

# On *Ctenophorellus afer* Silvestri, 1920, *Orthosilis* Motschulsky, 1860 and *Telerhina* Motschulsky, 1860 (Coleoptera, Cantharidae)

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Fanti F. 2022. On *Ctenophorellus afer* Silvestri, 1920, *Orthosilis* Motschulsky, 1860 and *Telerhina* Motschulsky, 1860 (Coleoptera, Cantharidae). *Baltic J. Coleopterol.*, 22(2): 327–329.

This document studies the genus *Ctenophorellus* Silvestri, 1920 with the species *Ctenophorellus afer* Silvestri, 1920. The holotype is still present in the collections preserved at the Filippo Silvestri Entomological Museum in Portici. The monotypic genus *Ctenophorellus* (*incertae sedis*) was found to be a *genus inquirendum* and therefore *Ct. afer* is a *species inquirenda*. Furthermore, other proposed taxonomic acts are: *Orthosilis* Motschulsky, 1860 *nomen dubium* and *Telerhina* Motschulsky, 1860 *nomen dubium*.

Key words: taxonomy, soldier beetles, *genus inquirendum*, *nomina dubia*.

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## INTRODUCTION

Filippo Silvestri (Bevagna, 22 June 1873 – Portici, 10 June 1949) traveled to the Republic of Guinea in 1912 and stayed in Kindia from 11:45 on 19 August to 12:45 on 23 August (Silvestri 1959), where he found a new genus and a new species probably of the family Cantharidae (Silvestri 1920). The taxa and their description have remained virtually unknown over the decades, therefore, the aim of the work is to provide all the information available on these taxa, for future study with more advanced techniques (DNA for example) or to encourage the finding of similar forms and their breeding, and thus to contribute to solving taxonomy.

While, the genera of Motschulsky are not preserved and we can only deduce information from the literature.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

I have studied all the very few pertinent bibliography. I also searched for the holotype of *Ctenophorellus* which is probably still preserved in the Filippo Silvestri Entomological Museum in Portici (Campania, Italy) but currently unobtainable. While, the genera *Orthosilis* and *Telerhina* are “*sine species*” and they are not preserved.

## RESULTS

*Ctenophorellus* Silvestri, 1920: 309–311 *genus inquirendum* (*incertae sedis*)

Type species: *Ctenophorellus afer* Silvestri, 1920, monotypic.

*Ctenophorellus afer* Silvestri, 1920: Fig. XXV. (p. 309), Fig. XXVI. (p. 310), 311. *Locus typicus*: “Gallorum Guinea: Kindia” *species inquirenda*

Silvestri 1920: 309–311; Delkeskamp 1939: 311 (as *incertae sedis*); Neave 1939: 897; Grandi 1951: 729; Delkeskamp 1977: 480 (as *incertae sedis* in Cantharidae).

**Note.** Length 9 mm (Silvestri 1920). Silvestri (1920) gives an extensive description and representation of the species and points out in particular the lateral comb on the thoracic segments and on the first eight abdominal segments and the two ventral ones of large bristles on the first seven abdominal segments. It also has the last abdominal segments elongated, short, narrow and cylindrical, the mandibles without retinaculum, maxillary articles I–II even but different in shape, antennae uniaarticulated (Silvestri 1920). Silvestri (1920) insert with doubt this genus in Cantharidae, and the taxonomic attribution within the family remains doubtful: *incertae sedis* (Delkeskamp 1939, 1977).

***Orthosilis*** Motschulsky, 1860: 398 *nomen dubium*

Type species: *sine specie* (Delkeskamp 1939, 1977).

*Locus typicus*: “Am. mér., Colombie.”

Motschulsky 1860: 398; Delkeskamp 1939: 311 (as *incertae sedis*); Neave 1940a: 474; Delkeskamp 1977: 481 (as *incertae sedis* in Cantharidae).

**Note.** Genus of South America and Colombia (Motschulsky 1860), described without species: *sine specie* (Delkeskamp 1939, 1977). It differs from the genus *Silis* for the pronotum without indentations and thorns at sides (Motschulsky 1860).

[*Silinae incertae sedis*].

***Telerhina*** Motschulsky, 1860: 397 *nomen dubium*

Type species: *sine specie* (Delkeskamp 1939, 1977).

*Locus typicus*: “Am. mér.”

Motschulsky 1860: 397; Delkeskamp 1939: 312 (as *incertae sedis*); Neave 1940b: 414; Delkes-

kamp 1977: 481 (as *incertae sedis* in Cantharidae).

**Note.** Genus of South America (Motschulsky 1860), described without species: *sine specie* (Delkeskamp 1939, 1977). It differs from the genus *Chauliognathus* for the parallel elytra (Motschulsky 1860).

[*Chauliognathinae incertae sedis*].

## DISCUSSION

The species *Ctenophorellus afer* is described on a single larva (Silvestri 1920), which was collected in a nest of *Euchilotermes tensus* Silvestri, 1914 var. *arcuata* Silvestri near Kindia and seemed undisturbed among the termites (Silvestri 1920; Grandi 1951).

The particularities and the description without the modern diagnostic characters useful for the larvae (Fitton 1976; Klausnitzer 1997–2009), do not allow a recognition of the identity or a possible synonymy. In fact, it also present characters (such as mandibles and antennae) different from the known representatives of the subfamilies Cantharinae and Malthininae. It should be noted, however, that in many families or orders the termitophilous larvae are completely different from the others, so much so as to make a supraspecific or suprageneric attribution difficult, if they are not reared or associated with adults, which, as Silvestri (1920) warns, also could concerns *Ctenophorellus*.

Furthermore, in sub-Saharan Africa there are many species of Cantharidae to describe, but very few genera: *Prosthaptus* Gorham, 1900 (largely distributed); *Silidius* Gorham, 1883 (largely distributed), *Malthinus* Latreille, 1806 (Madagascar and South Africa), *Ichthyurus* Westwood, 1848 (largely distributed), *Afronycha* Wittmer, 1949 (central-southern Africa), *Silisonycha* Wittmer, 1949 (South Africa), and *Compsonycha* Wittmer, 1949 (South Africa). If we exclude *Afronycha*, *Silisonycha*, and *Compsonycha* which are not known for Guinea (Delkeskamp 1977), all the other genera have been

previously described, making the genus *Ctenophorellus* synonymous in case of the same identity with one of these.

Based on the Code, *Ctenophorellus afer* whose holotype is probably conserved is considered here as a *species inquirenda* (*Ctenophorellus* as *genus inquirendum*) since of doubtful identity, needing further investigation, while the genera *Orthosilis* and *Telerhina* are no longer conserved, associated species are not known, therefore they remain with doubtful and obscure application and therefore they are considered here as *nomina dubia* (ICZN 1999).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I heartfelt thank prof. Roberto Antonio Pantaleoni for having sent some parts of the scientific literature relating to the subject dealt with in the document, and prof. Antonio Garonna (F. Silvestri Entomological Museum of Portici) for information on the holotype.

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*Received: 31.10.2022.  
Accepted: 20.12.2022.*