# A Chromosomal Analysis of Twelve Species of the Subfamily **Chrysomelinae** (Coleoptera, Chrysomelidae)

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Twelve species of chrysomelines, all but one from the Palaearctic region, have been cytogenetically analyzed, mostly through their male meiotic metaphases I. Ambrostoma superbum has  $2n = 40 (Xy_p)$ , Chrysolina colasi, Oreina fairmairiana and the Neotropical Platyphora spectabilis have  $2n = 24 (Xy_p)$ , Chrysolina gebleri  $2n = 26 (XY_p)$ , Colaspidema  $barbarum 2n = 28 (Xy_p)$ , Crosita altaica and C. rugulosa  $2n = 30 (Xy_p)$ , Phratora polaris, Ph. vitellinae and Ph. vulgatissima  $2n = 34 (Xy_p)$ , and the karyotype of Chrysolina marginata, consisting of 40 chromosomes, is also described. These results are discussed with those previously obtained in related genera and congeneric species, giving further support and extending the high chromosomal variability so far found in this subfamily of leaf beetles

Key words: Coleoptera, Chrysomelidae, karyotypes, sex-chromosome systems, cytotaxonomy, evolution.

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The subfamily Chrysomelinae is a large group of leaf beetles consisting of roughly 3000 species (REID et al. 2009) in 175 genera (DACCORDI 1982) which were later reduced to 133 (DACCORDI 1994). The number of tribes and subtribes is variable depending on the particular opinions of the different authors, but the majority consider two tribes, Timarchini and Chrysomelini, the former with only one subtribe and the latter with five, Entomoscelina (= Phyllocharitina), Chrysolinina, Doryphorina (sometimes included within the previous one), Gonioctenina (= Paropsina), and Chrysomelina (DACCORDI 1994; RILEY et al. 2002; REID 2002; PETITPIERRE 2011).

The Chrysomelinae are relatively well-known cytogenetically, with 180 surveyed taxa 25 years ago (PETITPIERRE et al. 1988), a figure updated to 260 taxa recently (PETITPIERRE 2011), that is 8.7% of the total described species in 41 genera or 23.3% to 30.8% of all known genera, depending on how many are recognized. Herein we have analyzed ten new species, and we have augmented cytogenetic data in two further species either by meiotic or by mitotic metaphase analyses.

## **Material and Methods**

#### Collection sites

The list of examined species and their geographical sources are given in Table I.

The number of analyzed adult male specimens was as follows: Ambrostoma superbum (1), Chrysolina marginata (1), Chrysolina gebleri (1), Chrysolina colasi (3), Oreina fairmairiana (3), Colaspidema barbarum (2), Crosita altaica (1), Crosita rugulosa (1), Phratora polaris (1), Phratora vitellinae (2), Phratora vulgatissima (1), Platyphora spectabilis (1).

#### Chromosome preparations

The cytogenetic data were obtained by testis dissection of adult male specimens which were fixed in 45% acetic acid, later on teased into small pieces for five minutes, squashed under a coverslip, immediately frozen in liquid nitrogen to remove the coverslip, and finally treated using conventional Giemsa staining procedures. Most examined cells

Cytogenetically analysed species of leaf-beetles and their geographical sources

Ambrostoma superbum (Thunberg, 1787)	Badaling at Great Wall, 50 km north Beijing (China)
Chrysolina (Chalcoidea) marginata (Linnaeus, 1758)	La Sagra, Granada, Andalucia (Southeast Spain)
Chrysolina (Pleurosticha) gebleri L. Medvedev, 1979	Charysh distr., Altai Province (Russia)
Chrysolina (Stichoptera) colasi (Cobos, 1952)	Pico Veleta, around 3000 m alt., Granada (Spain)
Colaspidema barbarum (Fabricius, 1792)	La Sagra, Granada, Andalucia (Southeast Spain)
Crosita altaica (Gebler, 1823)	Mugojary mts., Aktyubinsk reg. (West Kazakhstan)
Crosita rugulosa (Gebler, 1841)	South-Chuya mt. range, Republic of Altai (Russia)
Oreina (Chrysochloa) fairmairiana (Gozis, 1882)	Gausac, Val d'Aran, Pyrenees of Lleida, Catalonia (Spain)
Phratora (Phyllodecta) vitellinae (Linnaeus, 1758)	Kevo (North Finland)
Phratora (Phratora) vulgatissima (Linnaeus,1758)	Alpthal (Switzerland)
Platyphora spectabilis (Baly, 1858)	P.N. Brenes (Costa Rica)

were in meiotic metaphases I, providing the male meioformulas, thus the number of autosomal bivalents plus male sex-chromosome systems. Three among the twelve surveyed species gave spermatogonial meta- or prometaphase cells, from which we obtained results on their chromosomal architecture.

## Results

## Subtribe Chrysolinina

## Ambrostoma superbum

Several metaphase I cells were screened in this species showing a  $19 + Xy_p$  meioformula, composed of similar medium sized autosomal bivalents and the  $Xy_p$  ("parachute-type") sex-chromosome system, with a large X and a small y-chromosome (Fig. 1). A spermatogonial mitotic prometaphase displays mostly meta- and submetacentric medium or small chromosomes out of a large autosomal pair (Fig. 2).

#### Chrysolina marginata

The meioformula of this species,  $19 + Xy_p$ , was studied previously (PETITPIERRE 1981), but not its karyotype comprised of 2n = 40 chromosomes from spermatogonial metaphases. This karyotype has two pairs of large metacentric autosomes, seven pairs of medium sized ones of which three are acrocentrics (3<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>) and the remaining are metacentrics, and ten other pairs of mediumsmall, four of them clearly smaller than the other three, plus a rather large submetacentric X-chromosome and a tiny y-chromosome (Figs 3 and 4). Therefore, the number of large chromosome arms or "fundamental number" (FN) in *Ch. marginata*, is FN = 74.

#### Chrysolina gebleri

This species exhibits a  $12 + XY_p$  meioformula (Fig. 5), that is 2n = 26 chromosomes. The autosomal bivalents are relatively small and the male sex-chromosome system is a "parachute-type"  $XY_p$ , constituted by two elements, the X and Y chromosomes of similar sizes.

## Chrysolina colasi

The mitotic metaphases of *Ch. colasi*, with 2n = 24 chromosomes, have been studied before (PETITPIERRE 1981). Herein, we provide a metaphase I showing a  $11 + Xy_p$  meioformula (2n = 24), with four large bichiasmate autosomal bivalents, seven medium sized unichiasmate ones, and the  $Xy_p$  sex-chromosome system (Fig. 6).

## Oreina fairmairiana

Similar to the former species, this one has metaphases I with a  $11 + Xy_p$  meioformula (2n = 24) that consists of similar medium sized and mostly round autosomal bivalents out of the  $Xy_p$  sexchromosome system (Fig. 7).

#### Colaspidema barbarum

Meiotic metaphases I showing a  $13 + Xy_p$  meioformula (2n = 28) with similar small bivalents including the "parachute"  $Xy_p$  sex-chromosomes have been found in this species (Fig. 8).



Figs 1-4. Fig. 1. Metaphase I of *Ambrostoma superbum* with  $19 + Xy_p$ , the  $Xy_p$  is arrowheaded. Scale = 5  $\mu$ m. Fig. 2. Spermatogonial mitotic prometaphase of *A. superbum* with 2n = 40 chromosomes, the pair of largest autosomes are arrowheaded. Scale = 5  $\mu$ m. Figs 3 and 4. Spermatogonial mitotic metaphase (3) and karyogram (4) of *Chrysolina marginata* showing 2n = 40 chromosomes, the X- and y-chromosomes are at the lower right hand of the karyogram. Scale = 5  $\mu$ m.



Figs 5-10. Fig. 5. Metaphase I of *Chrysolina gebleri* with 12 + XY<sub>p</sub>, the symmetric XY<sub>p</sub> is arrowheaded. Scale = 5  $\mu$ m. Fig. 6. Metaphase I of *Chrysolina colasi* with 11 + Xy<sub>p</sub>, the lumen of distended Xy<sub>p</sub> is arrowheaded. Note also the four large bichiasmate autosome bivalents. Scale = 5  $\mu$ m. Fig. 7. Metaphase I of *Oreina fairmairiana* with 11 + Xy<sub>p</sub>, the Xy<sub>p</sub> is arrowheaded. Scale = 5  $\mu$ m. Fig. 8. Metaphase I of *Colaspidema barbarum* with 13 + Xy<sub>p</sub>, the Xy<sub>p</sub> is arrowheaded. Scale = 5  $\mu$ m. Fig. 9. Metaphase I of *Crosita altaica* with 14 + Xy<sub>p</sub>, the Xy<sub>p</sub> is arrowheaded. Scale = 5  $\mu$ m. Figs. 10. Interpretative drawing from a metaphase I of *Crosita rugulosa* with 14 + Xy<sub>p</sub>, the Xy<sub>p</sub> is arrowheaded. Scale = 5  $\mu$ m.



Figs. 11-14. Figs. 11 and 12. Metaphases I of *Phratora polaris* (11) and *Ph. vitellinae* (12) with  $16 + Xy_p$ , the  $Xy_p$  are arrowheaded. Scale = 5  $\mu$ m. Fig. 13. Spermatogonial mitotic metaphase of *Phratora vulgatissima* showing 2n = 34 chromosomes. Scale = 5  $\mu$ m. Fig. 14. Metaphase I of *Platyphora spectabilis* with  $11 + Xy_p$ , the  $Xy_p$  is arrowheaded. Note that six autosome pairs are overlapped in three pair groups. Scale = 5  $\mu$ m.

## Crosita altaica

A meiotic formula of  $14 + Xy_p$  (2n = 30) comprised of large autosomal bivalents and the small  $Xy_p$  sex-chromosome system characterizes the metaphases I of *C. altaica* (Fig. 9).

#### Crosita rugulosa

The same karyotype meioformula of  $14 + Xy_p$ (2n = 30), with similar large autosomal bivalents as in the former and a small  $Xy_p$ , have also been found in metaphases I of this congeneric species (Fig. 10).

## Subtribe Chrysomelina

#### Phratora polaris

Metaphases I include sixteen medium sized and small unichiasmate autosomal bivalents and a "parachute" male sex-chromosome, thus a meioformula of  $16 + Xy_p$ , 2n = 34 chromosomes (Fig. 11).

## Phratora vitellinae

This species has the same meioformula as the previous one,  $16 + Xy_p$ , (2n = 34), from which it differs by having a lower number of medium sized autosomal bivalents, since most of them are small (Fig. 12).

#### Phratora vulgatissima

The spermatogonial mitotic metaphases display 2n = 34 chromosomes, mostly of small size, but whose shapes are not easily identified (Fig. 13). A meioformula of  $16 + Xy_p$  has also been observed in this species (not shown).

## Subtribe Doryphorina

## Platyphora spectabilis

One individual from this species exhibited a meioformula of  $11 + Xy_p$ , (2n = 24), made of eight medium and three small autosomal bivalents, plus the "parachute" sex-chromosome pair (Fig. 14).

#### **Discussion and Conclusions**

The chromosomal results obtained in these twelve species of Chrysomelinae leaf beetles are in a close agreement with those reported before and recently reviewed elsewhere, based on nearly 260 taxa (PETITPIERRE 2011). First, the wide range of diploid numbers from 2n = 24 to 2n = 40 chromosomes fits well within the even wider range from 2n = 12 to 2n = 50 currently known for the whole subfamily. Second, the modal chromosome number for Chrysomelinae, 2n = 24, displayed in nearly one third of the total checked species (PETITPIERRE & SEGARRA 1985; PETITPIERRE 2011), is here represented by three among the twelve sampled taxa. And third, all of our sampled species show the "parachute-like",  $Xy_p$  or  $XY_p$ , sex-chromosome systems, matching well with the 79% figure so far found for all chrysomelines (PETITPIERRE 2011).

The 2n = 40 (Xy<sub>p</sub>) observed in *Ambrostoma superbum* is the first cytogenetic finding for the genus *Ambrostoma*, constituted by 13 species from East Asia (KIPPENBERG 2010). Since this genus seems to be taxonomically related to *Chrysolina* (DACCORDI 1994), it is not surprising that nearly 20% of the 70 examined species in the latter have 2n = 40 chromosomes. In addition, the meta- or submetacentric chromosome shape of its karyotype agrees with the prevalent chromosome structure found in chrysomelines (PETITPIERRE 2011), and also in the remaining beetles (SMITH & VIRKKI 1978; VIRKKI 1984).

The genus Crosita was also unworked to date from chromosomal grounds. As in Ambrostoma, Crosita with ten described species (KIPPENBERG 2010), is also taxonomically related to Chrysolina (DACCORDI 1994). However, contrary to the former genus, the 2n = 30 (Xy<sub>p</sub>) karyotype observed in the two examined species of Crosita is only found in one taxon of Chrysolina, Ch. lucidicollis grossepunctata (quoted as Ch. gypsophilae in PETITPIERRE 1982), a species which is not morphologically close to Crosita. Therefore assuming  $2n = 30 (Xy_p)$  is the putative modal number and sex-chromosome system for *Crosita*, the data do not indicate any relationship with the species of Chrysolina studied to date sharing these karyotypic characteristics.

We have analyzed three species in the genus Chrysolina, one of them Ch. marginata was previously cytogenetically studied, 19 + Xy<sub>n</sub> (PETITPIERRE 1981), though not in its karyotypic architecture as reported herein. The karyotype of Ch. marginata is composed of 40 chromosomes of gradually decreasing size, most of them biarmed, so its fundamental arm number is FN = 74. Conversely, other species belonging to the same subgenus Chalcoidea, such as Ch. carnifex and Ch. *interstincta*, also share with *Ch. marginata* 2n = 40 $(Xy_p)$  chromosomes, but all are acrocentrics and are similar in size except for the tiny y-chromosome (PETITPIERRE 1981; PETITPIERRE et al. 2004), and a much lower fundamental number of FN = 40. These differences in their karyotype architecture are also congruent with molecular phylogenetics based on two mitochondrial gene markers. Ch. marginata is more distantly related within the same clade, in respect to Ch. carnifex and another species of the subgenus Chalcoidea, than the latter are to each other (GARIN et al. 1999).

The meioformula of Chrysolina gebleri, 12 +  $XY_{p}(2n=26)$  is coincident both in diploid number and symmetric "parachute" sex-chromosome system with those of Ch. lagunovi (in the same subgenus Pleurosticha) and those of Ch. poretzkyi and Ch. tundralis, in the closely related subgenus Arctolina. Morphological similarity of the two subgenera Pleurosticha and Arctolina and problems with their recognition have been previously discussed (MIKHAILOV 2007a, 2008). The cytogenetic resemblance provides further support for their close interrelationship. While Ch. lagunovi, *Ch. poretzkyi* and *Ch. tundralis* are all from the Ural mountain range, *Ch. gebleri* is from the Altai mountains and presumably represents a relict species of the subgenus Pleurosticha (MIKHAILOV 2007b), although it shares the same meioformula. This  $XY_p$  sex-chromosome "parachute" system, with both elements of similar size, may be a synapomorphic character for the two subgenera, but it has also been detected in Ch. umbratilis (PETITPIERRE et al. 2004), which belongs to the subgenus Sphaerochrysolina (KIPPENBERG 2010), therefore a distinct and presumably distantly related taxon. *Chrysolina colasi* has a meioformula of 11 + Xy<sub>p</sub> which agrees with the karyotype of 2n = 24 chromosomes reported and illustrated by PETITPIERRE (1981, as *Oreina colasi*). The four large autosomal bivalents observed correspond to the four large autosomal pairs we found in spermatogonial metaphases. Moreover, the karyotype of Ch. colasi is clearly asymmetric with two striking groups differing in chromosome size: one group of large elements and another of small elements, a common characteristic shared with the other seven surveved species in the subgenus Stichoptera. This remarkable feature is conserved in spite of the high variation in diploid numbers, from 2n = 22 to 2n = 34in the eight examined species of Stichoptera (PETITPIERRE 1999, 2000; PETITPIERRE et al. 2004).

The meioformula of *Oreina fairmairiana*, 11 +  $Xy_p$  (2n = 24), is also found in all but one of the twelve studied species of *Oreina* (PETITPIERRE 1981, 1999). Since these sampled species represent five of the six established subgenera (KIPPENBERG 2010), the 11 +  $Xy_p$  meioformula could be taken not only as modal but also as the most plesiomorphous for the genus *Oreina*. In this sense, we emphasize again that this formula is modal and maybe ancestral for the closely related genus *Chrysolina*, although it is much more heterogeneous cytogenetically than *Oreina* (PETITPIERRE 1981, 1999; PETITPIERRE *et al.* 2004; PETITPIERRE & MIKHAILOV 2009).

Colaspidema barbarum displays a meioformula of  $13 + Xy_p$  (2n = 28), constituted by small autosomal bivalents and the  $Xy_p$ . A related species, *Colaphus sophiae*, has a similar formula in males with 13 + X (2n = 27) (LACHOWSKA *et al.* 1996)

but differs in the sex-chromosome system, XO instead of  $Xy_p$ . Although KIPPENBERG (2010) includes both genera in his tribe Entomoscelini, an opinion which is not shared by other authors (DACCORDI 1994; PETITPIERRE 2011), the only examined Palaearctic genus in this group, *Entomoscelis*, with two studied species, has a different diploid number of  $2n = 26 (Xy_p)$  (PETITPIERRE *et al.* 1988).

The three studied species of the genus *Phratora*: Ph. polaris, Ph. vitellinae and Ph. vulgatissima, share the same meioformula of  $16 + Xy_p (2n = 34)$ in agreement with two previously analyzed congeneric species, Ph. tibialis and Ph. laticollis (PETITPIERRE 1982; PETITPIERRE & SEGARRA 1985). These species seem to differ only in the number of medium and small chromosomes, thereby in their chromosomal architecture, a feature that should be more accurately investigated. As stated before (PETITPIERRE & SEGARRA 1985; PETITPIERRE 2011), the subtribe Chrysomelina to which Phratora, Chrysomela, Phaedon, Prasocuris, Hydrothassa and Plagiosterna belong to along with some other genera, show the 2n = 34 $(Xy_p)$  karyotype as the modal and presumably the ancestral state for this higher taxon.

The Neotropical *Platyphora spectabilis* has a diploid chromosome number of 2n = 24 (Xy<sub>p</sub>), which was also reported in the congeneric *P. aulica* (PETITPIERRE *et al.* 1988), and in three additional genera of Doryphorina, the subtribe in which they are placed, but it is not yet clear whether this value can be considered as the most plesiomorphous for this group (PETITPIERRE 2011).

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