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The leucosiid crabs described by Thomas Bell in 1855: original description and dates of publication (Crustacea: Decapoda: Brachyura)

B. Y. LEE^{1,3} & MARTYN E. Y. LOW²

¹Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, National University of Singapore 6 Science Drive 2, Singapore 117546, Republic of Singapore. E-mail: beeyan06@gmail.com

²Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research, National University of Singapore, 6 Science Drive 2, Singapore 119260, Republic of Singapore. Former address: Department of Marine and Environmental Sciences, Graduate School of Engineering and Science, University of the Ryukyus, 1 Senbaru, Nishihara, Okinawa 903-0213, Japan. E-mail: m.low@me.com

³Corresponding author

Abstract

Thomas Bell proposed 37 species- and 5 genus-group names for the Leucosiidae in four publications that appeared in 1855. The version appearing in the *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of London* is the earliest of these publications and the first available description of these taxa.

Key words: Leucosiidae, British Museum (Natural History), Natural History Museum, Oxford University Museum, original description, type material

Introduction

Thomas Bell (b. 11 October 1792, d. 13 March 1880) was a zoologist widely known for his work on tortoises (see Anonymous 1880: 499, 500; Nowak-Kemp & Fritz 2010: 1–8). Four publications on crabs of the family Leucosiidae Samouelle, 1819, by Bell appeared in 1855 (Bell 1855a–d). The material on which these publications were based were stated as being in the British Museum (now Natural History Museum, NHM) and Bell's own collection (see Bell 1885c: 284). Some of the material in the NHM is still extant (see Galil 2001a: 68; 2001b: 195; 2001c: 414), while some of those originally in Bell's collection are at the Oxford University Museum (OUM; see DiMauro 1982). The locations of the extant and known type material of each species are listed in Table 1.

Bell's publications on the Leucosiidae Samouelle, 1819

All four publications on Leucosiidae Samouelle, 1819, by Bell (1855a–d) contain the same names, and the only indication that some of these names were new was the addition of “Bell” after these names. The first publication (Bell 1855a) was published in the *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of London*, and is essentially an abbreviated version of Bell (1855c) that was to appear in the *Transactions* of the same society and a placeholder to establish priority. Bell (1855a) was published on 19 October 1855 (see Kappel in Howes 1896: v). Bell (1855b) was another summary of Bell (1855c) that appeared in the *Annals and Magazine of Natural History*. The *Annals* was at this time publishing the proceedings of the learned societies in the London region (Clark & Presswell 2001: 152).

Bell (1855b) was published on 1 November 1855 (see Evenhuis 2003: 20). Bell (1855c) appears to have been intended as the complete version of Bell's treatise on the Leucosiidae and contains five plates (Fig. 1B) to illustrate the species treated in the text. It is the only of Bell's four 1855 publications which contains figures. Bell (1855c)