

TreeClimbers



BaumSteiger

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CURCULIO-Institute, Hauweg 62, D-41066 Mönchengladbach, Germany
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TreeClimbers
Dendroacalles, Silvacalles and Lauriacalles
of the Canary Islands
BaumSteiger
Dendroacalles, Silvacalles und Lauriacalles
von den Kanarischen Inseln

by / von

Peter E. Stüben, Klaus Fabian & Jonas J. Astrin (Ed.)

41 pages with 15 drawings, 105 colour photographs, 19 distribution maps and 7 tables

Landscape format: 39 x 30 cm (DinA3 quer)

English / German



Dendroacalles (s.str.) *ruteri* (Roudier, 1954), Canary Islands, La Gomera, drawing by Klaus Fabian

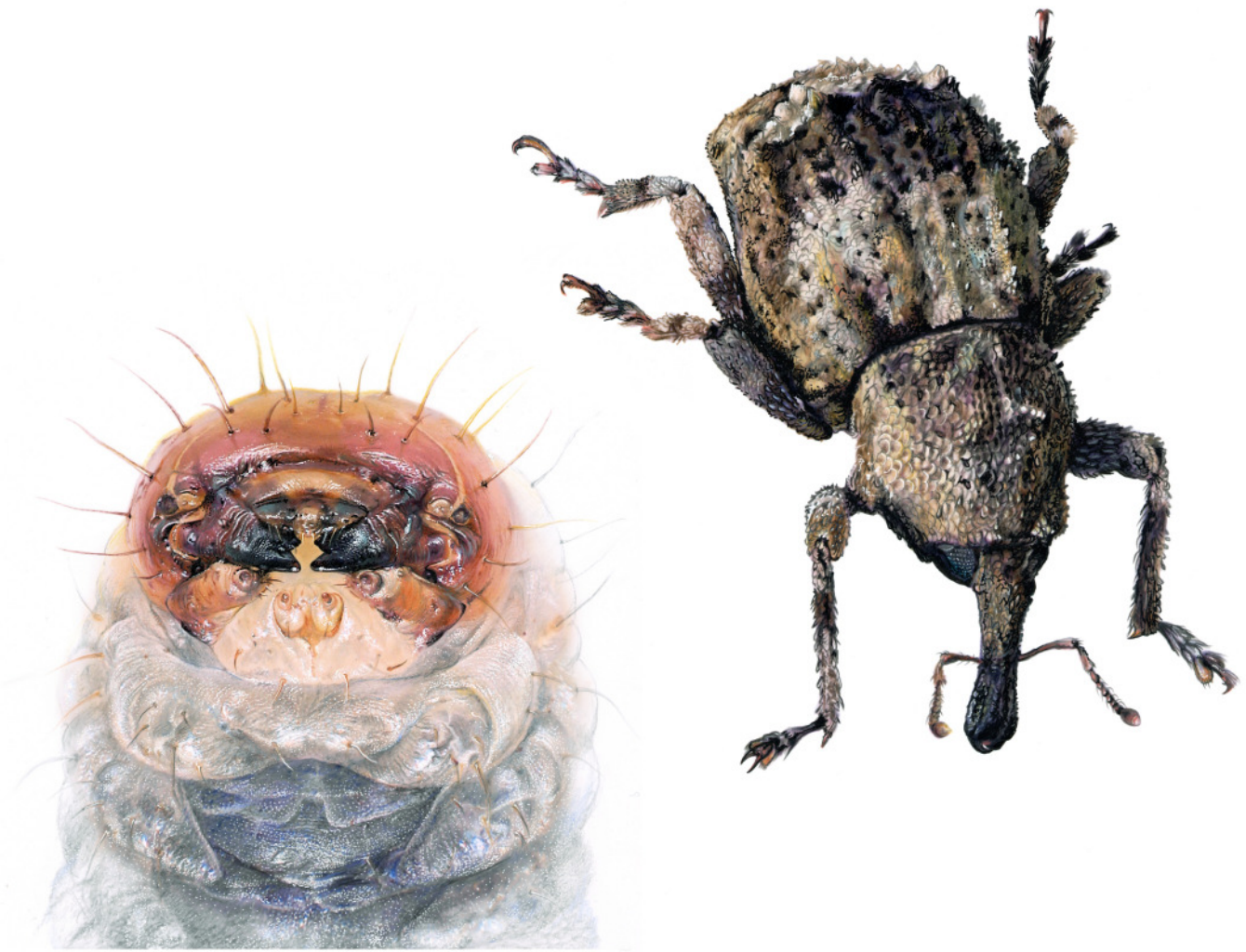
Preface

Medicine is viewed, not only as a science, but also a kind of art. The names *Merian*, *Roesel* and *Fabre* remind us that entomologists of the past likewise admired the beauty of their objects of study and knew how best to portray them. Such an appreciation of our study subjects seems alien to the entomology of today. Many years ago, when I viewed the illustrations of my friend Klaus Fabian for the first time during a private viewing, one of my valued academic colleagues remarked that they were useless to him: *Finally as an entomologist one is only used to the "dorsal view" and feels quite uncertain in light of the inclined objects.* In the same day I confronted Klaus Fabian with this point of view:

*"Alienated? But in truth just the "normal views" give us a harder time than necessary. Who is not able to report on efforts and disillusion while trying to "recover" the collected impressions by means of sparse words and dorsal views using an ordinary identification key (for instance the Freude/Harde/Lohse)? It often takes month or years of practice to learn the business of identification. For that purpose the three-dimensional view changes to the more simplified two-dimensional one; the structural complexity of the 'antlers' of the stag beetle is reduced to a plain sickle, for example. This is the restriction that generates narrowness; a narrowness that is important to the discussion of taxonomy. But in truth it is self-deception because we have to know a species beforehand to identify with a depiction. These depictions, the quality of which makes no difference by the way, are nothing more than a **coding system** for simple purpose of naming a specimen and distinguishing it from other species ...just to make it available? Certainly this is a bit exaggerated and polemical, but I could imagine that every fascination, even the fascination of the experience of nature itself gets lost... What I want to show is the animal from different points of visual experience and definitely not a man made **coding system**. This would be productive uncertainty."*

If our way of building a bridge between art, morphology and molecular biology – and finally also implicating the "Code of life" – makes the reader feel uncertain, then the most important aim of this work would have been achieved: understanding entomology as art **and** science.

Peter E. Stüben, Mönchengladbach in the spring of 2009



Dendroacalles euphorbiacus (Stüben, 2000), Paratype (inkl. Larve): Canary Islands, La Palma, drawing by Klaus Fabian

Abstract

The **TreeClimbers** s.l. comprise the exclusively tree-living Cryptorhynchinae (Coleoptera: Curculionidae) that are found mainly in the Canary Islands. Klaus Fabian was asked to portray these colourful and bizarrely-bristled acrobats of the higher strata and canopies of the Canarian and - only two species - Madeiran laurel forest.

At the beginning there was 'curiousness (if it might succeed) **and** fascination', because for the coleopterologist who was used to shifting the small number of Central European species of *Acalles* from the leaf litter of the native beech and oak forest, it was a big surprise to begin the subtle hunt in the moist, shady and evergreen forest of the thermo-canarian belt. This was more than ten years ago and it required the development of new techniques like beating with long stakes into huge beating trays to explore the Cryptorhynchinae fauna of the canopies. So-called, 'canopy fogging' with natural pyrethrum, a method which we applied on the Canary Islands in autumn 2008 for the first time, seemed much more promising and effective.

Where the forest was not felled in the past – as in the national park of Garojonay on La Gomera – old and huge trees are located between large and impressive roots, evoking an unearthly atmosphere during the night. This is the real homeland of the **TreeClimbers**. In such habitats the specimens can be beaten in large numbers from the metres-long shoots growing from the base of the tree and the

roots of the Lauraceae.

From the phylogenetical point of view the **TreeClimbers** are highly derived 'taxa' and, ecologically, these groups are extreme tree-specialists which colonized a very old habitat, the '*laurisilva*', only in the recent geological history. ...



Lauriacalles acutus (Wollaston, 1864), Canary Islands, Tenerife, Teno Mts., drawing by Klaus Fabian

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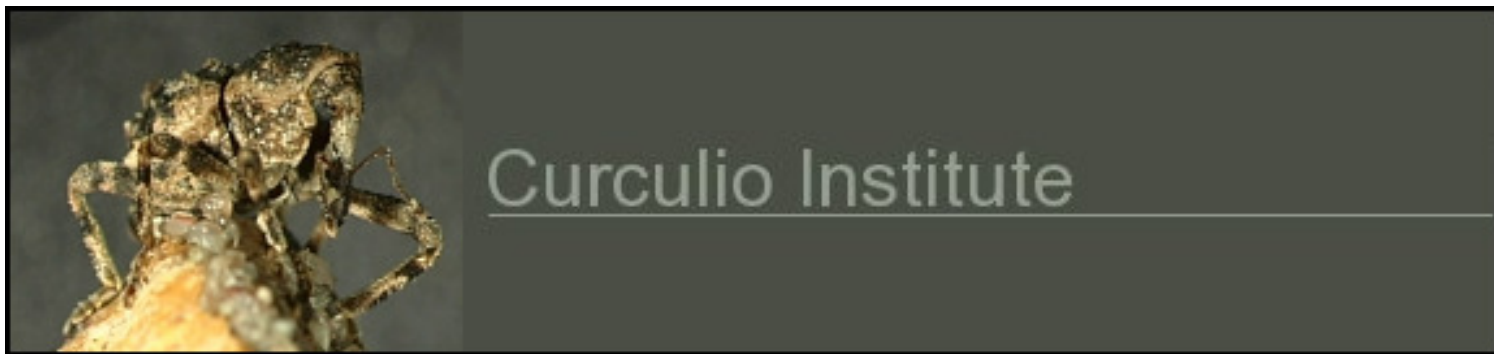
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