

Notes on the synonymy of *Meligethes persicus* (Faldermann, 1837) (Coleoptera: Nitidulidae)

Замечания по синонимии *Meligethes persicus* (Faldermann, 1837) (Coleoptera: Nitidulidae)

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KEY WORDS: synonymy, Coleoptera, Nitidulidae, genus *Meligethes*, subgenus *Clypeogethes*.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: синонимия, Coleoptera, Nitidulidae, род *Meligethes*, подрод *Clypeogethes*.

ABSTRACT: Recent examination of the “type” specimen of “*Meligethes persicus*” Faldermann, 1837, deposited in the collection of Zoological Museum of Moscow State University showed that it should be regarded as conspecific with specimens of *M. (Clypeogethes) maurus* Sturm 1845 rather than those of *M. (C.) tenerosus* Förster, 1849. However, this specimen, which more closely corresponds to the original description and most further interpretations of this name, cannot be regarded with certainty as part of the type series, because the label (“*Meligethes*”...) pinned beneath this specimen was written after the publication of “*Nitidula persica*”. The specimen from The National Museum of Natural History in Paris regarded by P. Audisio and A. de Biase [1993] as a type, and named as “*Meligethes*” rather than “*Nitidula*”, has some characters which are not consistent with the description, and it was unlikely to have been used by F. Faldermann for his description. It is proposed that the name *Nitidula persica* should not be used as a senior synonym of *M. (C.) tenerosus*.

РЕЗЮМЕ: Недавнее изучение “типового” экземпляра “*Meligethes persicus*” Faldermann, 1837, хранящегося в коллекции Зоологического музея Московского государственного университета, выявило то, что он должен рассматриваться скорее как конспецифичный с *M. (Clypeogethes) maurus* Sturm 1845, чем с *M. (C.) tenerosus* Förster, 1849. Однако этот экземпляр, который находится в большем соответствии с оригинальным описанием и большинством последующих интерпретаций этого названия, не может быть обозначен как лектотип, поскольку этикетка (“*Meligethes*”...), подколотая под него, написана после публикации “*Nitidula persica*”. Экземпляр из Национального музея естественной истории в Париже, рассматри-

ваемый П. Аудицио и А. Де Биазе [Audisio & de Biase, 1993] в качестве типа и конспецифичный с типами *M. (C.) tenerosus*, имеет признаки, которые не совпадают с этим описанием, и он едва ли использовался Ф. Фальдерманном для его описания. Предлагается не использовать название *Nitidula persica* в качестве старшего синонима *M. (C.) tenerosus*.

The name *Nitidula persica* was proposed by F. Faldermann in his publication devoted to the beetles of Transcaucasia [Faldermann, 1837: 225]. The author did not mention how many specimens he studied, or from whom and from where these specimens originated. He had a position at the Botanical Garden in St. Petersburg. He used for preparation of this paper mostly the specimens brought by E. Ménériés from an Academy expedition to Caucasus and Russian Transcaucasia, which should have been deposited in “Kunstkamera”, i.e. in the collection of the Zoological Institute (part of Kunstkamera). Nevertheless, F. Faldermann also examined other materials and used them for the cited publication. Part of this material was deposited in the collection of the Zoological Museum at Moscow State University, and later some duplicates of Carabidae and Curculionidae traveled to Kiev and Paris [Horn et al., 1990: 114]. The majority of the material, including type specimens of Clavicornia are expected to be deposited in St. Petersburg or Moscow. For a long time this species name was associated with the genus *Meligethes* Stephens, 1829, although its placements were different. E. Reitter [1877, 1919] was inclined to put it near to *Meligethes subrugosus* (Gyllenhal, 1808), also assuming the probable similarity of *M. persicus* to *M. brachialis* Erichson, 1845, *M. ovatus* Sturm, 1845 or *M. incanus* Sturm, 1845. Nevertheless, P. Audisio and A. de Biase [1993] found

in the Oberthür collection of The National Museum of Natural History (Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle) in Paris a specimen with “*Meligethes persicus* Faldermann, Perse, Type”, which is conspecific with specimens of the common species usually erroneously referred to as *M. pedicularius* (auctorum, non Gyllenhal, 1808) or *M. (Clypeogethes) tenebrosus* Förster, 1849 (see Kirejtshuk, 1992). However, the writers examined another specimen (female) with the labels “*Meligethes persicus* Fald., Pers. or.” and “Persia, Typus”, which is almost certainly conspecific with *M. (C.) maurus* Sturm, 1845 [or with *M. (C.) incanus* Sturm, 1845 with ovipositor very similar to that of *M. (C.) maurus*].

P. Audisio and A. de Biase proposed the use of *M. persicus* as the valid name for the species *M. pedicularius* (auctorum, non Gyllenhal, 1808) from the *difficilis* group, while *M. pedicularius* (Gyllenhal, 1808) was to be used for the species formerly called as *M. viduatus* (Heer, 1841). Thus, there are two specimens which could be pretender to be specimens used by F. Faldermann, but both named as “*Meligethes...*” (but not *Nitidula*). It is also known that F. Faldermann did not designate type specimens. Therefore each of them has no reliable advantage to be confidently chosen as a specimen used by F. Faldermann for the description.

Finally, if the characters of both potential Faldermann specimens under consideration are compared with the original description, it is seen that the description corresponds to members of the *maurus* group rather than to those of the *difficilis* group, and nobody apart from P. Audisio and A. de Biase has ever tried to find similarity between the description of *M. persicus* with the latter group. The pronotum according to the description is “*ater, subtilissime, tamen confertissime punctatus... angulis posticis subporrectis*” (p. 225); the elytra are “*confertissime punctulata*” (p. 225) and “*pedes toti piceo-nigri*” (p. 225). The correspondence of its characters with those in description can be treated as some evidence for the type status of the specimen from the Moscow collection. However, it is difficult to trace how a specimen which should seemingly have been deposited in the St. Petersburg collection was brought to Moscow (or moreover to Paris), although some beetles from the families other than Carabidae and Curculionidae could have also been taken by V. Motschulsky, or later from Motschulsky by M. de Chadoir, J.H. Hochhut, R. Oberthür, G.V. Mniszech or somebody else.

From the aforesaid, it can be concluded that there is no specimen which can without doubt be recognized as one used by F. Faldermann to describe the species for which he proposed the name *Nitidula persica*. It is therefore advisable to regard this name as a “*nomen dubium*” and, therefore to exclude it from the synonymy of the species referred to as *M. (Clypeogethes) tenebro-*

sus Förster, 1849 (based on the type series deposited in the Berlin Collection (Museum für Naturkunde an der Humboldt Universität). That species should therefore have the following synonymy:

Meligethes (Clypeogethes) tenebrosus Förster, 1849: 13

= *Meligethes pedicularius* auctorum, non Gyllenhal, 1808

= *Meligethes sinuans* Rey, 1889: 27

The authors are extremely grateful to N.B. Nikitsky (Zoological Museum, Moscow State University), who assisted them with seeking the specimen of “*M. persicus*” as well as to I.M. Kerzhner (Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg) for consultations on some paragraphs of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature and M.V.L. Barclay (Natural History Museum in London) for a discussion with colleagues at the Department of Coleoptera of the museum. M.V.L. Barclay also revised the English lexicon.

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