

HISTORICAL REVIEW

The first described species of the family Silvanidae is Dermestes surinamensis by Linnaeus in 1767. Latreille (1804) first established the genus Silvanus for the species Ips unidentata Olivier and later he (1807) gave a detailed description of the genus Silvanus. Sturm (1826) transferred Dermestes bidentatus (Fabricius) to it and eventually many species were described under this genus, principally, by Reitter and Grouvelle. The first important attempt to arrange the genera of present day Silvanidae into groups was made by Erichson in 1846. He grouped Silvanus Latreille, Psammoecus Latreille, Telephanus Erichson and Platamus Sharp together with Dendrophagus Schonherr and Brontes Fabricius under 'Brontini' of the family 'Cucujipes'. The first supergeneric divisions were proposed by Lacordaire (1854) in his "Genera des Coléoptères". He proposed the tribe 'Silvanides' under the family 'Cucujipes' and included the genera Silvanus Latreille, Psammoecus Latreille, Laemophloeus Dejean, Phlaestichus Redtenbacher and Oma Newm. under this tribe and placed the genus Telephanus Erichson together with Dendrophagus Schonherr and Brontes Fabricius under the tribe 'Brontides'. Leconte (1861) and Leconte and Horn (1883) in the work "Classification of the Coleoptera of North America" characterized the family Cucujidae in detail and splitted the family into five subfamilies namely, Silvaninae, Passandrinae, Cucujinae,

Hemipeplinae and Telephaninae. They placed the genera Silvanus Latreille and Nausibius Redtenbacher under Silvaninae, and Telephanus Erichson and Psammoecus Latreille under Telephaninae. Casey (1884) in his "Revision of the Cucujidae of America North of Mexico" erected two tribes namely, Telephanini and Cryptamorphini under the subfamily Telephaninae. Sharp (1899) in 'Biologia Centrali - Americana' did not make any further notable alterations to Casey's classification regarding Cucujidae, though he transferred Rhizophaginae under Cucujidae. He placed the genera Silvanus Latreille, Platamus Erichson, Euplatamus Sharp, Nausibius Redtenbacher, Synobius Sharp, Cathartus Reiche and Telephanus Erichson in a single subfamily Silvaninae. Ganglbauer (1899) in his work "Die Käfer Von Mitteleuropa" considered two tribes namely, Silvanini and Psammoecini under the subfamily Silvaninae: Cucujidae and also recognised Casey's tribe Cryptamorphini. Böving (1921) was the first author who established the group as a distinct family based on larval characters and subdivided into two subfamilies namely, Silvaninae and Telephaninae. Wilson (1930) studied the genitalia and wing venation and also considered the group as distinct family. Crowson (1955) in his book "Natural classification of the families of Coleoptera" restored the independent family status of Silvanidae and divided into two subfamilies namely, Silvaninae and Psammoecinae. In Junk's "Coleopterorum Catalogus" Hetschko (1930) has listed thirtyeight

genera and three hundred and twelve species under Silvaninae : Cucujidae. Sengupta and Crowson (1966) excluded Hymaea Pascoe from the Silvanidae and later they (1969) attributed this genus to the family Phloestichidae Sengupta and Crowson. Recently Halstead (1973) has revised the genus Silvanus Latreille. He erected three new genera and gave generic status to Grouvelle's subgenera Protosilvanus, Parasilvanus and Cathartosilvanus. He also mentioned that several erroneous inclusions have been made under the genus Silvanus in Junk's "Coleopterorum Catalogus".

Westwood (1839) described the larva of Oryzaephilus surinamensis (L.) and ? Nausibius dentatus (Marsh.). Perris (1877) described the larva of Ahasverus advena (Waltl). Böving (1921) described the larvae of Coccidotrophus socialis Schwarz and Barber and Eunausibius wheeleri Schwarz and Barber. Roberts (1930) provided key to the tribes of the family Cucujidae. Böving and Craighead (1931) in the work "An illustrated synopsis of the principal larval forms of the order Coleoptera" gave definition of larval characters of the family and subfamilies of the family Silvanidae. So far, six larvae of Silvanidae have been described.

The first available record of Indian Silvanidae is of Reitter's description of the species Airaphilus serricollis in 1878a. In 1903 Grouvelle recorded four species from Darjeeling:

West Bengal and later he (1908-1919) described several other Indian species from other parts of India. His publications in 1908 and 1912 entitled "Coléoptères de la région Indienne" and "Notes sur les Silvanini" respectively are the most important works so far published on Indian Silvanidae. Halstead (1973) described two new species of Silvanus Latreille from India and cited detailed distribution of the other Indian species. Recently Pal and Sengupta (1977) have revised the genus Silvanus from India, where they have redefined the genus and described five more new species. Hitherto thirty species belonging to nine genera are recorded from India.