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Redescription of the subgenus *Parancistrum* Verhoeff, 1943, an eastern Mediterranean lineage of the millipede genus *Megaphyllum* Verhoeff, 1894 (Diplopoda: Julida: Julidae: Brachyiulini)

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Abstract

The subgenus *Parancistrum* Verhoeff, 1943 is redefined on the basis of the examination of type and non-type material. The subgenus is currently settled to comprise 6 species, of which *Megaphyllum arcuatum* sp. n. is described as new, while *M. adanense* (Verhoeff, 1943) **syn. n.** and *M. palaestinum* (Jawłowski, 1931) **syn. n.** are established as junior subjective synonyms of *M. curvifolii* (Verhoeff, 1898) and *M. genezarethanum* (Verhoeff, 1923) **comb. nov.**, respectively. A neotype is designed for *Chromatoiulus tenenbaumi* Jawłowski, 1931 under ICZN Article 75.1. The distribution pattern of the studied group is discussed, and some preliminary phylogenetic ideas about *Megaphyllum* and the tribe Brachyiulini are presented.

Key words: millipede, *Brachyiulus*, new species, new synonymies, neotype, distribution

Introduction

The mostly Euro-Ponto-Mediterranean genus *Megaphyllum* Verhoeff, 1894 is one of the most diverse and taxonomically complex genera in the family Julidae (Akkari *et al.* 2011; Lazányi *et al.* 2012). Its identity has been entangled with numerous problems across its history. Numerous assigned species have repeatedly been referred to under different generic names, such as *Julus* Linnaeus, 1758, *Brachyiulus* Berlése, 1884 and/or *Chromatoiulus* Verhoeff, 1894; mostly as a result of Verhoeff's inconsistent views which often contradicted the basic rules of the ICZN (see also Pocock 1895). It was Hoffman (1980) who finally resolved the confusion by giving clear arguments for re-establishing the name "*Megaphyllum*" (see also Lazányi & Korsós 2011). However, a large number of highly varied species were assigned to the genus, mostly due to the lack of a diagnosis and the very general original description. The attempts at intra-generic grouping have even increased the ambiguity, resulting in a real jungle of numerous, mostly monotypic, sometimes overlapping or even invalidly proposed subgenera. *Parancistrum* Verhoeff, 1943 is one of these problematic subgenera. It was diagnosed on the basis of a species which is actually a junior synonym of *M. curvifolii* (Verhoeff, 1898), and has since remained monotypic despite the presence of several other, obviously similar species already known at that time.

Verhoeff (1898) described *Megaphyllum curvifolii* and *M. turcicum* from "Cilicien" [near Tarsus], and *M. serratum* from Pernata, both in Turkey. Jawłowski (1931) described two new *Megaphyllum* species: *M. palaestinum* and *M. tenenbaumi*, both from today's Israel, without referring to the above mentioned Verhoeff's paper. Meanwhile, Verhoeff (1923) had already described a new species of the genus, namely *M. genezarethanum*, from the same area, based on a single female. This was noted by Jawłowski (1931), who mentioned a possible synonymy of *M. genezarethanum* with one of his two new species. Attems (1940), in his revisionary work on Julidae, placed *M. curvifolii*, *M. serratum*, *M. palaestinum* and *M. tenenbaumi*, as well as a number of other species, in a newly described subgenus of *Megaphyllum* (*Chromatoiulus* auct.), namely, *Phauloiulus* Attems, 1940.

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