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Taxonomy of European Damaeidae (Acari: Oribatida) VII. Redescription of *Neobelba pseudopapillipes* Bulanova-Zachvatkina, 1967 with comments on its generic status

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Abstract

We redescribe *Neobelba pseudopapillipes* Bulanova-Zachvatkina, 1967, single known species of *Neobelba* Bulanova-Zachvatkina, 1967, based on the material collected in Russia and Slovakia. The species shares many important characters of *Metabelba* Grandjean, 1936, particularly of the subgenus *M. (Pateribelba)* Mourek, Miko et Bernini, 2011. It can be easily distinguished by presence of companion seta *d*, coupled with solenidion on tibia IV. As the original material of Bulanova-Zachvatkina was lost, neotype and 14 paraneotypes from Voronezh region, Russia are newly designated. Based on the neotype redescription, *Neobelba* was re-defined and the new status was proposed. Synonymy with *Metabelba* s. str. as proposed by Subías (2013) is rejected, and *Neobelba* is considered to be a separate subgenus of *Metabelba*, as earlier proposed by Subías (2004). Present distribution of *Metabelba (Neobelba) pseudopapillipes* (Bulanova-Zachvatkina, 1967) and known ecological data on the species are provided.

Key words: oribatid mite, *Metabelba*, *Pateribelba*, redescription, subgenus, neotype, Russia, Moldova, Slovakia

Introduction

Poorly known genus *Neobelba* was proposed by Bulanova-Zachvatkina (1967) in her first determination key of oribatid mites. Even if type species of the genus was not explicitly named, its single species *Neobelba pseudopapillipes* Bulanova-Zachvatkina, 1967 is the type by monotypy. Nevertheless, original description is very short, and without any figures. Later, Bulanova-Zachvatkina (1975) provided slightly amended definition, but again without any figure. Individuals corresponding to the available description were found by senior author already in 1989 in material collected by L. Kováč in East Slovakia, but confirming identity of the species was difficult. After findings of numerous individuals by the junior author in the central part of European Russia, within the originally presented range of the species, we attempted to find if there is any individual available in acarological collections of St. Petersburg and Novosibirsk, where the remaining part of the original material of Bulanova-Zachvatkina is housed. Unfortunately, no individual of *Neobelba pseudopapillipes* was found, and comparison with original material is therefore impossible. However, our material, both from Russia and from Slovakia, matches very well the known characteristics of the species. We consider therefore our individuals to be indeed representative of *Neobelba pseudopapillipes* Bulanova-Zachvatkina 1967. Given the poor knowledge of the species and genus, the aims of this article are following: (a) redescribe the species and provide detailed information about its morphology; (b) design the neotype of the species to fix this interpretation and avoid confusion in the future; and (c) analyze and discuss generic relationships of *Neobelba* Bulanova-Zachvatkina, 1967.

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