Synonymic notes on Palaearctic and Oriental Scydmaenus (Coleoptera: Staphylinidae: Scydmaeninae)

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The last two years brought surprising descriptions and nomenclatural changes in the tribe Scydmaenini of the ant-like stone beetles. Makhan & Ezzatpanah (2011) established a new genus Roepnarainius, clearly based on a misinterpretation of morphological characters. Another curious taxonomic decision was the placement by Tronquet (2012) of Scydmaenus perrisi Reitter, 1882 as a junior synonym of S. hellwigii (Herbst, 1792). Illustrations in that article suggest that the material studied by Tronquet was misidentified, and a superficial similarity of aedeagi in two other common European species of Scydmaenus led to erroneous conclusions. These two cases are commented on and verified in the present paper.

Scydmaenus Latreille


Roepnarainius Makhan & Ezzatpanah, 2011: 1, syn. nov. Type species: Roepnarainius jacquelineae Makhan & Ezzatpanah, 2011 (original designation).

Remarks. Makhan & Ezzatpanah (2012) did not provide a diagnosis for Roepnarainius and the three-line long description contains nearly exclusively characters found in a majority of Scydmaeninae (and many other beetles). The only taxonomically useful information is that their new genus is most similar to Scydmaenus, but differs in the presence of parameres, absent in Scydmaenus. The Fig. 1 presented in their article shows a specimen easily identifiable as Scydmaenus, with an impression on the posterior part of the vertex, typical of many representatives of the subgenus Cholerus Thomson, 1859. Also Figs. 2–5 show an aedeagus typical for Scydmaenus. This aedeagus, presented in lateral and approximately ventral aspects (with an additional close-up of its apical region) does not posses any structures that can be interpreted as parameres. Figure 3 shows a large subapical dorsal projection reaching the apex of median lobe. Such a projection can be found in a number of species of Scydmaenus, including Oriental representatives of this large and diverse genus, e.g. S. uncinatus Schaufuss from Malaysia, Indonesia and New Guinea (Franz 1970; Fig. 9) or S. foveiceps Franz from Indonesia (Franz 1984; Figs. 28, 29). These species have also a similar general shape of the aedeagus as that illustrated by Makhan & Ezzatpanah. Moreover, a group of sensilla located in the sub-apical part of the median lobe and misinterpreted by Makhan & Ezzatpanah as “teeth” is a typical character found in many species of Scydmaenus. Roepnarainius is here placed as a junior synonym of Scydmaenus, which results in Scydmaenus jacquelineae (Makhan & Ezzatpanah), comb. nov.

Scydmaenus jacquelineae shows characters typical for several Oriental species included in the subgenus Cholerus (e.g., Franz 1984), i.e., an impressed vertex and a general shape of the aedeagus. However, the type species of Cholerus, S. hellwigii and its European congeners have strikingly different aedeagi, which are divided by a narrow constriction into an elongate proximal and a short distal part. A similarly shaped aedeagus can be found in species of Scydmaenus belonging to the subgenus Mascarensia Franz, 1973 (e.g., Franz 1984; Figs. 28, 29). Diagnoses and relationships of these subgenera remain unclear and for this reason Scydmaenus jacquelineae is treated as incertae sedis within Scydmaenus.