

***Meligethes (Clypeogethes) roeri* sp. nov. (Coleoptera, Nitidulidae)
from Namibia, and Remarks on Synonymy of the *amplicollis*
Species-group in the Subgenus *Clypeogethes* Scholtz, 1932**

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Abstract. *Meligethes (Clypeogethes) roeri* sp. nov. is described and a detailed diagnosis is given, including argumentation on the synonymy of *M. (C.) howdeni* Kirejtshuk, 1990 and *M. (C.) ngwaneensis* Spornraft et Kirejtshuk, 1993, synonymy of *M. (C.) inconspicuus* Spornraft et Kirejtshuk, 1993 and *M. (C.) rugipusillus* Audisio, 1997, **syn. nov.**, and the synonymy of *M. (C.) rugipennis* Spornraft et Kirejtshuk, 1993 and *M. (C.) breytenbachae* Audisio, 1997.

Key words. Taxonomy, new species, southern Africa, Hubert Roer.

1. INTRODUCTION

About 70 species of the subgenus *Clypeogethes* Scholtz, 1932 have been described from the southern arid region of continental Africa, including the mountains and swamps of Okavango. This region can be regarded as a centre of diversity of this subgenus, of which other centres include East Africa and the Mediterranean area. Research indicates that this region houses more than twice the number of currently known species. Hubert ROER collected many interesting species of beetles in Namibia, and some new species from his samples have been previously described by me (KIREJTSHUK 1987, 1996). Now I would like to describe one species in his honour as a deserved recognition of his contribution to the knowledge of this fauna. The new species here described belongs to the rather numerous *amplicollis*-group of related species endemic to this part of Africa. This group includes more than a quarter of the entire species recognized in the subgenus *Clypeogethes* (SPORNRAFT & KIREJTSHUK 1993; KIREJTSHUK 1996; AUDISIO 1997). The species of this group have only a few diagnostic characters which are disseminated in a mosaic way among its members. Therefore the diagnosis of the new species is provided with a detailed list of all its features distinct from those in other representatives of the group. However, it should be taken into consideration that some characters, such as the shape of the pronotum, expression of transrugosity or aciculation on the elytra and level of development of the tarsal claws can vary in a very great scope.

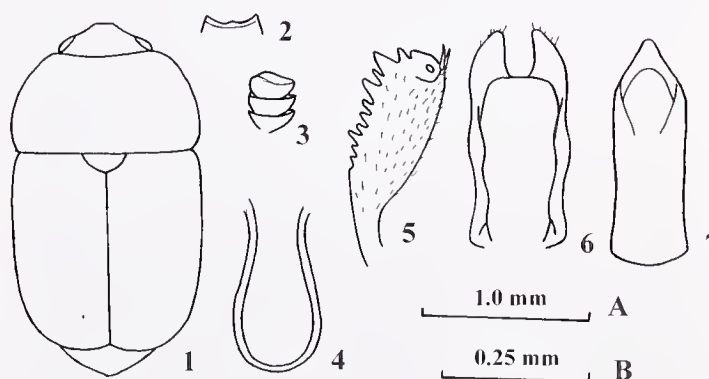
2. TAXONOMY

***Meligethes (Clypeogethes) roeri* sp. nov. – Figs. 1–7**

Material. Holotype, male (in the collection of Zoological Research Institute and Museum Alexander Koe-

nig in Bonn, Germany – ZFMK) – “SWA/Namibia, Nyangana/Okavango, 14–22.I.1985, H. Roer”.

Male (holotype). Length 2.1, breadth 1.1, height 0.7 mm. Moderately convex dorsally and slightly ventrally; blackish; antennae and fore legs reddish, mid and hind legs dark reddish brown; rather shining; dorsum and underside with rather dense and conspicuous grayish hairs, 1.5–2.0 times as long as distance between their roots. Head surface with oval punctures, much larger than eye facets in diameter, interspaces between them narrower than half a puncture diameter and smooth. Pronotum and elytra about as punctured and sculptured as head, although with punctures somewhat sparser (separated by nearly half a puncture diameter) and with rare and hardly visible lines between them. Thoracic sterna and ventrite 1 with



Figs. 1–7: *Meligethes (Clypeogethes) roeri* sp. nov. Male, holotype: 1 – body, dorsal; 2 – anterior part of head, dorsal; 3 – antennal club; 4 – prosternal process, ventral; 5 – protibia, dorsal; 6 – tegmen, ventral; 7 – enis trunk, dorsal. Scales: A – to fig. 1; B – to figs. 2–7.

slightly smaller punctures than those on pronotum and elytra, interspaces between them smooth. Other ventrites with smaller and less distinct punctures, interspaces between them with microreticulation becoming apically more contrasting. Head slightly convex, not shorter than distance between eyes. Antennae about 3/4 as long as width of head and with club comprising nearly 1/4 of total antennal length. Pronotum evenly sloping to extremely narrowly explanate sides, with anterior and posterior angles widely rounded. Scutellum subtransverse at apex. Elytra about as long as wide combined, very steeply (subvertically) sloping at extremely narrowly explanate sides. Pygidium somewhat projecting and rounded at apex. Distance between mesocoxae about twice and that between metacoxae about 3 times as great as that between procoxae. Prosternal process nearly twice as wide as antennal club. Metasternum subflattened. Submetacoxal line slightly deviating from middle of hind edge of metacoxae. Hypopygidium subtruncate at wide apex and without clear character of sexual dimorphism. Meso- and metatibiae about as wide as protibia, their outer edge with stout and dense setae. Protarsus nearly 2/3 as wide as protibia, meso- and metatarsi much narrower. Claws narrow and simple. Aedeagus moderately sclerotized.

Diagnosis. This new species is characterized by its distinct features in the shape of the excision between the lateral lobes of the tegmen, which is wider than that in any other species of the *amplicolis*-group and in the very long subacute apex of the penis trunk [somewhat similar to that in *M. (C.) robertsoni* Audisio, 1997 – see below]. Also, it is characterized by its even puncturation on dorsum – head, pronotum and elytra (without trace of transrugosity or aciculation on elytra). Only *M. (C.) testudo* Audisio, 1997 has also no trace of transrugosity or aciculation, while other species of the group more or less express this type of sculpture on the elytra, although some of them as an extreme of variability show almost obsolete expression of it [most specimens of *M. (C.) capensis* Reitter, 1872 demonstrate trace of this type of sculpture usually only at lateral edge of elytra in their basal halves]. This new species is most similar to *M. (C.) floralis* Reitter, 1872, but differs from the latter in its more arcuate pronotal sides, somewhat denser puncturation on dorsum, lack of trace of transrugosity on elytra, somewhat wider protibiae, wider male protarsi and aedeagal structure. Except for the distinct male genitalia and lack of trace of transrugosity or aciculation on elytra, *M. (C.) roeri* sp. nov. also differs from:

– *Meligethes (C.) amplicolis* Boheman, 1851 *M. (C.)* (= *chevrolati* Reitter, 1972; *laticollis* Reitter, 1873) and *M. (C.) dahlgreni* Audisio, 1997 in its smaller and

more slender body, darker appendages, shape of pronotum and elytra, wider antennal club, narrower transverse smooth stripe at anterior edge of frons and simple tarsal claws [the specimens in the BOHEMAN's and REITTER's type series and other specimens examined strongly vary in body size, shape of elytra and pronotum, expression of transrugosity on elytra, width of smooth stripe at anterior edge of frons and tarsal claws, and P. AUDISIO (1997) supposes that this synonymy can be revised];

– *Meligethes (C.) breytenbachae* Audisio, 1997 and *M. (C.) rugipennis* Spornraft et Kirejtshuk, 1993 in its more slender body, lighter appendages, wider prosternal process, crenellation of protibiae and wider male protarsi [it is most probable that the type specimens of *M. (C.) breytenbachae* and *M. (C.) rugipennis* are conspecific. Nevertheless, it would be advisable to examine and compare in detail their type series];

– *Meligethes (C.) capensis* Reitter, 1872 in its smaller and more slender body, lighter appendages, shorter pronotum, somewhat shorter pubescence, somewhat larger and denser puncturation of dorsum, narrower male protarsi and simple tarsal claws;

– *Meligethes (C.) clavatus* Reitter, 1872 (if this species really is a member of the group under consideration – see Audisio, 1997) in its smaller body, markedly less conspicuously pubescence, contour of emargination of anterior edge of frons, wider prosternal process and type of crenellation on outer edge of wider protibiae [this species has very distinct structure of male genitalia and some external characters similar to those in *M. (C.) argentarius* Audisio, Kirk-Spriggs et Kirejtshuk, 1998 and *M. (C.) marshalli* Grouvelle, 1915, although the anterior edge of frons is somewhat shaped as that in the species of the *amplicolis*-group];

– *Meligethes (C.) colophonoides* Audisio, 1997 in its shape of pronotum and elytra, wider antennal club, less raised pubescence on dorsum, moderately long and markedly wider protibiae and rather wider male protarsi;

– *Meligethes (C.) dentellus* Spornraft et Kirejtshuk, 1993 in its larger, somewhat more slender and markedly less convex body, lighter appendages, pronotum more narrowed anteriorly, apparently denser puncturation on dorsum, somewhat narrower male protarsi and simple tarsal claws;

– *Meligethes (C.) debiasei* Audisio, 1997 (if this species really is a member of the group under consideration – see Audisio, 1997) in lighter appendages, more conspicuous greyish pubescence, wider antennal club, completely different type of crenellation of markedly narrower protibiae;

– *Meligethes (C.) floralinimus* Audisio, 1997 in its darker, robust and larger body, greyish and more conspicuous pubescence, denser puncturation on dorsum, more distinct emargination of anterior edge of frons with clear median projection, wider antennal clubs, wider prosternal process, less even crenellation along outer edge of wider protibiae;

– *Meligethes (C.) fritschi* Reitter, 1872 (= *comosus* Reitter, 1872) in its smaller and more slender body, markedly less conspicuous dorsal pubescence, shallower emargination of anterior edge of frons, wider antennal club, shape of pronotum with extremely narrowly explanate sides, narrower male protibiae and simple tarsal claws;

– *Meligethes (C.) grandicollis* Reitter, 1872 in smaller body, shorter pronotum and longer elytra, greyish dorsal pubescence, clear median projection of anterior emargination of frons and larger crenellation along outer edge of protibiae;

– *Meligethes (C.) howdeni* Kirejtshuk, 1990 (?= *ngwaneensis* Spornraft et Kirejtshuk, 1993) in its lighter appendages, deeper emargination of anterior edge of frons with median projection and markedly wider male protarsi [the names synonymized by Audisio, 1997 were proposed for two forms differing in the expression of transrugosity on the elytra and size of the teeth on the outer edge of the protibiae];

– *Meligethes (C.) inconspicuus* Spornraft et Kirejtshuk, 1993 (= *rugipusillus* Audisio, 1997, **syn. nov.**) in its lighter appendages, shorter pronotum, median projection of emargination of anterior edge of frons and smaller number of subapical larger teeth of protibiae [the description of the latter is completely corresponding to the characters in that of the first, although antennal clubs drawn in AUDISIO (1997) look like somewhat narrower];

– *Meligethes (C.) largus* Spornraft et Kirejtshuk, 1993 in its lighter appendages, much shorter and narrower pronotum, median projection of emargination of anterior edge of frons and much narrower male protarsi;

– *Meligethes (C. montisatris* Audisio, 1997 in its lighter appendages, shorter pronotum, apparently larger and wider antennal clubs, markedly wider protibiae and simple tarsal claws;

– *Meligethes (C.) natalensis* Spornraft et Kirejtshuk, 1993 in its shape of pronotum with extremely narrowly explanate sides, distinctly larger crenellation at apex of protibiae and simple tarsal claws;

– *Meligethes (C.) primogenius* Audisio, 1997 in its lighter appendages, less conspicuous dorsal pubescence, apparently larger and wider antennal club, different crenellation of wider protibiae and simple tarsal claws;

– *Meligethes (C.) pseudorimulosus* Audisio, 1997 in its somewhat smaller body, lighter appendages, finer and denser puncturation on dorsum and normal structure of profemur and larger teeth at outer edge of wider protibiae;

– *Meligethes (C.) pygmaeus* Reitter, 1872 in its more conspicuous dorsal pubescence, smaller head, wider antennal clubs, emarginated fore edge of frons with clear median projection, different crenellation of protibiae and wider male protarsi;

– *Meligethes (C.) rimulosus* Reitter, 1872 in its much more shining dorsum, clear median projection in anterior edge of frons and wider male protarsi;

– *Meligethes (C.) robertsoni* Audisio, 1997 in its somewhat larger body, greyish dorsal pubescence, larger antennal club, clear median projection of emargination of anterior edge of frons and larger teeth along outer edge of wider protibiae [in contrast to *M. (C.) robertsoni* excision of lateral lobes of the new species is very wide and projecting apex of penis trunk is subacute];

– *Meligethes (C.) rugifer* Spornraft & Kirejtshuk, 1993 in its more slender body, different proportion of pronotum, wider prosternal process with wider and subtruncate apex, larger teeth along outer edge of protibiae and narrower male protarsi;

– *Meligethes (C.) subfloralis* Kirejtshuk, 1988 in its more convex and markedly more slender body, much denser puncturation on dorsum, shorter and narrower pronotum, extremely narrowly explanate pronotal and elytral sides, rounded apex of male pygidium [some specimens of *M. (C.) subfloralis* have no trace of median projection at anterior edge of frons];

– *Meligethes (C.) tenuirugatus* Spornraft et Kirejtshuk, 1993 in its wider antennal club, larger teeth along outer edge of protibiae and wider male protarsi;

– *Meligethes (C.) testudo* Audisio, 1997 in its smaller and much more slender body with narrower pronotum and elytra, greyish dorsal pubescence, apparently smaller and denser puncturation on dorsum and simple tarsal claws.

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Zusammenfassung. Die für die Wissenschaft neue Art *Meligethes (Clypeogethes) roeri* wird beschrieben, eine detaillierte Diagnose wird gegeben. Folgende Synonymien werden begründet: *M. (C.) howdeni* Kirejtshuk, 1990 und *M. (C.) ngwaneensis* Spornraft & Kirejtshuk, 1993; *M. (C.)*

inconspicuis Spornraft & Kirejtshuk, 1993 und *M. (C.) rugipusillus* Audisio, 1997, syn. nov.; sowie *M. (C.) rugipennis* Spornraft & Kirejtshuk, 1993 und *M. (C.) breytensbachae* Audisio, 1997.

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