

## THE PERITELINI (COLEOPTERA: CURCULIONIDAE, ENTIMINAE) OF THE VITALE COLLECTION

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(communicated by Salvatore Fasulo)

**ABSTRACT.** The collection of Peritelini (Coleoptera Curculionidae Entiminae) currently stored in the Vitale collection at the University of Messina is an element of great importance for studies of taxonomy and biogeography of these rarely collected weevils. All species are commented in relation to the contributions to this taxonomic group, published on several occasions by the authors.

### 1. Introduction

Francesco Vitale (1861-1953) was certainly the greatest expert of beetles in eastern Sicily. Much of his efforts were devoted to studies of biology, ecology, taxonomy and biogeography of Coleoptera. The recent restoration of its entomological collection, preserved in the *Museo Zoologico “Francesco Cambria”* at the University of Messina (Baviera 2004b), has made it possible to examine the specimens with the identification of many interesting species (Facchini and Baviera 2004; Baviera 2004a; Baviera and Sparacio 2004; Vienna and Baviera 2007). During his life, Vitale published more than 100 contributions including many related to taxonomy and biology of weevils (Baviera 2004b). In fact while collecting and observing beetles of all families, he became particularly interested in the family Curculionidae s. l. as evidenced by the current wealth of its collection, reconstituted with remarkable commitment after the destruction of Messina caused by the earthquake of 1908 (Caldara *et al.* 2010). Unfortunately, many genera of Curculionoidea are totally absent in the remains of his collection, but species of the tribe Peritelini are still well preserved. Therefore, Peritelini of the Vitale collection are part of the more important historic collections of these weevils for Sicily. In addition to the collection data, his publications on the species of this tribe are also very important, such as comments on mimicry, important notes on the collection techniques reported with the description of the new species *Pseudomeira reitteri* (Vitale 1903b). The biogeographical interest of the species belonging to this tribe, the considerable expertise required for their research, and the high number (112) of preserved specimens underlines the importance of the Vitale collection. Therefore it deserves this special contribution. The study of the specimens of the Vitale collection was part of the still in progress researches aiming at a better knowledge of the Sicilian Coleoptera (Baviera 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010,

2011, 2015; Baviera and Sparacio 2002; Baviera and Liberti 2010; Baviera and Magnano 2010; Bellò and Baviera 2011; Caldara, Casalini, and Baviera 2012; Magrini and Baviera 2011; Baviera and Audisio 2014; Baviera and Biondi 2015; Toševski *et al.* 2011, 2014, 2015). In particular, during researches focused on the taxonomic and geonomic revision of all species of Peritelini of Sicily, using the most modern techniques of integrative taxonomy (Bellò and Baviera 2011), the historic specimens preserved in the Vitale collection, often identified by the most skilled taxonomists of that time, allowed us to better understand the real identity of Sicilian taxa reported in ancient catalogues and contributions.

## 2. Materials and methods

All specimens are preserved in the box number 75 and were maintained at their original position as the determination of the author is given by the tags placed close to the specimens. If genital organs were extracted, the original labels were retained. On the basis of previous contributions to the knowledge of the species kept in the Vitale collection, the original determination expressed with all the words written under the specimens are reported. Words in print were placed within quotation marks, whereas the parts added to the original text are reported inside square brackets. We also report the total number of specimens of the species preserved in the collection. When the name of taxonomist who classified the specimen(s) is reported, it is quoted in the notes. The systematic-nomenclatural order follows the checklists of weevils of Italian fauna (Abbazzi *et al.* 1995; Colonnelli 2003; Abbazzi and Maggini 2009; Abbazzi and Zinetti 2013), and the contributions on Sicilian species of Peritelini (Bellò and Pierotti 1992; Pierotti and Bellò 1994; Pierotti 2009; Bellò and Baviera 2011). The genus *Solariola* is included in Peritelini following the recent revision of this genus (Baviera, 2015). The most relevant data obtained from the study of the collection were compared with the literature data for Sicily and in particular with those published by Vitale (1890, 1891-92, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903a,b, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907).

## 3. Results

### FAUNISTIC LIST

#### CURCULIONIDAE ENTIMINAE PERITELINI

##### *Solariola vitalei* (A. Solari and F. Solari, 1923)

Original identification - *Solariola* Flach – *vitalei* Solari.

Localities - Castanea [Messina], I.1931, Vitale; same locality, XII.[1]931; Messina Calamara Castanea 420 m, Vitale and Schatzmayr; Calameria, [Messina] 10.IV.[1]934, Vitale; Dint. Messina Calamara, 4.V.1933, Vitale; same locality, 2.III.1929, Vitale; same locality, 16.III.1938, Vitale; same locality, 16.IV.1934, Vitale; same locality, 1.III.1934, Vitale; same locality, 12.V.1939, Vitale; same locality, 19.XI.1927, Vitale; same locality, 21.I.1933, Vitale; same locality, 21.II.1932, Vitale; Cuddutta, [Messina], 04.IV.1918, Vitale; same locality, 23.III.1930, Vitale; same locality, 15.IV.1930, Vitale; same locality, 24.IV.1918, Vitale; same locality, 22.IV.1911, Vitale; same locality, 29.III.[18]80, Vitale; F. Vitale; "Messina", "F. Vitale"; Messina, 04.V.1906, Dodero.

Specimens - 19

**Notes.** This species was described based on five specimens collected in “dintorni di Messina” without more data by Vitale in 1923, very probably the type locality of this species is Castanea (various contrade like Calamarà, Cudduttà). Adults of this species have been sifted from the leaf litter of *Quercus* forest on gravelly-sandy soil (Baviera 2015).

*Solariola doderoi* A. Solari and F. Solari, 1923

Original identification - *Solariola* Flach? – *doderoi* Solari.

Localities - Castanea [Messina], I.1931, F. Vitale; Messina, Calamarà, [Castanea], 19.II.1931 F. Vitale.

Specimens - 2

**Notes.** These two females bear the label: “Solariola Doderoi m., Desideratissimo, det. Solari”, and the locality is almost surely wrong since *S. doderoi* is described from the Madonie mountains, and up to now no specimens of this rare weevil has been collected outside its type locality of Castelbuono (A. Solari and F. Solari 1932).

*Solariola ruffoi* (Osella and Di Marco, 1996)

Original identification - *Solariola* Flach – *vitalei* Solari

Localities - Ficuzza, XI.1912, F. Vitale.

Specimens - 1

**Notes.** This single specimen with the following label: “Solariola vitalei var? aut nov. sp., Desideratissimo, det. Solari”, is probably the one mentioned by Angelo and Ferdinando Solari in their 1923 paper as a probably new species “...che ha tutta l’aria di appartenere ad una specie ben distinta da quelle descritte nel presente lavoro...” from Ficuzza (A. Solari and F. Solari 1932). *S. ruffoi* is described from Ficuzza Wood.

*Simo grandis* (Desbrochers, 1888)

Original identification - *Peritelus* Germ. – *grandis* Desbr.

Localities - Naso, 28.IV.[19]34, F. Vitale; Tortorici, 06.VII.[1]915, F. Vitale; “Messina”, “F. Vitale”.

Specimens - 5

**Notes.** Vitale considered the specimens collected in the Nebrodi mountains as *Simo hirticornis* (Herbst, 1875): “raro a Tortorici su *Corylus*” (Vitale 1890). He also reported this locality later (Vitale 1901). We found *S. grandis* after careful research, while beating *Corylus avellana* at this locality on 24th April 2006. *Simo hirticornis* (Herbst, 1875) should therefore be excluded from the Sicilian fauna (see also Pierotti and Bellò 2006). In the Desbrochers collection preserved in the Museum of Natural History in Paris we did not find the holotype, but two specimens labelled “Sicile”. Apart from Sicily, where the species is widespread from Messina to Palermo, this weevil is also known from Cava dei Tirreni (Campania).

*Pseudomeira obscura* (A. Solari and F. Solari, 1907)

Original identification - *Peritelus* Germ. – *obscurus* Solari – *parvulus* Seidlitz

Localities - Calamarà, 7.IV.[19]15, F. Vitale; idem, 12.IV.[19]16; idem 3.XII.[19]36; idem, 24.XII.[19]36;

Castanea, 7.XI.[1]910, F. Vitale; idem, 20.III.[19]40; “Sicilia”, “F. Vitale”; “Messina”, “F. Vitale”.  
Specimens - 22

**Notes.** Two paralectotypes were recently identified (see Bellò and Baviera 2011), both labeled as follows: “Messina, F. Vitale”, *Peritelus obscurus*, det. F. Solari”, “*Pseudomeira obscura* Sol., det. C. Pesarini 2001”, “*Pseudomeira obscura* (A. and F. Solari, 1907), det. Bellò 2009”, “*Pseudomeira obscura* (A. and F. Solari, 1907), Paralectotypus, det. Bellò 2010” [red, handwritten]. Despite our efforts, we were unable to recollect these species in the surroundings of Messina.

*Pseudomeira obscurella* (Pierotti and Bellò, 1994)

Original identification - *Peritelus* Germ. – *obscurus* Solari – *parvulus* Seidlitz

Localities - Cudduttà (Mess.), 24.IV.1911, F. Vitale; “Messina”, “F. Vitale”.

Specimens - 2

**Notes.** A predominantly mountainous parthenogenetic species, with adults in spring, collected in Sicily while sifting leaf-litter taken under *Fagus* sp., *Olea* sp., *Quercus* sp., *Castanea* sp., *Erica* sp., *Viola aetnensis* P., or with pitfall traps. One of us (Baviera) collected some adults also sweeping low vegetation (see Bellò and Baviera 2011). The specimen from Messina is a paralectotype of *P. obscura*, labelled: “Messina, F. Vitale”, “*Peritelus obscurus* nob.-cotyp” [white, handwritten], “*Pseudomeira obscura* (A. and F. Solari, 1907), Paralectotypus, det. Bellò 2010” [red, handwritten], “*Pseudomeira obscurella* Bellò and Pierotti, det. C. Bellò 2010”.

*Pseudomeira vitalei* (Desbrochers, 1892)

Original identification - *Peritelus* Germ. – *Vitalei* Desbr.; – *parvulus* Seidlitz

Localities - Castanea, 16.II.[19]30, F. Vitale; idem, 4.III.[19]38; idem, 9.II.[19]30; idem, 20.III.[19]40; Massa San Giorgio, 2.VII.1935, F. Vitale; Colla, 2.XI.[1]930, F. Vitale; Cudduttà, 10.VII.[19]10, F. Vitale; Calamarà, 2. III. [19]35, F. Vitale; idem, 12.VI.[19]39, F. Vitale; “Messina”, “F. Vitale”; “Sicilia”, “F. Vitale”.

Specimens - 36

**Notes.** This taxon was described in 1892 by Desbrochers based on “plusieurs exemplaires des deux sexes” from “Sicile, Messine”, sent to him by Vitale. In Desbrochers’ collection we were unable to find type specimens. In the “Catalogo dei Rincofori Siciliani” published by Vitale (1900), *P. vitalei* was reported from “M. Cicci” (probably Ciccia Mount above Messina city). All the specimens in the collection were collected after the description of the species (and after the earthquake that destroyed Messina in 1908). Angelo and Ferdinando Solari identified fourteen specimens. *Pseudomeira vitalei* is an endemic species of northeastern Sicily, and the Eolie archipelago. Specimens of *P. vitalei* have been collected by sifting leaf-litter taken beneath *Olea europaea europaea* L., *Cistus* sp. and *Quercus* sp.. Adults emerged from late winter to late spring, then they aestivate, and can be found again in autumn from the starting of the rainy season till the beginning of the winter. Vitale used to collect around Messina several specimens of this species already at the beginning of January, beating bunds of freshly cut heather on a large white napkin (Vitale 1902), and he

also wrote (Vitale 1904) that it was quite difficult to see and collect them because of their cryptic colors miming small *Erica* fruits and soil debris (Bellò and Baviera 2011).

*Pseudomeira reitteri* (Vitale, 1903)

Original identification - *Peritelus* Germ. – *Reitteri* Vitale

Localities - Gazzi (Messina), 30.XII.[1]917, F. Vitale; idem, 29. XII. [19]20; idem, 29.XII.[19]30; idem, 07.II.[19]30; idem 30.XII.[19]27, F. Vitale; idem, 20. I. [1]930; “Messina”, “F. Vitale”.

Specimens - 14

**Notes.** Vitale described this species in 1903 based upon several specimens collected in Castoreale Bagni under the bark of an old olive tree (“parecchi esemplari in quel di Castoreale Bagni, sotto le scorze al pedale di un vecchio olivo, il 12 dicembre 1901”) (Vitale 1903b). In the Vitale collection there are no specimens from Castoreale. A. and F. Solari identified two specimens correctly as *P. reitteri*, while the same authors identified three of them as *P. vitalei*. *Pseudomeira reitteri*, endemic from Sicily, is recorded in northeastern Sicily, from Peloritani to Nebrodi mountains. To fix the name to a specimen, a male neotype was selected by Bellò and Baviera (2011) from the type locality and preserved in the Vitale collection. This specimen is labelled as follows: “♂”, “Sicilia-ME-Castoreale, 24.IV.06, Leg. Bellò”, “N 38°05.750” E 015°11.906”, “al vaglio lettiera *Olea europaea*” [white, printed], “*Pseudomeira reitteri* (Vitale, 1903) det. C. Bellò”, “coll. Cesare Bellò”; “*Pseudomeira reitteri* (Vitale, 1903), NEOTYPUS des. Bellò, 2010” [red, partly printed].

*Pseudomeira erinacea* (Bellò and Baviera, 2011)

Original identification - *Peritelus* Germ. – *kraatzi* Tourn.; – *sicula* Desbr.

Localities - Ficuzza, 15.I.1913, F. Vitale; Ficuzza, 15.IX.1912, F. Vitale.

Specimens - 3

**Notes.** This recently described species seems to be endemic from northwestern Sicily, and was identified by Vitale, as well as by A. and F. Solari, as *Peritelus kraatzi*.

*Pseudomeira exigua* (Stierlin, 1861)

Original identification - *Peritelus* Germ. – *pfisteri* Stierl. *exiguus* Stierl.

Localities - Brolo, 17.XI.[19]37, F. Vitale.

Specimens - 4

**Notes.** Two specimens identified by A. Solari in 1911 as *Pseudomeira pfisteri*. This species was described by Stierlin from “Sicily”, without more details, probably collected by Rottenberg during his research trip in Sicily, in particular on Mount Pellegrino near Palermo, where he collected this species under stones (Rottenberg 1871). There we have collected this species sifting soil from *Rubus* sp. bushes near big stones at the end of autumn. This is the easternmost record of this species in Sicily (see Bellò and Baviera, 2011), so *Pseudomeira* of the *exigua* group (sensu Bellò and Baviera 2011) is present in northern Sicily from Erice to Brolo.

*Pseudomeira pfisteri* (Stierlin, 1864)

Original identification - *Peritelus* Germ. – *exiguus* Stierl.

Localities - P[alazzo]. Adriano (Palermo), 2.XII.1910, F. Vitale; “Messina”, “F. Vitale”

Specimens - 2

**Notes.** Adults can be found from the beginning of the winter till the end of the spring, only a few aestivating ones can be found in autumn. We have often collected *Pseudomeira pfisteri* together with *P. exigua* sifting leaf litter under *Rubus* sp. and *Olea europaea* L. var. *sylvestris* Brok. in the grazed garrigues of Monte Pellegrino at 400 a. s. l., they seem to be more common in autumn than in spring.

*Heteromeira neapolitana* (Faust, 1890)

Original identification - *Peritelus* Germ. – *neapolitanus* Faust.

Localities - P[alazzo]. Adriano, XII.1909, F. Vitale.

Specimens - 1

**Notes.** A new locality for this species. This single specimen was collected during the period that Vitale spent in Palermo after the Messina earthquake of December 1908. The Vitale report of “*Meira latiscrobs*” (Vitale 1900), in our opinion, may refer to this species, which is widespread in central and southern Italy and Sicily (Pierotti 2011b,a), where it is quite common and also collected together with *P. solarii* (Bellò and Baviera 2011). *Heteromeira latiscrobs* (Desbrochers, 1871) is an endemic species from Sardinia and Corsica (Pierotti and Bellò 2001).

*Heteromeira pacei* Bellò and Pierotti, 1992

Original identification - *Peritelus* Germ. – *sicula* Desbr.

Localities - Ucria Sicil., 27.XI.[19]04, F. Vitale.

Specimens - 2

**Notes.** A species identified and described after Vitale’s death, identified by Vitale as *Peritelus siculus*. In the “Catalogo dei Rincofori Siciliani” Vitale (1900) reported a “*Meira sicula*” that, in our opinion, might refer to this species. The two specimens from 1904 are the only Peritelini collected before the disastrous earthquake of Messina in 1908. The specimens from the Vitale collection allow expanding the known distribution of *Heteromeira pacei* to the Nebrodi mountains. *H. pacei* is an endemic Sicilian species (Bellò and Pierotti 1992; Pierotti 2011b,a) described from the Iblei mountains (Mazzarone, Catania) and collected in Niscemi Corn Oak Wood (near Ragusa).

*Dolichomeira dubia* Pierotti and Bellò, 1994

Original identification - *Peritelus* Germ. – *microphthalmus* Solari

Localities - Pizzauti Pal., [?].09.[19]12, F. Vitale.

Specimens - 1

**Notes.** Another recently described species separated from *Dolichomeira microphthalma*, a species from Pellegrino Mount. The single specimen was identified by Solari as *P. microphthalmus*. *Dolichomeira dubia*, endemic from Sicily, was described from Monreale,

Palermo, upon specimens collected under stones in a grassland near Giacalone. This species is quite common at west of Hymera riverine territory of Palermo, Trapani and Agrigento.

#### 4. Final remarks

We did not find in the collection the following species quoted by Vitale in his works (Vitale 1890, 1891-92, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903a,b, 1904, 1905, 1906, 1907): *Peritelus insularis* Des. now *Pseudomeira insularis* (Desbrochers des Loges, 1871); *Peritelus grenieri* Seid. now *Pseudomeira grenierii* (Seidlitz, 1865); *Peritelus flavipennis* Duv.var. *siculus* Seid. now *Pseudomeira flavipennis* (Jacquelin du Val, 1853); *Peritelus planidorsis* Seid. now *Simeiropsis planidorsis* (Seidlitz, 1865); *Peritelus muscorum* Desbr. now *Pseudomeira muscorum* (Desbrochers des Loges, 1871); *Peritelus griseus* Seid. now *Peritelus sphaeroides* Germar, 1824; *Meira laticrobs* Desbr. now *Heteromeira laticrobs* (Desbrochers des Loges, 1871). *Peritelus albicans* Hoch. is reported by Vitale in his Catalogue (Vitale 1900) and in Bertolini's Catalogues (Bertolini 1872, 1899), but not in the Catalogues compiled by Winkler (1932) and Pierotti (2011a). Since twenty years of accurate researches in Sicily, focused on Peritelini and carried out by ourselves and others, did not yield any specimen of the above-mentioned species, we think that they should be excluded from the Sicilian fauna.

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