



The identity and taxonomic position of *Pleias* Kirkaldy, 1901 (Hemiptera: Heteroptera: Reduviidae: Emesinae)

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Abstract

Based on the examination of the holotype, *Pleias ritsemae* Kirkaldy, 1901 (Heteroptera: Reduviidae: Emesinae: Leistarchini), is redescribed and figured. No generic differences can be found between *Pleias* Kirkaldy, 1901 and *Bagauda* Bergroth, 1903, consequently the latter is a junior synonym of *Pleias*. Reversion to the senior name *Pleias* would require that the several nominal species currently included in *Bagauda* be transferred to the nominal genus *Pleias*. Therefore, in order to preserve stability, no nomenclatural changes are proposed in this paper, but an application has been submitted to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to give *Bagauda* precedence over *Pleias*. Although congeneric, *Pleias ritsemae* is not conspecific with any other species currently in *Bagauda* and its differentiating characters are discussed. The following new synonymy is proposed: *Ploiaria perfuga* Miller, 1941, syn. n. = *Pleias ritsemae* Kirkaldy, 1901.

Key words: Hemiptera, Heteroptera, Reduviidae, Emesinae, *Pleias*, *Bagauda*, taxonomy, nomenclature

Introduction

Kirkaldy (1901) established the thread-legged assassin bug genus *Pleias* for the accommodation of the new species *P. ritsemae* from Sumatra. This genus and species have not been recorded since and there are no later works presenting original data about it. Based only on its original description, Bergroth (1906: 311) briefly discussed the systematic position of *Pleias* and expressed his opinion that it might be synonymous with *Luteva* Dohrn, 1860 (currently the junior synonym of *Ploiaria* Scopoli, 1786). In his comprehensive world monograph on the subfamily Emesinae, Wygodzinsky (1966), also unable to examine the holotype, regarded *Pleias* as a genus *incertae sedis*. Following Wygodzinsky, the recent taxonomic catalogues of Putshkov & Putshkov (1988) and Maldonado Capriles (1990) also listed *Pleias* as of uncertain identity.

Based on examination of the holotype of *Pleias ritsemae*, deposited at Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum (Naturalis), Leiden, the species is redescribed and figured and its taxonomic position and the nomenclatural consequences are discussed; furthermore, a new synonymy is proposed in this paper.

Materials and methods

External structures were examined using a stereoscopic microscope (Opton 47 50 52 – 9901). Drawings were made using a camera lucida. Measurements were taken using a micrometer eyepiece. For fore wing venation, Wygodzinsky's (1966) interpretation is followed. Abbreviations for institutions and collections: BMNH: Natural History Museum, London, United Kingdom; NHMW: Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria; RMNH: Nationaal Natuurhistorisch Museum (Naturalis), Leiden, The Netherlands.