

On the identity of some poorly known lithobiid centipedes described by Karl Verhoeff (Chilopoda: Lithobiomorpha)

PAVEL STOEV*

*National Museum of Natural History, Tsar Osvoboditel Blvd. 1, 1000 Sofia – Bulgaria
e-mail: stoev@nmnh.bas.bg

Abstract

The present paper considers the taxonomic status of the poorly known European centipedes *Lithobius dollfusi* Verhoeff, 1901, *L. lapadensis* Verhoeff, 1900 and *L. karamani* Verhoeff, 1937 described by the prominent German zoologist Dr. Karl Wilhelm Verhoeff, using types currently housed in the Museum für Naturkunde, Berlin. Re-examination of the types revealed the following new combination and synonymy: *Harpolithobius dollfusi* (Verhoeff, 1901) comb.n. = *H. intermedius* Matic, 1958 syn.n. *Lithobius lapadensis* and *L. karamani* are re-described and illustrated and their taxonomic position discussed.

Key words: Centipedes, Lithobiomorpha, Taxonomy, Re-description, New synonymy

Introduction

Karl Wilhelm Verhoeff was undoubtedly one of the most prolific scientists in the history of myriapodology. He described thousands of new taxa, mainly in the classes Chilopoda and Diplopoda, from almost every part of the world. In terms of current systematics, a considerable proportion of them, especially in the order Lithobiomorpha, were described too inadequately to allow correct identification by later generations of taxonomists. Thus, many species have remained in oblivion for decades, though their types were traceable in European museums. Only Eason (1983) re-described part of the lithobiomorph types of Verhoeff in the collection of the British Museum (Natural History), showing their true identity. However, those deposited in the natural history museums of Munich and Berlin have never been thoroughly re-considered. Many taxa, especially those described from the Balkan Peninsula, badly need critical re-evaluation.

The current paper is a step towards resolving some of the long-standing taxonomic problems with the lithobiomorphs described by Verhoeff. It is based upon a small part of