

## On the availability and identity of “*Ebaeus tener* DOHRN” (Coleoptera: Melyridae)

Isidor S. PLONSKI

### Abstract

The nominal complex “*Ebaeus tener* DOHRN, 1873” is unavailable: The binomen is a nomen nudum and there is no published work with that authorship and date. The specimen referred to as “*Ebaeus tener*” actually belongs to *E. decorus* ABEILLE DE PERRIN, 1885.

Key words: Coleoptera, Melyridae, *Ebaeus*, taxonomy, synonymy, Central Asia, Iran.

### Zusammenfassung

Der Namenskomplex “*Ebaeus tener* DOHRN, 1873” ist nicht verfügbar: Das Binomen ist ein nomen nudum und es gibt keine publizierte Arbeit mit diesem Autor bzw. Datum. Das “*Ebaeus tener*” genannte Exemplar gehört in Wirklichkeit zu *E. decorus* ABEILLE DE PERRIN, 1885.

### Introduction

This study continues the author’s research on the genus *Ebaeus* ERICHSON, 1840 (see PLONSKI (2010) for the first communication). In what follows, the findings on a “ghost”, viz. a taxon that never existed but which has “haunted” taxonomic catalogues and regional checklists for many decades, are reported. The “ghost” is “unmasked” and “put to rest” once and for all below, because the true identity of a historical specimen is revealed and its old name is discarded.

### Material and methods

Thirty-nine specimens have been studied for the present purpose, which are dry preserved in the following institutional and private collections:

CIP	Coll. Isidor S. Plonski, Vienna, Austria.
MNB	Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin, Germany.
MSNG	Museo Civico di Storia Naturale Giacomo Doria, Genova, Italy.
NHMW	Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria.

One voucher specimen, which is here called the “Dohrn exemplar”, was examined in detail and compared with material from Iran and Turkmenistan. A Leica SMZ 16C binocular microscope was used for examination and identification.

The history of study and identification of the Dohrn exemplar is reconstructed based on the label data. The handwritings on the curatorial labels of the Dohrn exemplar were

identified by Roberto Poggi (email, July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020). The data of each label are placed between quotation marks (“...”), a backslash with a space on either side (\) separates lines, and information placed between square brackets ([...]) provides further details. Different labels associated with one specimen are linked with a comma. Furthermore, for the Dohrn exemplar, the colour of the labels is noted (b = beige; w = white; y = yellow), as well as whether information is handwritten (hwr) or printed/typed (pr). The abbreviation MS indicates the handwriting of a person.

Origin and availability of the nominal complex “*Ebaeus tener* DOHRN, 1873” is scrutinized according to the fourth edition of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN 1999). The used open nomenclature follows the recommendations of SIGOVINI et al. (2016).

## Results

### *Ebaeus* (s. str.) *decorus* ABEILLE DE PERRIN, 1885 (sec. DOWGAILO 1997)

= *Ebaeus tener* DOHRN [nomen nudum!]: BAUDI 1873: 246 (as nomen in schedula). – PEYRON 1877: 277–278 (as nomen ineditus). – GREINER 1937: 54 (catalogue, as valid taxon). – MAYOR 2007: 432 (catalogue, as valid taxon). – MIRUTENKO & GHAHARI 2016: 335 (checklist, as valid taxon).

Historical material examined. The “Dohrn exemplar”: 1 ♀ (MSNG) labelled: “649.” [y, pr], “Ebaeus \ (tener D[o]h[r]n coll.) \ Schahrud [= Shahrood, Semnan Province, Iran] D[o]h[r]n [18]72” [w, hwr, MS G. Doria], “Ebaeus \ decorus Ab. \ ♀.” [b, hwr, MS E. Abeille de Perrin], “Det. Abeille \ 1890” [w, hwr, MS G. Mantero], “Museo Civico \ di Genova” [w, pr], “Ebaeus (s.str.) \ decorus \ Abeille de Perrin, 1885 \ confirm. I. Plonski 2020” [w, pr].

Comparative material examined. Iran: 8 ♂♂ (2 in CIP; 6 in MNB) “IRAN, Razavi Khorasan Prov[ince] \ 20 km NW Torbat-e \ Heydariyeh: Senobar \ 1730 m (Sorkh Mts), \ N35°26'04" E059°05'08" \ 28.05.2006, lg. Frisch & Serri”; 1 ♂ (MNB) “IRAN, Razavi Khorasan Prov[ince] \ Quchan-Bajgiran road: \ 6 km O [= East of] Emam Qoli: Inche \ 1750 m (Koppe Dag), \ N37°21'43" E058°34'09" \ 30.05.2006, lg. Frisch & Serri”; 2 ♂♂ (MNB) “IRAN, Razavi Khorasan Prov[ince] \ Quchan-Bajgiran road: \ 14 km NW Emam Qoli \ 1640 m (Koppe Dag), \ N37°26'02" E058°29'45" \ 31.05.2006, lg. Frisch & Serri”; 1 ♀ (MNB) “IRAN, Razavi Khorasan Prov[ince] \ Emam Qoli-Kapkan r[oa]d: 17 km \ O [= East of] Emam Qoli: Aghmazar \ 1850 m (Koppe Dagh), \ N37°19'16" E058°41'13" \ 31.05.2006, lg. Frisch & Serri”; 1 ♂ (MNB) “IRAN: North Khorasan Prov[ince]. \ Qarlog-Raz road: 33 km \ NNW Qarlog: Yekehshakh \ 1010 m (Koppe Dag), \ N37°39'34" E057°25'11" \ 03.06.2006, lg. Frisch & Serri”. – Turkmenistan: 2 ♀♀ (NHMW) “TRANSCASP[IEN]. \ Dortkuju [= Dort-Kuyu Stantsiya (railroad station at 37°37'14"N, 061°17'29"E), Ahal Province] 5.1900 \ Coll. Hauser.”; 1 ♂, 2 ♀♀ (NHMW) “TRANSCASPIEN \ Oase Tedshen [= Tejen, Ahal Province] \ 5.1903. Coll. Hauser.”; 1 ♀ (CIP) “Turkm. SSR 5-9.5. \ Ashabad [= Ashgabat] bor. V. \ lgt. S. Bečvár 1989”; 3 ♂♂, 10 ♀♀ (CIP) “Turkmenia bor. \ Bacherden [= Bäherden, Ahal Province] \ 26.4.1992 \ Lgt. [M.] Snižek”; 1 ♀ (CIP) “Turkmenia bor. \ Dargan Ata [= Birata, Lebap Province] env. \ 5.6.1992 \ Lgt. [M.] Snižek”. – Unknown: 2 ♀♀ (NHMW) “Turkestan \ Tal IV/[19]06 Fischer”; 3 ♀♀ (NHMW) “Collect. \ Plason”. – All 38 specimens have been provided with following label: “Ebaeus (s.str.) \ decorus \ Abeille de Perrin, 1885 \ det. I. Plonski 2020”.

Note. The taxon concept used for identification is that of DOWGAILO (1997: figs. 51–53), who learned from Walter Wittmer.

Availability of names. The nominal complex “*Ebaeus tener* DOHRN, 1873” is listed as a valid taxon in more or less recent catalogues or annotated checklists (GREINER 1937, MAYOR 2007, MIRUTENKO & GHAHARI 2016). However, the binomen originated as a collection name in the work of BAUDI (1873) accompanied only by a locality name (“Persia (Schahrud)”) and a collection reference (“coll. Dohrn”). Since a formal description or diagnostic information is missing, this name is not available according to the Code

(ICZN 1999: Art. 12.1.). Furthermore, there is no published work with that authorship and date (note that the entry in GREINER (1937) reads “Dohrn apud Baudi”). This was already recognized by PEYRON (1877), who wrote “Je n’ai pu trouver nulle part la description de l’espèce suivante, qui est peut-être inédite (...)” [= “Nowhere I could find a description of the following species, which may be unpublished (...)”].

The name “*Ebaeus decorus*” is validly published and available.

History of the “Dohrn exemplar”. Carl August von Dohrn (\*1806, †1892) collected the specimen in question in the environment of Shahrood (Northeastern Iran) in 1872 and recognized it as representing an undescribed species of *Ebaeus*. It was then donated among other beetles to the Civic Museum of Natural History in Genova (R. Poggi, email, July 21<sup>th</sup>, 2020; cf. GESTRO (1921: 26–27) and POGGI & CONCI (1996: 43) who mention donations of exotic beetles). There it was first curated by Giacomo Doria (\*1840, †1913), who transcribed onto a label the species identification, locality and collector information provided by Dohrn in a letter, which is archived in the MSNG. It was subsequently seen by Flaminio Baudi di Selve (\*1821, †1901), and BAUDI DI SELVE (1873) reports the collection name “*Ebaeus tener*”. However, Dohrn never published a description. Years later, the Dohrn exemplar was borrowed by Elzéar Emmanuel Arène Abeille de Perrin (\*1843, †1910), who recognized it as belonging to *E. decorus* in 1890. After the return of the Dohrn exemplar, Abeille de Perrin’s determination label was supplemented with a dated label, which was handwritten by Giacomo Mantero (\*1878, †1949), who was a curator at the MSNG from 1898 till 1923 (POGGI 2017).

Discussion of the “Dohrn exemplar”. Abeille de Perrin’s determination is confirmed by the present author. The confirmation is based on (1) direct comparison with undoubtedly identified female specimens, and (2) zoogeographical consideration. The first is supported by the identification of the male specimens collected together at the same time and place in Bâherden and Tejen, which are conspecific to the males retrieved from Northeastern Iran. The second is supported by the current faunistic knowledge that there are no similar species occurring in Northeastern Iran: *Ebaeus decorus* is a species that is “widely distributed” (WITTMER 1956: 141). It shows a Central Asian distribution and is presently known from the western part of the chorotype delimited by VIGNA TAGLIANTI et al. (1999: fig. 26), viz. Afghanistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

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Author's address: Isidor S. PLONSKI,  
Rembrandtstraße 1/4, A-1020 Vienna, Austria  
E-mail: isidor.plonski@gmx.at

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