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Australotarsius—a new genus of the rove beetle tribe Staphylinini from Australia (Coleoptera: Staphylinidae: Staphylininae)

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Abstract

Australotarsius Solodovnikov & Newton, **gen. nov.**, a new genus of rove beetles of the tribe Staphylinini, endemic to Australia, is described and compared to other Staphylinini. It includes two new species, *A. grandis* Solodovnikov & Newton, **sp. n.** from Queensland and New South Wales, and *A. tasmanicus* Solodovnikov & Newton, **sp. n.** from Tasmania. The systematic position of *Australotarsius* within Staphylinini needs further investigation in the context of a broad-scale phylogenetic study of this large tribe. Preliminarily this new genus is thought to be a member of the lineage of Staphylinini which includes genera *Anchocerus* Fauvel, 1905, *Acylophorus* Nordmann, 1837, *Anaquedius* Casey, 1915, *Hemiquedius* Casey, 1915 and possibly *Euryporus* Erichson, 1839, all of which are current members of the subtribe Quediina.

Key words: Quediina, systematics, new species, eastern Australia, Tasmania

Introduction

The new rove beetle genus of the tribe Staphylinini described here was discovered by the second author decades ago among the material collected by Philip J. Darlington, Jr., in Australia. However, its description had to be postponed due to fundamental difficulties associated with the study of the Australian fauna of Staphylinini. Only a small fraction of the local diversity of Staphylinini has been hitherto described for Australia, most of these descriptions dating back to the initial period of exploration of the Australian beetle fauna in the 19th and early 20th centuries (for a catalogue of described species see Newton & Thayer 2005). The overall taxonomic standard characteristic for this period is so outdated that the existing taxonomic literature on Australian Staphylinini is now useful primarily as a reference tool for locating types and other material for revisions. Knowledge of Staphylinini of the neighboring fauna of Papua New Guinea, and of the more remote but biogeographically relevant faunas of New Zealand, New Caledonia and southern South America, is more or less in the same condition. Additionally, in recent decades, there has been significant collecting activity in Australia largely focused on methods (sifting, flight intercept and pitfall traps, low-scale fogging) and habitats (leaf litter and mossy logs in forests) productive for rove beetles, which has yielded tens of thousands of new specimens for study. Therefore, to make sound systematic conclusions about any presumably new taxon of the Australian Staphylinini one must revise a large amount of relevant type and non-type material scattered in the museums of Australia and other countries. By this time, within the framework of a long-term focused inventory of the south temperate fauna of rove beetles (Thayer *et al.* 2003) and a broader phylogenetic study of the world Staphylinini (Chatzimanolis *et al*. 2007), both of us have seen enough material to assure proper identification, description and comparison of *Australotarsius* Solodovnikov & Newton, **gen. nov.** The phylogenetic affiliation of *Australotarsius* is also here hypothesized but it will be

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