diversification of forms is found in the Madeiras.



Figs. 1-3. — Aedeagus of *Sphaericus* spp.: 1 & 2. *S. velhocabrali* n.sp.; 3. *S. albopilosus* Wollaston. — 1: Ventral view. 2: Lateral view. 3: Lateral view (apical portion).

The new species is very similar to the variable *albopictus* Wollaston but the latter is perhaps smaller on average, the medial depression of the pronotum is absent or very short; the elytral punctuation usually coarser and less dense, at places often with a discernible tendency of the punctures to be arranged into longitudinal rows; the elytral scales are narrower and the hairs longer, amply surpassing the base of the following; the punctuation of the metasternum and the abdominal sternites 1-3 is less crowded and that of the sternites 4 and 5 not abruptly finer. The morphological variation of the aedeagus in *albopictus* is poorly known; in some males collected in Ponta de São Lourenço (Madeira proper) the

organ is relatively a little larger than in the Azorean species; moreover the penis and its apical portion (Fig. 3) appear somewhat prolonged as compared with those of *velhocabrali* (Fig. 2).

The sole *Sphaericus* previously recorded from the Azores is the widely introduced *gibboides* Boieldieu («*gibboides*» auctt.) well distinguished from the new species by denser vestiture and nonpunctate elytra.

Length 1.4-2.0, breadth 0.7-1.1 mm. Integument paler or darker reddish brown to blackish; elytra at middle with an often vaguely limited and moderately distinct transverse dark fascia dilated into a more or less regularly diamond-shaped sutural patch sometimes prolonged along suture. Appendages brownish red; femora and proximal portion of tibiae often infusate. Vestiture of fine, recumbent, golden hair and of oval, white or yellowish, adpressed, fugitive scales at places concentrated into denser groups, particularly so along lateral sides of pronotal disc and behind elytral fascia.

Head rather densely clad on upper side with narrow, hair-like scales pointing downward. Eyes small, subtriangular, protruding. Antennae moderately slender, 11-segmented, 0.55-0.65 times as long as body.

Pronotum about as long as wide, widest a little behind middle, from there slightly narrowed in about straight lines, with a moderately strong medial depression not reaching anterior margin, and with dense, finely granulate punctation. Discal hairs pointing backward in front and forward before base, at about one third from base converging from all sides. Scales rather broadly oval.

Elytra 1.25-1.35 times as long as broad, suboval with slightly convex sides, concave in front, and very shortly obtusely pointed at apex, with dense and confuse punctation with very narrow interspaces. Scales somewhat more narrowly oval than on pronotum. Hairs comparatively short, hardly reaching base of following.

Metasternum without median longitudinal line, flat with very dense, subpolygonal punctures as broad as two combined facets of eye. Abdominal sternites 1-3 with similar punctation except punctures smaller and longitudinally prolonged; surface not shining. Sternites 4 and 5 with very sparse and fine round punctures; surface shining.

Legs rather strong, densely pubescent; tarsi broad, segment 4 broader than 5, bilobed.

Aedeagus as in Figs. 1 and 2.

Found on thistles (*Silybium marianum*) in which it probably develops. Some specimens were beaten from dead branches of common vine.

LITERATURE

Bellés, X. :

1982. El primer representante de la familia Ptinidae (Col.) de las Islas Salvajes: *Sphaericus bicolor* n. sp. — Vieraea 11 : 103-107.