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Notomithrax gen. nov. and the Status of the Genus Paramithrax H. Milne Edwards (Crustacea, Brachyura, Majidae)

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Abstract

Six species of majid spider crab formerly placed in the genus Paramithrax H. Milne Edwards, 1834, are removed to a new genus, Notomithrax, Paramithrax peronii H. M. Edw. being designated type species. The genera Lobophrys Filhol, 1885, and Gonatorhynchus Haswell, 1880, are reduced to synonymy with Paramithrax s.s. which is restricted to include a single Australian species, Paramithrax barbicornis (Latreille), most widely known as Gonatorhynchus tumidus Haswell. Diagnoses of Notomithrax and Paramithrax, and a key to the species of the former, are given. Paramithrax parvispinosus Ward is transferred to the genus Leptomithrax Miers.

Introduction

THE genus Paramithrax was established by H. Milne Edwards (1834) to include three species of majid spider crab, Pisa barbicornis Latreille, 1825, Paramithrax peronii n.sp. and Paramithrax gaimardii n.sp. The genus was divided by Milne Edwards into two sections, one containing the Australian P. barbicornis and the "Indian Ocean" P. peronii, and the other P. gaimardii, a supposedly New Zealand species. The descriptions of all three were very brief and no type species was specified for the genus. Miers (1876a, 1876b) subdivided Milne Edwards's genus into two subgenera, the name Paramithrax being restricted to the first section and a new name, Leptomithrax, being proposed for the second. P. peronii was designated type species of the former, and the New Zealand P. (L.) longimanus Miers, 1876, of the latter, by Miers (1879b). These subgenera, different in both content and definition from the two sections of the genus proposed originally by Milne Edwards, were each eventually raised to full generic status by Rathbun (1918). By that time six more species of Paramithrax (Paramithrax) had been described: four, P. latreillei Miers, 1876 (syn. P. cristatus Filhol, 1885), P. minor Filhol, 1885, P. longipes Thomson, 1902, and P. parvus Borradaile, 1916, from New Zealand; one, P. spinosus Miers, 1879, from Norfolk Island; and one, P. baeckstroemi Balss, 1924 (syn. P. peroni Lenz, 1902, not P. peronii M. Edw.), from Juan Fernandez, off the coast of Chile. Another species, P. parvispinosus

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Ward, 1933, from Australia, was added fifteen years later. It should be noted here that in the present paper the Australian species, *Paramithrax spatulifer* and *P. coppingeri*, both described by Haswell (1882a and 1882b respectively) are not referable to *Paramithrax* but either to the genus *Acanthophrys* A. Milne Edwards or *Chlorinoides* Haswell and should not be confused with the group of species dealt with in the present paper.

In 1880 Haswell (1880) described and figured Gonatorhynchus tumidus, a new genus and species of majid crab from Australia. Later workers had no difficulty in recognising this species, and the name became well established in the Australian literature. Balss's (1929) important revision of the majid Oxyrhyncha included two main points of interest relevant to the present account. Firstly, he was able to show that Paramithrax barbicornis and Gonatorhynchus *tumidus* were conspecific, the holotype of the former being figured for the first time. Prior to 1876 it had been assumed that P. barbicornis occurred in New Zealand as well as Australia. However, both Miers (1876a, 1876b) and Filhol (1885, 1886) considered that P. barbicornis (Latreille) was not part of the New Zealand fauna, but that the New Zealand form, previously called by that name, was specifically distinct. Miers gave this species the name Paramithrax latreillei and Filhol Paramithrax cristatus. The latter author went further than Miers in that he created a new genus for Latreille's species, Lobophrys. Balss followed Filhol in this regard, and the species barbicornis Latreille was retained in Haswell's Gonatorhynchus. Between 1886 and 1929, species barbicornis received no mention in the literature. Balss therefore brought to light the identity of a previously obscure species. Secondly, Balss reduced Paramithrax latreillei Miers to synonymy with a very old species, Cancer ursus Herbst, 1788, retained it within Paramithrax, and recorded it from Australia for the first time. Unfortunately, these decisions of Balss seem to have been overlooked by later workers, P. ursus being recorded from Australia for the second time as P. latreillei by McNeill (1953), and the latter name has also appeared in recent New Zealand literature (see Richardson, 1949; Dell, 1960).

Thus, of the ten species referred to Paramithrax (Paramithrax) since its inception, one, P. barbicornis, has been transferred to Gonatorhynchus Haswell, one, P. longipes Thomson, has been regarded as belonging to the genus Leptomithrax Miers by most recent workers such as Richardson (1949) and Dell (1960), while one other, P. gaimardii H. Milne Edwards, is now also considered to be a species of Leptomithrax, and is almost certainly restricted to Australia (see Griffin, in press). This leaves a group of seven species inhabiting intertidal and shallow offshore waters, six of which are restricted to the Australasian region, P. peronii and P. minor having been recorded from Australia on several occasions (Haswell, 1882c; Hodgson, 1902; Fulton and Grant, 1906; Rathbun, 1918) and P. ursus on two, as noted above; there is a distinct possibility that the locality given by H. Milne Edwards (1834) for P. peronii—viz., Indian Ocean, is a mistake for New Zealand. At least two species, P. parvus and P. parvispinosus, are very poorly known, each having been described only once and then from but a single small specimen. Miers's (1879b) designation of P. peronii H. Milne Edwards as the type species of *Paramithrax* has been widely accepted up to the present. This, then is the current concept of the genus Paramithrax H. Milne Edwards, 1834, as included, for instance, by Balss (1957: 1628) in the list of the genera of Oxyrhyncha of the World.

The need for the present note stems from the statement by Ward (1933: 392) that the type species of *Paramithrax* is *P. barbicornis* (Latreille), having been so designated by Desmarest (1858: 14). I quote here Desmarest's own words:

"Paramithrax Edw.: groupe ne renfermant qu'un petit nombre d'espèces particulière à l'Australasie, et dont le type est la Pisa barbicornis Latreille."

Dr John S. Garth and Dr L. B. Holthuis (pers. comm.) have both confirmed the validity of this type designation by Desmarest. Clearly, therefore, the species barbicornis of Latreille must be included in Paramithrax, and the genera Lobophrys Filhol and Gonatorhynchus Haswell thereby become junior objective synonyms of it. Miers's designation of P. peronii as the type species of Paramithrax must, on the other hand, be regarded as invalid. This procedure raises some complications for, as already noted in this paper, P. barbicornis has been considered, by Filhol and by Balss, to be generically distinct from all the other species placed in Paramithrax by Milne Edwards, Miers, and later workers. If Filhol and Balss are correct in this view then a new genus is required for those species.

Consideration of the problems introduced above was made practically possible by examination of a specimen of *P. barbicornis* sent, by kind permission of **Dr J.** W. Evans, Director of the Australian Museum, Sydney, by Mr F. A. McNeill, the then Curator of Crustacea. Specimens of three of the New Zealand species of *Paramithrax* s.l., *P. peronii*, *P. minor* and *P. ursus*, have also been examined. The remainder of the present paper is devoted to the setting up and definition of a new genus, a redefinition of *Paramithrax* s.s., and a discussion of the several points outlined above. Finally, the systematic position of *Paramithrax parvispinosus* Ward is considered following re-examination of the type specimen. The terminology used follows Rathbun (1925) and Garth (1958).

SYSTEMATICS

Family MAJIDAE Samouelle, 1819 Subfamily MAJINAE Alcock, 1895; restricted Balss, 1929

Genus Notomithrax gen. nov.

Paramithrax H. Milne Edwards, 1834: 323 (part: P. peronii H. Milne Edwards, 1834).
Miers, 1876a: 219 (subgenus Paramithrax part); 1876b: 5 (part); 1879b: 655.
Haswell, 1882c: 12 (part).
Rathbun, 1893: 66 (part); 1918: 17; 1925: 338.
Alcock, 1895: 240 (part).
Balss, 1929: 18.
Richardson, 1949: 65 (in key).
Garth, 1958: 344.

DIAGNOSIS: Carapace pyriform, densely tuberculated or spinous dorsally. Rostrum of two divergent spines separate from their base. Orbit consisting above of a broad, laterally rounded supraorbital eave with a prominent spine at posterolateral corner, anterolateral corner sometimes also produced into a small spine; an intercalated spine, and a long, conical, postorbital spine remote from orbit; eave, intercalated spine and postorbital spine separated by wide, deep fissures. Eyestalks slender, never reaching postorbital spine, cornea small, terminal. Basal antennal article broad, subrectangular, of even width throughout, lateral edge not notched, anterolateral and anteromedial angles each produced into a well developed spine of which at least anteromedial is forwardly directed.

Merus of third maxilliped subquadrate, not greatly expanded laterally, deeply notched distally, a sharp, prominent spine at lateral angle of notch.

Chelipeds much longer than carapace in adult male, merus with a few spines or tubercles dorsally, carpus with two longitudinal ridges converging proximally, usually one dorsal and one obliquely crossing lateral surface; chela enlarged distally in male, fixed finger more or less strongly excavated basally, fingers thus gaping at bases.

Abdomen of seven distinct segments in both sexes. Male abdomen widest at middle of third segment; seventh segment subtriangular to subquadrate, basal width greatly exceeding length, distal edge weakly convex.

Male first pleopod slender, outwardly curved distally, tip finely pointed, setose; aperture located a short distance from tip, basal lip of aperture weakly expanded as a fleshy lobe.

RANGE: New Zealand, south-east Australia, Norfolk Island, extending eastward to Juan Fernandez off the coast of Chile.

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Type Species: Paramithrax peronii H. Milne Edwards, 1834.

REMARKS: The genus as thus defined includes six species, the relationships of which are shown in the following key.

KEY TO THE SPECIES OF THE GENUS Notomithrax

- 1 (10) Carapace with both spines and tubercles dorsally. Two hepatic spines. Two to seven marginal branchial spines extending on to dorsum of carapace posteriorly.
- 2 (5) Protogastric regions smooth or only faintly tuberculate. Seven marginal branchial spines. Eyestalks reaching almost to postorbital spine.
- 3 (4) Eyestalk stout, with several tubercles dorsally toward distal extremity. (Chelipeds missing from only described specimen.)
- 4 (3) Eyestalks slender, lacking tubercles above. Merus of cheliped smooth dorsally, carpus with dorsal ridge poorly developed, tuberculate, lateral ridge well developed, sharp, entire
- 5 (2) Entire surface of carapace covered by spines and tubercles leaving no smooth areas. Two to five marginal branchial spines.
- 6 (9) Carpus of cheliped with dorsal ridge serrate, merus with numerous spines on dorsal surface. Supraorbital eave with strong spine anterolaterally.
- 7 (8) Dactyl of cheliped in male with a prominent basal tooth.

 Two subdorsal branchial spines posteriorly
- 8 (7) Dactyl of cheliped in male lacking prominent tooth.

 Three marginal branchial spines, last two subdorsal
- 9 (6) Carpus of cheliped with dorsal ridge entire, blunt; merus with a few scattered spines and tubercles dorsally. Supraorbital eave rounded anterolaterally. Five marginal branchial spines

- N. parvus (Borradaile). New Zealand. See Borradaile (1916: fig. 15)
- N. minor (Filhol). New Zealand and S.E. Australia. See Rathbun (1918: Pl. 8) and Richardson (1949: fig. 36)
- N. spinosus (Miers). Norfolk Island. See Miers (1879a: Pl. 4, fig. 5)
- N. baeckstroemi (Balss).
 Juan Fernandez. See
 Balss (1924: fig. 3)
 and Garth (1958: Pl.
 41, fig. 2)
- N. peronii (H. M. Edw.). New Zealand and S.E. Australia. See Richardson (1949: fig. 35)
- N. ursus (Herbst). New Zealand and S.E. Australia. See Miers (1876b: Pl. 1, fig. 2, as P. barbicornis), Filhol (1886: Pl. 41, fig. 11, as P. cristatus) and Richardson (1949: fig. 34, as P. latreilli)

Genus Paramithrax H. Milne Edwards, 1834, restricted

Paramithrax H. Milne Edwards, 1834: 323 (part: P. barbicornis (Latreille, 1825)).

Desmarest, 1858: 14. Not Paramithrax, Miers 1879b: 656.

Gonatorhynchus Haswell, 1880: 437; type species by monotypy: Gonatorhynchus tumidus Haswell, 1880 (= Pisa barbicornis Latreille, 1825); 1882c: 10. Miers, 1886: 25. Balss, 1929: 17.

Lobophrys Filhol, 1885: 17; type species by monotypy: Paramithrax barbicornis (Latreille, 1825); 1886: 360.

DIAGNOSIS: Carapace pyriform, very weakly tuberculated dorsally. Rostrum of two spines fused for a short distance basally, lateral margins subparallel. Orbit consisting above of a narrow supraorbital eave, sharply angled anteriorly, a very small spine at posterolateral corner, an intercalated spine and a very short, conical postorbital spine not greatly removed from orbit; eave, intercalated spine and postorbital spine separated by narrow, deep fissures. Eyestalks slender, reaching to intercalated spine when retracted, cornea small, obliquely ventral. Basal antennal article large, wide posteriorly, narrowing anteriorly, lateral edge notched close to anterolateral angle, which is laterally produced as a small, flattened, blunt lobe, anteromedial angle bearing a short, conical, downwardly curved spine.

Merus of third maxilliped subquadrate, greatly expanded laterally, deeply notched distally, a very small spinule at lateral angle of notch.

Chelipeds not much longer than carapace, lacking spines or tubercles, carpus with a strong longitudinal ridge obliquely crossing lateral surface; chela enlarged midway along its length in adult male, narrowing distally; fixed finger excavated at base, fingers gaping proximally.

Abdomen of seven distinct segments in both sexes. Male abdomen widest at middle of third segment; seventh segment subtriangular, basal width scarcely exceeding length, apex distal, rounded.

Male first pleopod slender, outwardly curved distally, tip blunt, setose; aperture terminal, medial surface expanded distally to fill groove formed by curved lateral surface.

Range: South and south-east Australia.

Type Species: Pisa barbicornis Latreille, 1825, by subsequent designation of Desmarest (1858: 14).

REMARKS: The genus is here restricted to include only the type species, Paramithrax barbicornis (Latreille), as already noted above. For descriptions and figures of this species see Haswell (1880: 437, Pl. 25, fig. 4, as G. tumidus), McCulloch (1913: 335, fig. 46, as G. tumidus) Balss (1929: 17, Pl. 1, fig. 4, as G. barbicornis) and Griffin (in press).

As there has in the past been some considerable disagreement over the limits of the genera Notomithrax (under the name Paramithrax) and Leptomithrax Miers, the present section is concluded with a key to these two genera and to Paramithrax s.s.

KEY TO THE MAJINE GENERA Paramithrax s.s., Notomithrax and Leptomithrax

- 1 (2) Rostral spines fused for a short distance basally, lateral margins subparallel. Supraorbital eave bearing posterolaterally a very small spine, intercalated and postorbital spines subequal in length. Carapace very sparsely tuberculated dorsally. Basal antennal article broad posteriorly, narrowing anteriorly, lateral edge notched close to blunt anterolateral angle. Cheliped lacking tubercles or spines, carpus with a blunt oblique ridge
- 2 (1) Rostral spines separate from base, widely divergent. Supraorbital eave bearing a prominent spine posterolaterally, postorbital spine much longer than intercalated spine. Carapace generally densely tuberculated or spinous dorsally. Basal antennal article of almost even width throughout, not notched laterally, anterolateral angle a prominent spine or flattened lobe. Cheliped with or without tubercles or spines, carpus ridged or subcylindrical,

Paramithrax H. M. Edw.,

- 3 (4) Three parts of supraorbital margin (eave, intercalated spine and postorbital spine) widely separated; postorbital spine conical, lacking hairs anteriorly. Eyestalk slender, seldom reaching postorbital spine, cornea small. Cheliped sparsely tuberculated or spinous, carpus with two longitudinal ridges converging proximally, one dorsal and one lateral, oblique
- 4 (3) Three parts of supraorbital margin closely approximated; postorbital spine dorsoventrally flattened, excavated anteriorly to form a "cup", margin of cup fringed by hairs. Eyestalk stout, reaching almost to postorbital spine, cornea very large. Cheliped usually densely tuberculated or spinous, carpus lacking a dorsal longitudinal ridge, a poorly developed lateral ridge sometimes present

Notomithrax n.gen.

Leptomithrax Miers

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

From a comparative examination of Paramithrax barbicornis and the other species included, up to the present, in Paramithrax s.l. it is at once evident that P. barbicornis is widely different from the rest of the species in a number of important features, as will be seen by reference to the generic diagnoses and the key to genera given above. The more important of these differences are the degree of separation of the three parts of the supraorbital margin, the comparative length of the intercalated and postorbital spines, the degree of divergence of the rostral spines, the shape of the basal antennal article and the shape of the male abdomen, particularly that of the seventh segment in the species under consideration. In addition the form of the male first pleopods (for P. barbicornis see Griffin, in press; for N. peronii and N. baeckstroemi see Garth, 1958: Pl. U, figs. 1, 1a and 2, 2a respectively) support the claim for generic distinctness of P. barbicornis. In view of these important differences I consider that Filhol and Balss were correct in placing P. barbicornis in a genus separate from the other species. However, as P. barbicornis is the type species of Paramithrax, the name Paramithrax can no longer be used for the remaining species, P. peronii, etc. Both Filhol and Balss, on the contrary, retained Paramithrax, in the sense in which it was defined by Miers (1879b) as a subgenus, and, being unaware of Desmarest's note in this regard, removed P. barbicornis to a separate genus.

There remains the problem of the systematic position of Paramithrax parvispinosus Ward. The two genera Leptomithrax and Notomithrax are most satisfactorily separated on the basis of orbital characters since the species show many intergeneric similarities in other characters such as form of the rostrum, basal antennal article, merus of the third maxilliped and shape of the male abdomen. The ornamentation of the chelipeds and also of the carapace are sometimes valuable in confirming a placing on the basis of orbital characters. The differences in these characters shown by the two genera are given in the key at the end of the systematic section of this paper. Paramithrax parvispinosus shows (according to the type specimen, a female, Aust. Mus. No. P 10640, in the collections of the Australian Museum, Sydney) the following features: supraorbital eave, intercalated spine and postorbital spine closely approximated to one another, intercalated spine almost excluded from the rim of the supraorbital margin by the large flattened spine at the posterolateral angle of the eave which is produced laterally toward the weakly flattened postorbital spine which is setose on the anterior edge; eyestalk stout, reaching the postorbital spine, cornea very large. On the other hand this species presents two rather important features of resemblance to species of Notomithrax, particularly N. minor, namely a lack of spines or tubercles on the chelipeds and a well developed oblique ridge on the lateral surface of the carpus of the cheliped. The laterally produced, flattened anterolateral spine of the basal antennal article, the sparsely tuberculated carapace and the distally notched merus of the third maxilliped of *P. parvispinous* are features shown by other species at present placed in *Notomithrax*, and others belonging to *Leptomithrax*. The rostrum is now missing from the type specimen, although Ward (1933: Pl. 23, fig. 41) shows the rostrum as consisting of two slender, divergent spines, similarly a character which would allow its placing in either genus. On the basis of the above, it seems most appropriate to remove *Paramithrax parvispinosus* Ward, 1933, to the genus *Leptomithrax* Miers. However, since only the one small female specimen of the species is known, this placing should be regarded as necessarily somewhat tentative.

The genus Notomithrax is most closely related to the Indo-West Pacific genus Leptomithrax Miers (as already inferred), while Paramithrax H. Milne Edwards, s.s. appears to stand close to the Australian genus Anacinetops Miers (= Eruma McCulloch, see Hale, 1927: 131) but Balss (1935) places the latter genus in the Inachinae whereas Paramithrax is almost certainly a majine genus.

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SUMMARY

- 1. The genus *Paramithrax* H. Milne Edwards, 1834, has become established in the literature for seven species of majid spider crab from New Zealand, southeast Australia, Norfolk Island, and Juan Fernandez, off the coast of Chile, with *Paramithrax peronii* H. Milne Edwards accepted as the type species of the genus following Miers (1879b).
- 2 Pisa barbicornis Latreille, included in Paramithrax by H. Milne Edwards (1834) was designated type species of Paramithrax by Desmarest (1858), but redescribed as Gonatorhynchus tumidus by Haswell (1880) under which name it has become generally known in the Australian literature.
- 3. Paramithrax barbicornis is no longer considered to be congeneric with those species up till now included in Paramithrax. A similar conclusion was reached by Filhol (1885) and Balss (1929) who placed this species in a separate monotypic genus.
- 4. Desmarest's designation of *P. barbicornis* as the type species of *Paramithrax* precedes Miers's of *P. peronii*, so that the former must stand while the latter must be considered invalid.
- 5. The genus *Paramithrax* is redefined and restricted to include only *P. barbicornis*, while a new genus, *Notomithrax*, is set up to accommodate six of the remaining species, *P. peronii* being designated type species.
- 6. The last of the seven species formerly included in *Paramithrax*, *P. parvispinosus* Ward, is transferred, on the basis of orbital details, to *Leptomithrax*, following re-examination of the type specimen of that species.

7. A key to the genera Paramithrax s.s., Notomithrax and Leptomithrax, and to the species of Notomithrax, is given.

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