

Manuscript Details

Manuscript number	YCRES_2019_316
Title	Early Cretaceous termites in amber from northern Spain (Isoptera)
Article type	Full Length Article

Abstract

Two virtually complete termites in Early Cretaceous (Late Albian) amber from Peñacerrada I outcrop, Spain, are described and figured, representing the most well-preserved Isoptera yet discovered from the Albian stage. The material is described as *Ithytermes montoyai*, gen. et sp. nov., and is similar in many details to the slightly younger *Krishnatermes yoddha* Engel, Barden, and Grimaldi of northern Myanmar amber. Given the presence of distinct soldiers in this grade of Cretaceous termites, it is likely that *I. montoyai* also exhibited such a tripartite caste system. In addition to the type material of *I. montoyai*, two fragmentary termites are recorded for the first time in Albian amber from the El Soplao outcrop, and in the few preserved details these taxa are not conspecific with the former.

Keywords	Albian; Euisoptera; eusociality; Mesozoic; taxonomy
Taxonomy	Paleontology, Invertebrate Paleontology
Corresponding Author	Alba Sánchez-García
Corresponding Author's Institution	Universitat de Barcelona, Facultat de Geologia
Order of Authors	Alba Sánchez-García, Enrique Peñalver, Xavier Delclòs, Michael Engel
Suggested reviewers	David Grimaldi, Torsten Wappler, Ricardo Pérez-de la Fuente, Vincent Perrichot
Opposed reviewers	Dong REN, Paul Eggleton

Submission Files Included in this PDF

File Name [File Type]

Manuscript.docx [Manuscript File]

To view all the submission files, including those not included in the PDF, click on the manuscript title on your EVISE Homepage, then click 'Download zip file'.

1 **Early Cretaceous termites in amber from northern Spain (Isoptera)**

2

3 Alba Sánchez-García ^{a,*}, Enrique Peñalver ^b, Xavier Delclòs ^c, Michael S. Engel ^{d,e}

4

5 ^a A. Sánchez-García

6 Departament de Botànica i Geologia, Facultat de Ciències Biològiques, Universitat de València,

7 C/ Dr. Moliner, 50, Burjassot 46100, València, Spain

8 e-mail: sanchez.garcia.alba@gmail.com

9

10 ^b E. Peñalver

11 Museo Geominero, Instituto Geológico y Minero de España, Cirilo Amorós 42, 46004, València,

12 Spain

13 e-mail: e.penalver@igme.es

14

15 ^c X. Delclòs

16 Departament de Dinàmica de la Terra i de l'Oceà and Institut de Recerca de la Biodiversitat

17 (IRBio), Facultat de Geologia, Universitat de Barcelona, Martí i Franquès s/n, Barcelona 08028,

18 Spain

19 e-mail: xdelclos@ub.edu

20

21 ^d M.S. Engel

22 Division of Entomology, Natural History Museum, and Department of Ecology & Evolutionary
23 Biology, 1501 Crestline Drive – Suite 140, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-
24 4415, USA

25 e-mail: msengel@ku.edu

26

27 ^e M.S. Engel

28 Division of Invertebrate Zoology, American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at
29 79th Street, New York, New York 10024-5192, USA

30

31 * Corresponding author

32

33 **Abstract** Two virtually complete termites in Early Cretaceous (Late Albian) amber from
34 Peñacerrada I outcrop, Spain, are described and figured, representing the most well-preserved
35 Isoptera yet discovered from the Albian stage. The material is described as *Ithytermes montoyai*,
36 gen. et sp. nov., and is similar in many details to the slightly younger *Krishnatermes yoddha*
37 Engel, Barden, and Grimaldi of northern Myanmar amber. Given the presence of distinct soldiers
38 in this grade of Cretaceous termites, it is likely that *I. montoyai* also exhibited such a tripartite
39 caste system. In addition to the type material of *I. montoyai*, two fragmentary termites are
40 recorded for the first time in Albian amber from the El Soplao outcrop, and in the few preserved
41 details these taxa are not conspecific with the former.

42

43 **Keywords:** Albian; Euisoptera; eusociality; Mesozoic; taxonomy

44

45

46

47 **1. Introduction**

48

49 Termites inspire awe, not the least of which is due to their remarkable societies. All of the more
50 than 3300 species of Isoptera are highly eusocial (Krishna et al., 2013), living in permanent
51 colonies and in which the roles of the society's participants are more or less fixed by a system of
52 castes — workers, soldiers, and winged reproductives. This advanced eusocial syndrome is
53 ancient among termites and, in fact, termites were perhaps first among the social insects
54 (Grimaldi and Engel, 2005). Termite eusociality was already present in the Early Cretaceous
55 (Martínez-Delclòs and Martinell, 1995; Thorne et al., 2000; Engel et al., 2016a), and it is likely
56 that the earliest termite societies were appearing during the latest Jurassic (Ware et al., 2010).
57 Not only were basal termites eusocial, but even the complexities of a tripartite caste system were
58 present by the mid-Cretaceous, and likely also in the Early Cretaceous (Martínez-Delclòs and
59 Martinell, 1995; Engel et al., 2016a). Despite the presence of intricate societies by the Early
60 Cretaceous, eusociality did not confer great ubiquity, and it appears to have been the much later
61 appearance of large colony sizes, supported in part by more developed nests, that permitted
62 termites to achieve the ecological dominance for which they are so famed today (Engel et al.,
63 2009). Nonetheless, while the Termitidae are dominant today and inform us greatly about termite
64 social dynamics and their ecological impact, it remains the frequently smaller societies of the
65 basal families that more closely approximate characteristics likely to have been influential in
66 early isopteran social evolution. Relationships among the basal lineages of termites provide a
67 greater perspective of early termite evolution, and the integration of fossils into this phylogenetic
68 framework provides the only direct evidence for understanding these episodes (Engel et al.,
69 2009, 2016a; Ware et al., 2010; Zhao et al., 2019). As such, the paleontological record of

70 termites is of significance and, in fact, Isoptera are not uncommon in many Cenozoic deposits
71 (e.g., Krishna, 1996; Engel and Krishna, 2007; Engel et al., 2007a, 2011a; Krishna and Grimaldi,
72 2009). These taxa are, as one would suspect, typically of more derived lineages and while
73 informative of Paleogene and Neogene events, such as biogeographic patterns and climatic
74 changes, they reveal little in terms of divergences among early termites. Relicts do exist within
75 the Cenozoic fauna, such as the diverse and widespread species of *Mastotermes* Froggatt
76 (Emerson, 1965; Krishna and Emerson, 1983; Krishna and Grimaldi, 1991; Wappler and Engel,
77 2006; Engel et al., 2015), the most basal of living termites and today native to northern Australia
78 (Emerson, 1965; Krishna et al., 2013). These species, however, do not give further refinement to
79 the affinities of mastotermitids among Isoptera. Conversely, Cretaceous termites are more
80 interesting for their unique combinations of traits placing many of them outside of traditional
81 concepts of the modern families and most form a well-circumscribed grade of taxa relative to the
82 basal families (Engel et al., 2009, 2016a). Most Cretaceous Isoptera, particularly those preserved
83 as compression fossils in sedimentary rock, are represented by the shed wings of alates and are
84 therefore of limited phylogenetic value due to the absence of so many critical traits present in the
85 body. Preservation in amber, however, leaves fossilized remains with life-like fidelity and it is
86 from these taxa that we may extract the greatest amount of character and paleobiological
87 information. Termites in Cretaceous amber, however, are not overly abundant, perhaps the sole
88 exception being the abundance of species and individuals in mid-Cretaceous amber from
89 Myanmar. Species are known in most of the major deposits and spanning the breadth of the
90 Cretaceous (Table 1), but these range in degrees of completeness, leaving much to be done on
91 the Mesozoic record of Isoptera. One glimmer of hope rests in the fact that the majority of these

92 taxa have been discovered in the last decade or so, suggesting that continued efforts will reveal
93 an even greater diversity of material from which to revisit and refine our hypotheses.

94 In this context, we provide a brief account of termites newly recovered from the Early
95 Cretaceous (Albian) Peñacerrada I (Burgos Province) and El Soplao (Cantabria Province)
96 outcrops in Spain. Previous records of termites from Albian-aged amber in Spain were two
97 species from the deposit of Peñacerrada I and one species from the deposit of San Just (Teruel
98 Province) (Engel and Delclòs, 2010), and those were exceedingly fragmentary. Much is the same
99 for the newly discovered Spanish amber termites from El Soplao. However, one piece from
100 Peñacerrada I nicely preserves two nearly complete alates (imagoes) and from these we can
101 observe more features than from any previously known Albian Isoptera. The Spanish termites,
102 along with those few from Lebanon (Barremian in age), are the earliest termites preserved in
103 amber.

104

105 **2. Material and methods**

106

107 The amber pieces MCNA 14936 and CES-446 were cut and embedded in a transparent epoxy
108 resin except the piece CES-552; the preparations were polished once the polymer hardened
109 (Nascimbene and Silverstein, 2000). These three samples were observed under three different
110 lenses, i.e., an Olympus SZX-12 stereomicroscope, and a Motic BA310 compound microscope
111 with reflected and transmitted light. Photomicrographs were taken with a Canon EOS 7D digital
112 camera attached to an Infinity K-2 long-distance microscope lens for general habitus, and a
113 Moticam 2500 camera attached to the Motic BA310 microscope for details. All photographs
114 were arranged and sharpened with Helicon focus and edited with Adobe Photoshop. Illustrations

115 were prepared with the aid of a camera lucida attached to an Olympus BX41 compound
116 microscope.

117 We have generally followed the classification of termites as presented by Krishna et al.
118 (2013), and categorically reject proposals to eliminate Isoptera as a name for this clade (Lo et al.,
119 2007), preferring the rank of infraorder as advocated by Engel (2011) and others, although the
120 name could equally be used without formal rank, much as is done for Aculeata among the
121 Hymenoptera. Morphological terminology has also generally followed that of Krishna et al.
122 (2013), while the format for the descriptions is analogous to those used elsewhere for basal grade
123 Isoptera (e.g., Engel et al., 2016a). Measurements were taken with the aid of an ocular
124 micrometer on an Olympus SZX-12 stereomicroscope.

125 Specimen MCNA 14936 is deposited in the Museo de Ciencias Naturales de Álava
126 (Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain), and specimens CES-446 and CES-552 are deposited in the amber fossil
127 collection of the Laboratory of the El Soplao Cave (Celis, Santander, Spain).

128

129 **3. Geological and paleontological settings**

130

131 Peñacerrada I

132 The Peñacerrada I [=Moraza] amber-bearing outcrop is included within the Utrillas Group *sensu*
133 Barrón et al. (2015) (eastern area of the Basque-Cantabrian Basin, Burgos Province, northern
134 Spain), and dated to the Late Albian (Barrón et al., 2015). This outcrop, together with the
135 Peñacerrada II amber-bearing outcrop in Álava Province, belongs to the so-called ‘Álava amber’.
136 In this area continental-transitional deposits can be differentiated into three subunits that are
137 represented by a deltaic succession, with a vertical tendency toward a regression of the deltaic

138 system in the lower-middle subunits and a vertical transgression in the upper subunit. The amber
139 is found in the middle subunit associated with coal and lignitic beds or organically-rich marl
140 levels, coinciding with the boundary between the maximum regression and the beginning of the
141 transgression, and it is mainly present at the top of filling sequences of interconnected channels
142 within deltaic bays. In general, these two amber deposits of the eastern region of the Basque-
143 Cantabrian Basin represent paralic-swamp environments (Peñalver and Delclòs, 2010). The
144 stratigraphy and taphonomy of the Peñacerrada I deposit are provided by Alonso et al. (2000).
145 Peñacerrada I amber includes a high diversity and abundance of arthropod inclusions. To date,
146 different hexapod orders have been recognized from this deposit (Collembola, Archaeognatha,
147 ‘Blattaria’, Isoptera, Orthoptera, Psocoptera, Thysanoptera, Hemiptera, Homoptera, Coleoptera,
148 Raphidioptera, Neuroptera, Trichoptera, Lepidoptera, Hymenoptera, and Diptera), as well as
149 crustaceans (Isopoda and Tanaidacea), and chelicerates (Acari, Arachnida and
150 Pseudoscorpionida). Termites are not abundant in Álava amber, with only five specimens
151 collected thus far of the 1500 bioinclusions. *Morazatermes krishnai* Engel and Delclòs, 2010 was
152 described from an imago (and wings of a second specimen), and *Cantabritermes simplex* Engel
153 and Delclòs, 2010 from one isolated forewing (Engel and Delclòs, 2010). Thus, the two imagoes
154 described in this paper correspond to the third isopteran species from Peñacerrada I.

155

156 El Soplao

157 The El Soplao amber-bearing outcrop is included within the Las Peñas Formation and is near
158 the village of Rábago, within the El Soplao Territory (western area of the Basque-Cantabrian
159 Basin, Santander Province, northern Spain). The El Soplao outcrop is dated to the early Albian.
160 The amber is found in a unit of heterolithic sandstone-siltstone and carbonaceous mudstone

161 related to broadly coastal delta-estuarine environments in unit P2 of the Rábago section (*sensu*
162 Najarro et al., 2009), but the depositional environment also exhibits a slight marine influence
163 (Najarro et al., 2010). Together with the amber, there were also dinoflagellate cists, spores of
164 vascular cryptogams, pollen grains of numerous gymnosperms and some angiosperms (the latter
165 poorly represented), abundant gymnosperm cuticle remains, fusainized wood, and marine or
166 brackishwater invertebrates such as gastropods and bivalves (Najarro et al., 2010). The
167 stratigraphy and taphonomy of the El Soplao deposit are provided by Najarro et al. (2009, 2010).
168 Embedded in the amber, 549 bioinclusions have been recorded, including fungi, plants, and
169 diverse arthropods. The hexapod orders hitherto found are Collembola, Blattaria, Isoptera,
170 Psocoptera, Thysanoptera, Raphidioptera, Neuroptera, Hemiptera, Coleoptera, Trichoptera,
171 Lepidoptera, Hymenoptera, Mecoptera, and Diptera (Pérez-de la Fuente, 2012). The record of
172 Isoptera consists of only two fragmentary specimens (one consisting on isolated partial wings)
173 collected thus far of the 549 bioinclusions. However, these bioinclusions represent the first
174 documentation of the order from El Soplao amber.

175

176 Institutional abbreviations

177 CES, Cueva El Soplao, Celis, Cantabria, Spain; MCNA, Museo de Ciencias Naturales de Álava,

178 Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain.

179

180 **4. Systematic paleontology**

181

182 Infraorder Isoptera Brullé, 1832

183 Clade Euisoptera Engel et al., 2009

184 'Meiatermes Grade'

185

186 Genus *Ithytermes*, gen. nov.

187

188 *Type species Ithytermes montoyai*, sp. nov.

189

190 *Diagnosis Imago.* Large termites, approximately 9.5 mm in length, with comparatively long,
191 erect setae prominent on much of body and wing scales. Head longer than wide; mandible
192 completely covered by labrum (dentition not visible in available material); antenna moniliform,
193 with 20 articles; compound eye circular, without emargination, separated from posterior border
194 of head by more than compound eye length; ocelli absent; fontanelle absent; occipital carina
195 present; subgenal sulcus present; ventral cervical sclerite absent. Pronotum large, slightly
196 broader than head, anterior border concave, posterior border medially straight, lateral borders
197 broadly rounded and slightly convergent posteriorly, apicolateral angles broadly rounded.
198 Procoxa apparently with weak ventral keel; femora not carinate or keeled ventrally; all tarsi
199 wholly pentamerous; tibial apical spur formula 3-4-4, spurs minutely serrate, asymmetrical;
200 tibiae with outer and pre-apical spurs present; pretarsal claws long, arolium present and large.
201 Wing membrane hyaline, reticulate; forewing scale large, greatly overlapping hind wing base,
202 humeral margin convex, basal suture convex, all veins originating within scale, surface of scale
203 tegminous with numerous erect setae, with distinct reticulation in scale posterior to M, CuA, and
204 CuP; CuP arched, termination of CuP (claval fissure) on posterior wing margin basal to basal
205 suture; Sc long; multiple, elongate R veins, extending beyond wing midlength; R₁ apparently
206 simple; R₂ with numerous branches, particularly apically; Rs long, branching in apicalmost part

207 of wing (an indeterminate number of branches but inferior branches lacking); radial field only
208 slightly expanding apically; M branching near wing midlength; CuA extensively branched and
209 apparently encompassing majority of posterior wing margin. Hind wing without defined scale,
210 lacking distinct basal suture, apparently without anal lobe. Abdominal styli prominent, thin, long,
211 projecting beyond abdominal apex; cerci short, with five short and somewhat indistinct
212 cercomeres.

213

214 *Etymology* The new generic name is a combination of *ithyos*, meaning, “upright”, and *termes*,
215 common generic stem meaning, “termite.” The name refers to the comparatively abundant and
216 upright setae of the head and body. The gender of the name is masculine.

217

218 *Ithytermes montoyai*, sp. nov.

219 (Figs. 1–4)

220

221 *Holotype* Imago (Figs. 1, 2A–C), MCNA 14936, Early Cretaceous, Late Albian, Peñacerrada I
222 outcrop [Peñacerrada I = Moraza], Utrillas Group (Barrón et al., 2015), eastern area of the
223 Basque-Cantabrian Basin, Burgos, northern Spain; deposited in the Museo de Ciencias Naturales
224 de Álava, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain.

225

226 *Paratype* A single imago (Figs. 1, 2D–F, 3, 4), preserved in the same piece of amber with the
227 holotype, and in the same repository.

228

229 *Other syninclusions* include a microlepidopteran and a male ceratopogonid.

230

231 *Diagnosis* As for the genus (*vide supra*).

232

233 *Description Imago.* Large, total body length 9.46 mm (from apex of abdomen to tip of labrum);
234 head longer than wide, length of head to apex of labrum 2.30 mm, width across compound eyes
235 1.50 mm, width posterior to compound eyes 1.15 mm; labrum wider than long, length 0.30 mm,
236 width 0.50 mm; compound eye length 0.50 mm; median length of pronotum 1.08 mm, depth of
237 anterior concavity 0.15 mm (maximum width of pronotum cannot be adequately measured in
238 either specimen but is wider than head); length of metatibia 2.05 mm; length of forewing scale
239 1.50 mm; forewing length (including scale) at least 9.5 mm (neither individual with completely
240 preserved forewings, but nearly complete, partially folded left forewing of paratype at least 9.5
241 mm in length and missing portion of apex suggests it could have been perhaps slightly more than
242 10 mm in life); styli length 0.31 mm; cerci length 0.19 mm.

243 Integument dark brown throughout except lighter on antenna, tarsi, and styli; impunctate
244 and generally faintly imbricate except on head distinctly and coarsely imbricate. Integument with
245 scattered, fine, erect to suberect, moderately long setae (setae on average about one half length of
246 compound eye); setae largely pale brown in color except on legs seemingly darker (either dark
247 brown or nearly black); setae particularly prominent on head, pronotum, forewing scale, and
248 abdominal terga; antenna with numerous setae arranged in irregular whorls, setae as long as or
249 slightly longer than individual antennal articles; legs with numerous, erect, stiff, bristle-like
250 setae, particularly prominent on tibiae; forewing scale with scattered, erect, fine, long setae; styli
251 and cerci with numerous, minute, fine, mostly apically-directed or suberect setae.

252 Head robust, longer than wide, posterior border broadly and gently rounded, lateral
253 borders parallel-sided; mandibles covered entirely by labrum (dentition cannot be discerned as
254 preserved); labrum subquadrate, wider than long; postclypeus flat, transverse, much wider than
255 long; antenna moniliform, with 20 articles (based on right antenna of paratype; left antenna of
256 paratype and both antennae of holotype damaged and incomplete); compound eye without
257 anterior emargination, circular, separated from lower margin of head by slightly more than
258 compound eye diameter, separated from posterior border of head by about 1.5 times compound
259 eye length; ocelli ('ocelloids' sensu Engel et al., 2009) absent; fontanelle absent; Y-shaped
260 ecdysial cleavage scar absent; ventral cervical sclerite absent. Pronotum large, broad, broader
261 than head; anterior border concave, with rounded apicolateral angles, concavity comparatively
262 shallow; lateral borders slightly convergent posteriorly, convex, with posterior corners gently
263 rounded and tapering inward; posterior border medially straight. Procoxa with weak ventral keel;
264 femora not carinate or keeled ventrally; all tarsi wholly pentamerous; tibiae with 2–3 outer spines
265 along length, tibial spur formula 3-4-4, spurs of all legs asymmetrical; arolium present and
266 comparatively large, pretarsal claws long, simple. Wings hyaline, membrane reticulate (faint as
267 preserved but discernible), not pimplate or nodulate. Forewing veins Sc, R, and Rs more strongly
268 pigmented than remainder of veins; forewing scale large, greatly overlapping hind wing base,
269 scale about as long as medial length of pronotum, humeral margin convex, basal suture convex;
270 all major longitudinal veins originating inside wing scale, with strong reticulation between veins
271 posterior to M within scale; Sc long, simple, terminating along anterior wing margin apparently
272 near one-third wing length; R1 simple, terminating slightly proximal wing midlength; Rs
273 elongate, with numerous branches and sub-branches; radial field not greatly expanded apically; M
274 elongate, simple, paralleling and nearest to Rs; CuA branching extensively and across its entire

275 length, CuA field encompassing entire posterior margin of wing. Hind wing without basal suture
276 and without anal lobe. Abdomen somewhat compressed, lateral borders roughly parallel; styli
277 present, thin, slender, projecting beyond abdominal apex; cerci short, distinctly shorter than styli,
278 with five cercomeres.

279

280 *Etymology* The specific epithet honors Dr. Plinio Montoya, Universitat de València (Spain).

281

282 Indeterminate (Fig. 5)

283

284 *Material* Imago, CES 552, Early Cretaceous, Albian, Las Peñas Formation, El Soplao outcrop;
285 deposited in the Laboratory of the El Soplao Cave, Celis, Santander, Spain.

286

287 *Comments* Isolated partial wings.

288

289 Indeterminate

290

291 *Material* Imago, CES 446, Early Cretaceous, Albian, Las Peñas Formation, El Soplao outcrop;
292 deposited in the Laboratory of the El Soplao Cave, Celis, Santander, Spain.

293

294 *Comments* A fragmentary alate largely obscured by fractures and debris but with pentamerous
295 tarsi discernible and about 5 mm in total length. No other meaningful details of this specimen
296 can be observed but it nonetheless records a smaller form of basal grade termite within the El
297 Soplao deposits.

298

299 **5. Discussion**

300

301 *Ithytermes montoyai* gen. et sp. nov. is a comparative large termite, approximating the
302 proportions of other large Cretaceous alates such as those recently described from Cenomanian
303 amber from Myanmar (Engel et al., 2016a). While not as massive as some Tertiary species, such
304 as those of the genus *Gyatermes* Engel and Gross, 2009 which had forewing lengths of about 27–
305 34 mm (Engel and Gross, 2009; Engel and Tanaka, 2015), the present species is still among the
306 larger of fossil termite species. Among described genera, *Ithytermes* gen. nov. appears to share
307 most features in common with *Krishnatermes* Engel, Barden, and Grimaldi, 2016 in Burmese
308 amber (Engel et al., 2016a). Aside from their proportions, both genera have many shared traits,
309 although most are clearly symplesiomorphies shared with other basal lineages including
310 mastotermitids. Like *Krishnatermes*, *Ithytermes* share with mastotermitids the presence of well-
311 developed, asymmetrical tibial spines; a 3-4-4 tibial spur formula; wholly pentamerous tarsi; a
312 large, apicolaterally rounded pronotum; a massive forewing scale with all primary veins
313 originating within, and a dense reticulate pattern present between the veins within the scale;
314 multiple Rs branches within a comparatively narrow radial field along anterior wing margin (not
315 greatly widening toward wing apex); and the absence of a hind wing scale. The presence of styli
316 is another noticeably primitive feature of *Ithytermes*, shared across most basal termite lineages
317 (Krishna et al., 2013). Unfortunately, the mandibles are obscured in the holotype and paratype
318 and it is therefore unknown whether or not a subsidiary tooth was present. Such a tooth is present
319 in Archotermopsidae and some *Meiatermes*-grade genera, where known. However, *Ithytermes*
320 differ from *Krishnatermes* by the presence of a large arolium; distinct subgenal and occipital

321 sulci; long, slender styli; larger number of cercomeres; and the numerous, elongate, erect setae
322 on the head, pronotum, and forewing scale.

323 It was recently documented that at least some species of the *Meiatermes* grade had
324 tripartite castes and specialized soldiers, representing a dramatic degree of specialization among
325 early termite societies (Engel et al., 2016a). Given the phylogenetic placement of these genera
326 relative to Mastotermitidae, Archotermopsidae, and Hodotermitidae, families in which well-
327 developed soldiers are present, and the presence of similar soldiers in at least *Krishnatermes*
328 *yoddha* Engel, Barden, and Grimaldi, 2016 and *Ginormotermes rex* (Engel, Barden, and
329 Grimaldi, 2016) (Engel et al., 2016a, b), it is reasonable to conclude that all *Meiatermes*-grade
330 species had such castes. Thus, this would be true for the present species as well.

331 Collectively, the Cretaceous record of termites, inclusive of those known less completely
332 from compression fossils, reveals a considerable diversity and one that was scarcely hinted at
333 merely 20 years ago, particularly those from the Early Cretaceous (e.g., Thorne et al., 2000;
334 Engel et al., 2007b; Grimaldi et al., 2008). Although termites were not abundant at the time and
335 their colonies were likely small, the group had nonetheless experienced considerable
336 cladogenesis such that disparate species could be found throughout the world (Engel et al., 2009,
337 2016a; Krishna et al., 2013). From this diversity and the specialization of their societal
338 structures, it is apparent that termites were under considerable influence from their surroundings
339 and likely interactions with other organisms such that there was selective maintenance for
340 complex systems of colony defense. This pressure could have been from vertebrate predators that
341 would see a colony as a concentration of resources, but also from other social lineages such as
342 ants, the present-day rivals of the termites. Indeed, advanced eusocial ants and termites co-
343 existed during the Cretaceous (Barden and Grimaldi, 2016; Engel et al., 2016a), but the latter

344 certainly predated the former as did their societies (Engel et al., 2009; Ware et al., 2010). In fact,
345 while termites extend well into the Early Cretaceous and were likely already present in the latest
346 Jurassic (Engel et al., 2007b; Grimaldi et al., 2008; Ware et al., 2010), the earliest occurrences of
347 true ants are from the earliest Cenomanian, although they most certainly must have been present
348 during at least the Albian (Perrichot, et al., 2008a; LaPolla et al., 2013; Barden and Grimaldi,
349 2016; Barden, 2017). It is therefore fascinating that termites are the sole social insects known
350 from Spanish amber. Arthropod inclusions are abundant from the varied Albian amber deposits
351 across the Iberian Peninsula, and most of the major orders of hexapods are represented (e.g.,
352 Delclòs et al., 2007; Peñalver and Delclòs, 2010; Pérez-de la Fuente, 2012; Engel et al., 2015b;
353 Sánchez-García et al., 2015; Sánchez-García and Engel, 2016a, b). Termites have been
354 previously described from the Peñacerrada I locality (Engel and Delclòs, 2010), and those
355 together with the present material document a rather diverse representation of basal Euisoptera
356 within the fauna at that time. Termites are also present in the slightly younger, Early
357 Cenomanian deposits of nearby localities in France (e.g., Engel et al., 2011b), and those taxa also
358 belong to the basal *Meiatermes* grade of genera. Further afield geographically but roughly coeval
359 with the deposits of France, there is also a diverse termite fauna present in the amber of northern
360 Myanmar (Engel et al., 2007b, 2016a). In the Burmese and French deposits ants are similarly
361 well represented (e.g., Engel and Grimaldi, 2005; Perrichot et al., 2008b; Perrichot, 2014, 2015;
362 Barden and Grimaldi, 2016; Barden, 2017). However, no ants have been recovered from any of
363 the Spanish localities and this absence is striking given the close geographic and temporal
364 proximity to deposits with significant myrmecofaunas.

365

366 **Acknowledgements**

367 We thank Rafael López-del Valle (MCNA, Spain) for the preparation of the samples, the director
368 and staff of the Museo de Ciencias Naturales de Álava for the access to the Peñacerrada I
369 specimens, and the staff of the El Soplao Cave (Santander, Spain), SIEC S.A., and the
370 Government of Cantabria for the access to the El Soplao specimens. This project forms a portion
371 of the first author's doctoral dissertation research at the Universitat de Barcelona, and which is
372 supported by a grant from the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness. The work is a
373 contribution of the Division of Entomology, University of Kansas Natural History Museum, and
374 to the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities Project CRE CGL2017-84419
375 (AEI/FEDER, UE).

376

377 **References**

378

- 379 Alonso J, Arillo A, Barrón E, Corral JC, Grimalt J, López JF, López R, Martínez-Delclòs X,
380 Ortuño V, Peñalver E, Trincão PR (2000) A new fossil resin with biological inclusions in
381 Lower Cretaceous deposits from Álava (northern Spain, Basque-Cantabrian Basin).
382 *Journal of Paleontology* 74(1): 158–178.
- 383 Barden P (2017) Fossil ants (Hymenoptera: Formicidae): Ancient diversity and the rise of
384 modern lineages. *Myrmecological News* 24: 1–30.
- 385 Barden P, Grimaldi DA (2016) Adaptive radiation in socially advanced stem-group ants from the
386 Cretaceous. *Current Biology* 26(4): 515–521.
- 387 Barrón E, Peyrot D, Rodríguez-López JP, Meléndez N, López del Valle R, Najarro M, Rosales I,
388 Comas-Rengifo MJ (2015) Palynology of Aptian and upper Albian (Lower Cretaceous)

- 389 amber-bearing outcrops of the southern margin of the Basque-Cantabrian basin (northern
390 Spain). *Cretaceous Research* 52: 292–312.
- 391 Brullé GA (1832) *Expédition Scientifique de Morée. Section des Sciences Physiques. Tome III.*
392 *Partie 1. Zoologie. Deuxième Section—Des Animaux Articulés.* Levrault, Paris.
- 393 Cockerell TDA (1916) Insects in Burmese amber. *American Journal of Science, Fourth Series*
394 42(248): 135–138.
- 395 Cockerell TDA (1917) Insects in Burmese amber. *Annals of the Entomological Society of*
396 *America* 10(4): 323–329.
- 397 Delclòs X, Arillo A, Peñalver E, Barrón E, Soriano C, López del Valle R, Bernárdez E, Corral C,
398 Ortuño VM (2007) Fossiliferous amber deposits from the Cretaceous (Albian) of Spain.
399 *Comptes Rendus Palevol* 6: 135–149.
- 400 Emerson AE (1965) A review of the Mastotermitidae (Isoptera), including a new fossil genus
401 from Brazil. *American Museum Novitates* 2236: 1–46.
- 402 Engel MS (2011) Family-group names for termites (Isoptera), redux. *ZooKeys* 148: 171–184.
- 403 Engel MS (2014) A termite (Isoptera) in Late Cretaceous amber from Vendée, northwestern
404 France. *Paleontological Contributions* 10E: 21–24.
- 405 Engel MS, Delclòs X (2010) Primitive termites in Cretaceous amber from Spain and Canada
406 (Isoptera). *Journal of the Kansas Entomological Society* 83(2): 111–128.
- 407 Engel MS, Grimaldi DA (2005) Primitive new ants in Cretaceous amber from Myanmar, New
408 Jersey, and Canada (Hymenoptera: Formicidae). *American Museum Novitates* 3485: 1–
409 23.
- 410 Engel MS, Gross M (2009) A giant termite from the late Miocene of Styria, Austria (Isoptera).
411 *Naturwissenschaften* 96(2): 289–295.

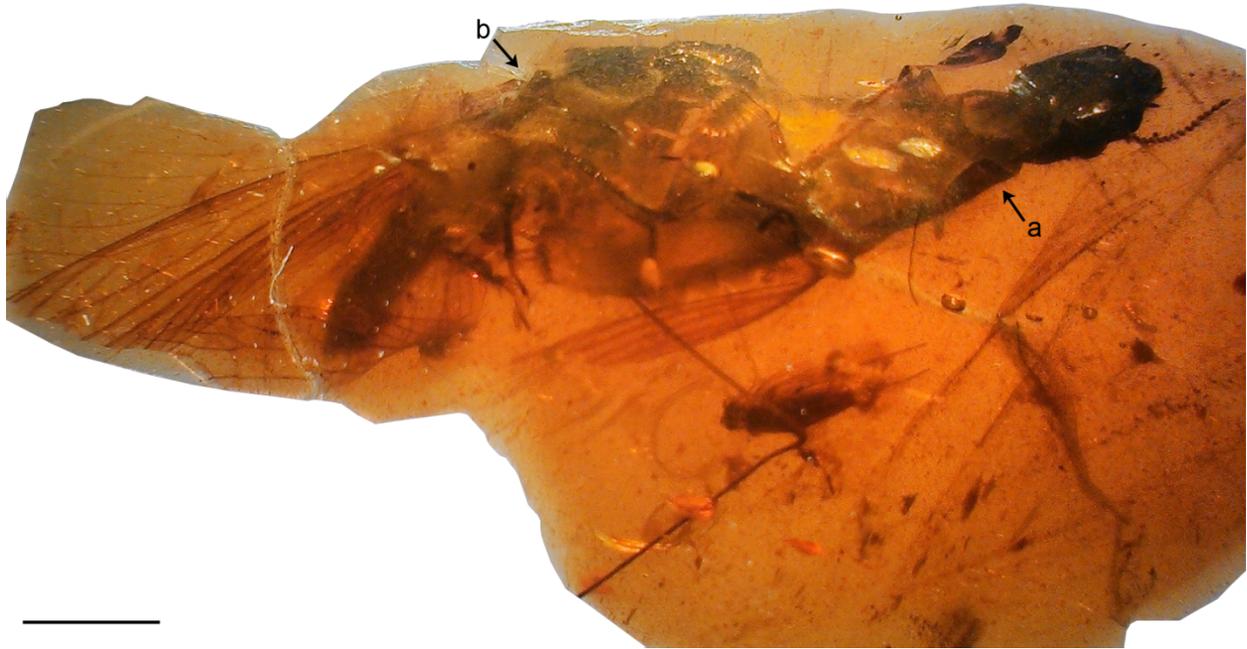
- 412 Engel MS, Krishna K (2007) Drywood termites in Dominican amber (Isoptera: Kalotermitidae).
413 Beiträge zur Entomologie 57(2): 263–275.
- 414 Engel MS, Tanaka T (2015) A giant termite of the genus *Gyatermes* from the Late Miocene of
415 Nagano Prefecture, Japan (Isoptera). Novitates Paleoentomologicae 10: 1–10.
- 416 Engel MS, Barden P, Riccio ML, Grimaldi DA (2016a) Morphologically specialized termite
417 castes and advanced sociality in the Early Cretaceous. Current Biology 26(4): 522–530.
- 418 Engel MS, Barden PM, Grimaldi DA (2016b) A replacement name for the Cretaceous termite
419 genus *Gigantotermes* (Isoptera). Novitates Paleoentomologicae 14: 1–2.
- 420 Engel MS, Currano ED, Jacobs BF (2015a) The first mastotermitid termite from Africa
421 (Isoptera: Mastotermitidae): A new species of *Mastotermes* from the early Miocene of
422 Ethiopia. Journal of Paleontology 89(6): 1038–1042.
- 423 Engel MS, Grimaldi DA, Krishna K (2007a) A synopsis of Baltic amber termites (Isoptera).
424 Stuttgarter Beiträge zur Naturkunde, Serie B (Geologie und Paläontologie) 372: 1–20.
- 425 Engel MS, Grimaldi DA, Krishna K (2007b) Primitive termites from the Early Cretaceous of
426 Asia (Isoptera). Stuttgarter Beiträge zur Naturkunde, Serie B (Geologie und
427 Paläontologie) 371: 1–32.
- 428 Engel MS, Grimaldi DA, Krishna K (2009) Termites (Isoptera): Their phylogeny, classification,
429 and rise to ecological dominance. American Museum Novitates 3650: 1–27.
- 430 Engel MS, Grimaldi DA, Nascimbene PC, Singh H (2011a) The termites of Early Eocene
431 Cambay amber, with the earliest record of the Termitidae (Isoptera). ZooKeys 148: 105–
432 123.

- 433 Engel MS, Nel A, Azar D, Soriano C, Tafforeau P, Néraudeau D, Colin J-P, Perrichot V (2011b)
434 New, primitive termites (Isoptera) from Early Cretaceous ambers of France and Lebanon.
435 *Palaeodiversity* 4: 39–49.
- 436 Engel MS, Peris D, Chatzimanolis S, Delclòs X (2015b) An earwig (Insecta: Dermaptera) in
437 Early Cretaceous amber from Spain. *Insect Systematics and Evolution* 46(3): 291–300.
- 438 Grimaldi D, Engel MS (2005) *Evolution of the Insects*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- 439 Grimaldi DA, Engel MS, Krishna K (2008) The species of Isoptera (Insecta) from the Early
440 Cretaceous Crato Formation: A revision. *American Museum Novitates* 3626: 1–30.
- 441 Krishna K (1996) New fossil species of termites of the subfamily Nasutitermitinae from
442 Dominican and Mexican amber (Isoptera, Termitidae). *American Museum Novitates*
443 3176: 1–13.
- 444 Krishna K, Emerson AE (1983) A new fossil species of termite from Mexican amber,
445 *Mastotermes electromexicus* (Isoptera, Mastotermitidae). *American Museum Novitates*
446 2767: 1–8.
- 447 Krishna K, Grimaldi D (1991) A new fossil species from Dominican amber of the living
448 Australian termite genus *Mastotermes* (Isoptera: Mastotermitidae). *American Museum*
449 *Novitates* 3021: 1–10.
- 450 Krishna K, Grimaldi D (2000) A new subfamily, genus, and species of termite (Isoptera) from
451 New Jersey Cretaceous amber. In: Grimaldi D (ed) *Studies on Fossils in Amber, with*
452 *particular Reference to the Cretaceous of New Jersey*. Leiden: Backhuys Publishers,
453 Leiden, pp. 133–140.
- 454 Krishna K, Grimaldi DA (2003) The first Cretaceous Rhinotermitidae (Isoptera): A new species,
455 genus, and subfamily in Burmese amber. *American Museum Novitates* 3390: 1–10.

- 456 Krishna K, Grimaldi D (2009) Diverse Rhinotermitidae and Termitidae (Isoptera) in Dominican
457 amber. *American Museum Novitates* 3640: 1–48.
- 458 Krishna K, Grimaldi DA, Krishna V, Engel MS (2013) Treatise on the Isoptera of the world.
459 *Bulletin of the American Museum of Natural History* 377: 1–2704.
- 460 LaPolla JS, Dlussky GM, Perrichot V (2013) Ants and the fossil record. *Annual Review of*
461 *Entomology* 58: 609–630.
- 462 Lo N, Engel MS, Cameron S, Nalepa CA, Tokuda G, Grimaldi D, Kitade O, Krishna K, Klass K-
463 D, Maekawa K, Miura T, Thompson GJ (2007) Save Isoptera: A comment on Inward et
464 al. *Biology Letters* 3(5): 562–563.
- 465 Martínez-Delclòs X, Martinell J (1995) The oldest known record of social insects. *Journal of*
466 *Paleontology* 69(3): 594–599.
- 467 Najarro M, Peñalver E, Pérez-de la Fuente R, Ortega-Blanco J, Menor-Salván C, Barrón E,
468 Soriano C, Rosales I, López del Valle R, Velasco F, Tornos F, Daviero-Gomez V, Gomez
469 B, Delclòs X (2010) Review of the El Soplao amber outcrop, Early Cretaceous of
470 Cantabria, Spain. *Acta Geologica Sinica* 84: 959–976.
- 471 Najarro M, Peñalver E, Rosales L, Pérez-de la Fuente R, Daviero-Gomez V, Gomez B, Delclòs
472 X (2009) Un usual concentration of Early Albian arthropod bearing amber in the Basque-
473 Cantabrian Basin (El Soplao, Cantabria, Northern Spain): palaeoenvironmental and
474 palaeobiological implications. *Geologica Acta* 7: 363–387.
- 475 Nascimbene P, Silverstein H (2000) The preparation of fragile Cretaceous ambers for
476 conservation and study of organismal inclusions. Pp. 93–102 in D. Grimaldi (ed.) *Studies*
477 *on Fossils in Amber, with Particular Reference to the Cretaceous of New Jersey*.
478 Backhuys Publishers, Leiden.

- 479 Peñalver E, Delclòs X (2010) Spanish amber. Pp. 236–270 in D. Penney (ed.) *Biodiversity of*
480 *Fossils in Amber from the Major World Deposits*. Siri Scientific Press, Manchester.
- 481 Pérez-de la Fuente R (2012) Paleobiología de los Artrópodos del ámbar Cretácico de El Soplao
482 (Cantabria, España). PhD Thesis, University of Barcelona.
- 483 Perrichot V (2014) A new species of the Cretaceous ant *Zigrasimecia* based on the worker caste
484 reveals placement of the genus in the Sphecomyrminae (Hymenoptera: Formicidae).
485 *Myrmecological News* 19: 165–169.
- 486 Perrichot V (2015) A new species of *Baikuris* (Hymenoptera: Formicidae: Sphecomyrminae) in
487 mid-Cretaceous amber from France. *Cretaceous Research* 52: 585–590.
- 488 Perrichot V, Lacau S, Néraudeau D, Nel A (2008a) Fossil evidence for the early ant evolution.
489 *Naturwissenschaften* 95(2): 85–90.
- 490 Perrichot V, Nel A, Néraudeau D, Lacau S, Guyot T (2008b) New fossil ants in French
491 Cretaceous amber (Hymenoptera: Formicidae). *Naturwissenschaften* 95(2): 91–97.
- 492 Poinar GO (2009) Description of an Early Cretaceous termite (Isoptera: Kalotermitidae) and its
493 associated intestinal Protozoa, with comments on their co-evolution. *Parasites and*
494 *Vectors* 2: 12 [doi:10.1186/1756-3305-2-12].
- 495 Sánchez-García A, Engel MS (2016a) Long-term stasis in a diverse fauna of Early Cretaceous
496 springtails (Collembola: Symphypleona). *Journal of Systematic Palaeontology* 15(7):
497 513–537.
- 498 Sánchez-García A, Engel MS (2016b) Springtails from the Early Cretaceous amber of Spain
499 (Collembola: Entomobryomorpha), with an annotated checklist of fossil Collembola.
500 *American Museum Novitates* 3862: 1–47.

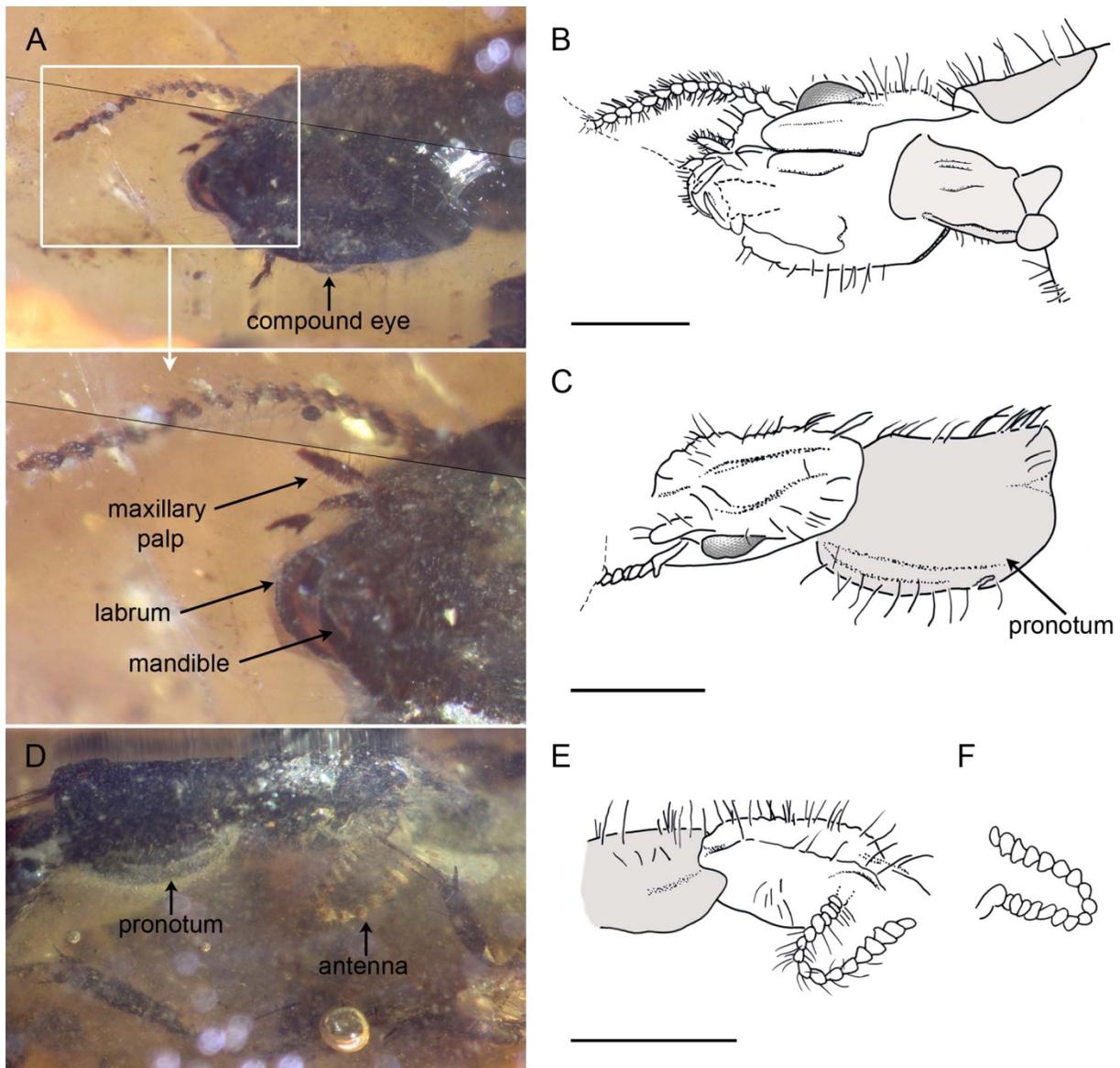
- 501 Sánchez-García A, Peñalver E, Pérez-de la fuente R, Delclòs X. (2015) A rich and diverse
502 tanaidomorphan (Crustacea: Tanaidacea) assemblage associated with Early Cretaceous
503 resin-producing forests in North Iberia: Palaeobiological implications. *Journal of*
504 *Systematic Palaeontology* 13(8): 645–676.
- 505 Schlüter T (1989) Neue Daten über harzkonservierte Arthropoden aus dem Cenomanium NW-
506 Frankreichs. *Documenta Naturae, München* 56(5): 59–70, +6 pls.
- 507 Thorne BL, Grimaldi DA, Krishna K (2000) Early fossil history of the termites. In: Abe T,
508 Bignell DE, Higashi M (eds) *Termites: Evolution, Sociality, Symbioses, Ecology*.
509 Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, pp. 77–93.
- 510 Wappler T, Engel MS (2006) A new record of *Mastotermes* from the Eocene of Germany
511 (Isoptera: Mastotermitidae). *Journal of Paleontology* 80(2): 380–385.
- 512 Ware JL, Grimaldi DA, Engel MS (2010) The effects of fossil placement and calibration on
513 divergence time and rates: An example from the termites (Insecta: Isoptera). *Arthropod*
514 *Structure and Development* 39(2): 204–219.
- 515 Zhao Z, Eggleton P, Yin X, Gao T, Shih C, Ren D (2019) The oldest known mastotermitids
516 (Blattodea: Termitoidea) and phylogeny of basal termites. *Systematic Entomology* 44:
517 612–623.
- 518



519

520 **Fig. 1.** Photograph of the holotype (specimen MCNA 14936a) and paratype (specimen MCNA521 14936b) of *Ithytermes montoyai* gen. et sp. nov. in Peñacerrada amber. Scale bar: 2 mm.

522

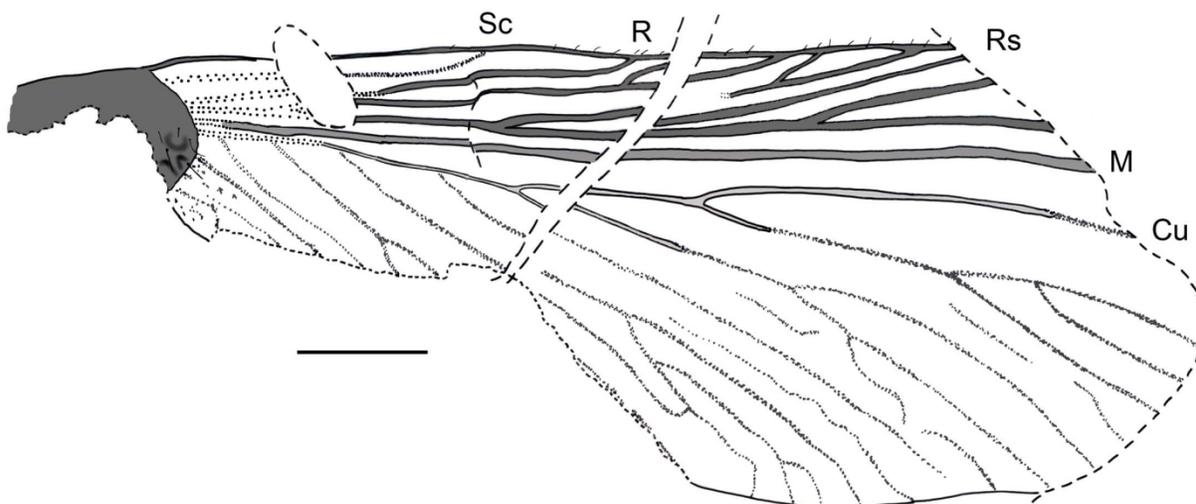


523

524 **Fig. 2.** Details of the holotype (subfigures A, B, C, specimen MCNA 14936a) and paratype
 525 (subfigures D, E, F, specimen MCNA 14936b) of *Ithytermes montoyai* gen. et sp. nov. A,
 526 microphotograph of head in ventral view showing details of left antenna and mouthparts
 527 (magnified area). B, camera lucida drawing of head in ventrolateral view. C, camera lucida
 528 drawing of head and pronotum in dorsolateral view. D, microphotograph of head and pronotum
 529 in lateral view. E, camera lucida drawing of head and pronotum in lateral view. F, camera lucida

530 drawing of right antenna. Scale bars: A, B – 1 mm (both to the same scale); C, 1 mm; D, E, F – 1
531 mm (all to the same scale).

532

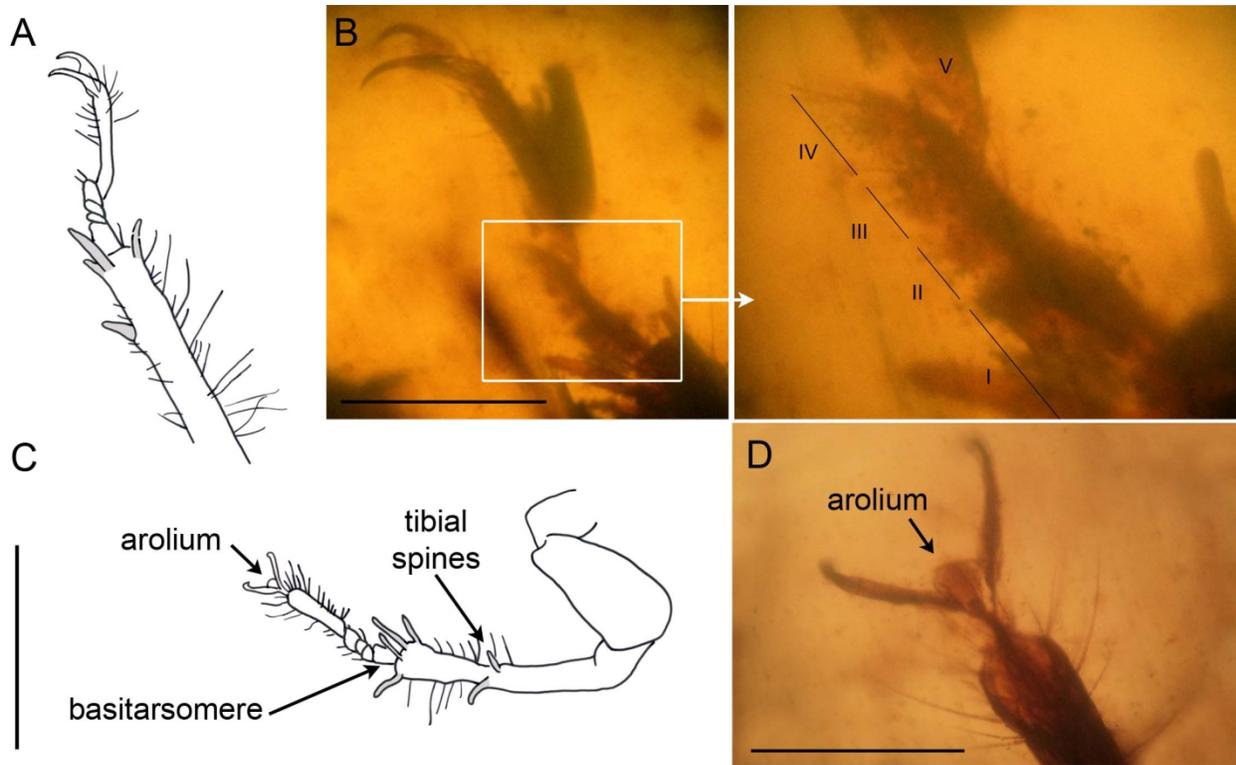


533

534 **Fig. 3.** Camera lucida drawing of the right forewing of the paratype of *Ithytermes montoyai* gen.

535 et sp. nov., specimen MCNA 14936b.

536



537

538 **Fig. 4.** Details of the paratype of *Ithytermes montoyai* gen. et sp. nov., specimen MCNA 14936b.

539 A, Camera lucida drawing of right metatibial apex, metatarsus, and metapretarsus, lateral view.

540 B, microphotographs of right metatarsus, and metapretarsus, lateral view. See detail of tarsal

541 segmentation in the magnified area. C, Camera lucida drawing of entire right midleg showing

542 stout femur and tibia, spination, and tarsal segmentation. D, microphotograph of arolium. Scale

543 bars: A, C – 1 mm (both to the same scale); B – 0.5 mm; D – 0.25 mm.

544



545

546 **Fig. 5.** Photograph of Indeterminate specimen CES 552 in El Soplao amber.

547

548 **Table 1.** Described Cretaceous amber termites (Isoptera).

Species	Locality	Age
<i>Melqartitermes myrrheus</i> Engel, Grimaldi & Krishna, 2007	Lebanon	Barremian
<i>Lebanotermes veltzae</i> Engel, Azar & Nel, 2011	Mdeyrij-Hammana, Lebanon	Barremian
Indeterminate (Engel et al., 2011)	Mdeyrij-Hammana, Lebanon	Barremian
Indeterminate (Engel et al., 2011)	Mdeyrij-Hammana, Lebanon	Barremian
Indeterminate (Engel et al., 2011)	Mdeyrij-Hammana, Lebanon	Barremian
<i>Ithytermes montoyai</i>, gen. et sp. nov.	Peñacerrada I, Spain	Albian
<i>Cantabritermes simplex</i> Engel & Delclòs, 2010	Peñacerrada I, Spain	Albian

<i>Morazatermes krishnai</i> Engel & Delclòs, 2010	Peñacerrada I, Spain	Albian
Indeterminate (herein)	El Soplao, Spain	Albian
Indeterminate (herein)	El Soplao, Spain	Albian
<i>Aragonitermes teruelensis</i> Engel & Delclòs, 2010	San Just, Spain	Albian
<i>Anisotermes xiai</i> Zhao, Eggleton & Ren, 2019	Kachin, Myanmar	Cenomanian
<i>Archeorhinotermes rossi</i> Krishna & Grimaldi, 2003	Kachin, Myanmar	Cenomanian
<i>Dharmatermes avernalis</i> Engel, Grimaldi & Krishna, 2007	Kachin, Myanmar	Cenomanian
<i>Ginormotermes rex</i> (Engel, Barden & Grimaldi, 2016)	Kachin, Myanmar	Cenomanian
<i>Kachinitermes tristis</i> (Cockerell, 1917)	Kachin, Myanmar	Cenomanian
<i>Kachinitermopsis burmensis</i> (Poinar, 2009)	Kachin, Myanmar	Cenomanian
<i>Krishnatermes yoddha</i> Engel, Barden & Grimaldi, 2016	Kachin, Myanmar	Cenomanian
<i>Mastotermes monostichus</i> Zhao, Eggleton & Ren, 2019	Kachin, Myanmar	Cenomanian
<i>Mylacrotermes cordatus</i> Engel, Grimaldi & Krishna, 2007	Kachin, Myanmar	Cenomanian
<i>Proelectrotermes holmgreni</i> Engel, Grimaldi & Krishna, 2007	Kachin, Myanmar	Cenomanian
<i>Proelectrotermes swinhoi</i> (Cockerell, 1916)	Kachin, Myanmar	Cenomanian
<i>Tanytermes anawrahtai</i> Engel, Grimaldi & Krishna, 2007	Kachin, Myanmar	Cenomanian
<i>Lutetiatermes priscus</i> Schlüter, 1989	Bezonnais, France	Cenomanian
<i>Mastotermes sarthensis</i> Schlüter, 1989	Bezonnais, France	Cenomanian
<i>Santonitermes chloae</i> Engel, Nel & Perrichot, 2011	Archingeay, France	Cenomanian
<i>Syagriotermes salomeae</i> Engel, Nel & Perrichot, 2011	Archingeay, France	Cenomanian
Indeterminate (Engel et al., 2011)	Archingeay, France	Cenomanian
<i>Carinatermes nascimbenei</i> Krishna & Grimaldi, 2000	New Jersey, USA	Turonian
<i>Termitotron vendeense</i> Engel, 2014	Garnache 1, France	Turonian
Indeterminate (Engel & Delclòs, 2010)	Grassy Lake, Canada	Campanian