Welcome back, *Ancylochetus*
(Polydesmida: Chelodesmidae: Prepodesminae)

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Abstract
The prepodesmine genus *Ancylochetus*, undocumented since its original proposal in 1931, is revised from specimens of the type species, *A. signatus* Attems. The course of the prostatic groove is clarified, and relationships of the genus examined.

Key words
*Ancylochetus*, Chelodesmidae, Prepodesminae, gonopod structure, Nigeria

Introduction
The new generic name *Ancylochetus* was proposed by Count Attems in 1931 to accommodate the new species *signatus*, the type material of which being attributed to “Liberia: Öflusse”. An abridged version of the original account was printed subsequently in Attems’ treatment of prepodesmines in the “Tierreich” series (1938), and the genus was included incidentally in listings of these animals by Chamberlin (1952), Demange & Mauriès (1975), and myself (1980). Our knowledge of this rather neglected taxon therefore consists solely of its eighty-year old original description. The opportunity to review the genus in a modern context is provided by examination of numerous specimens of the type species from two localities in the Niger delta.

Although Attems’ description and illustrations clearly portrayed those traits that he considered of generic significance, he failed to provide a diagnostic statement, *per se*, contrasting *Ancylochetus* with other genera of the group he knew as “Cordyloporinae”. Only by reference to his key to these nine taxa do we find a definitive indication in couplet 4 to the effect that the loop formed by the prostatic groove prior entering onto
the very short tibiotarsus is what distinguishes *Ancylochetus*. This singular condition was shown by dotted lines in Attems’ Fig. 140 which explains his use of *Schleife* (a loop or bow) as well as the formation of the generic name (*ankyllos*, Gk., hooked or bent). Although the gonopod drawings are remarkably accurate to have been made from a microscope preparation – which denied the possibility of examination from several different aspects – Fig. 140 lacks the single detail that would explain how a surface groove could cross over itself twice.

The type material appears not to exist, at least searches by myself and museum staff at both Hamburg and Vienna have been unsuccessful. Nonetheless, Attems’ description and drawings agree so precisely with the specimens at hand, I think there can be no doubt of their identity.

**Taxonomy**

**Family Chelodesmidae Cook**

**Subfamily Prepodesminae Cook**

**Genus *Ancylochetus* Attems**

Type species, *Ancylochetus signatus* Attems by monotypy and original designation.

**Diagnosis**: Sternum of 4th segment of males with two prominent acutely conical processes, 5th sternum with similar but smaller processes. Gonopods without median sternal sclerite; coxae elongate, subcylindrical, without apophysis, tracheosternal apodeme slender, not recurved. Telopodite robust, set on coxa at right angle, setose (?prefemoral) region about half of telopodite length, set off from acropodite element by defined groove on ventral side and shallow depression on mesal; acropodite with two large components: the laterally placed primary lamina which carries the prostatic groove and a slender falcate basal process, and the more mesial, apically trilobed secondary process. Cyphopods large, the posterior valves large and setose, nearly in contact mesially, much larger than anterior and incrassate, receptacle and operculum small and obscure.

**Distribution**: This monotypic genus remains known only from the southern edges of the Niger River delta, Nigeria.

**Species**: One.  
**Relationships**: Attems did not offer any opinion about possible affinities of his genus. The “arrangement” proposed by Chamberlin in 1952, which only arranged prepodesmine genera alphabetically within the two subfamilies he recognized, was not very helpful. Demange & Mauriès (1975: 139) suggested that the genus appeared to be close to *Paracordyloporus*, but did not provide a key to the genera referred by them