



On the identity of *Basigona lucasii* Silvestri, 1896, a poorly known millipede from Tunisia, with notes on the North African Chordeumatida (Diplopoda: Chordeumatida: Chamaesomatidae)

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Considering the very high diversity of Chordeumatida in Europe, namely almost 500 described species in 140 genera (Enghoff & Kime 2009), the paucity of records of this order in North Africa is striking. The order has hitherto been reported only from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.

The first record of chordeumatidans from North Africa is due to Lucas (1849) who reported two juvenile specimens from La Calle, northeastern Algeria. He tentatively assigned them to *Craspedosoma polydesmoides* Leach, 1814 (now known as *Nanogona polydesmoides*), a species originally described from Great Britain but now being reported also from several continental European countries (Enghoff & Kime 2009).

Almost 50 years later, Silvestri (1896) recorded thirty-eight species of Myriapoda from the Kroumirie region in Tunisia, which included a new chordeumatidan, *Basigona lucasii* Silvestri, 1896. Having only a few female and juvenile specimens at his disposal, he only provisionally assigned the species to *Basigona* Cook, 1895 (family Craspedosomatidae Gray in Jones, 1843), a genus erected one year earlier to accommodate the species *B. athesina* (Fedrizzi, 1876) from Italy (Cook 1895). Since then, *B. lucasii* has not been re-collected, nor have the type specimens been re-examined, and the species has thus remained in oblivion until now.

In his checklist of North African myriapods, Brolemann (1921) repeated the record of *B. lucasii* from Tunisia and that of *C. polydesmoides* from Algeria (the latter with a question mark). Schubart (1952) synonymised *C. polydesmoides* (*sensu* Lucas 1849) with *B. lucasii* and mentioned the species only for Tunisia. Manfredi (1956) described *Origmatogona strinatii* (family Chamaesomatidae Verhoeff, 1913) from the Friouatto cave (Region Taza, Middle Atlas) in Morocco. Later, two juvenile chordeumatidans of an undetermined genus and species were recorded from Tangier in Morocco (Schubart 1960).

More recently, Mauriès (1982) described a new genus and species from Annaba, northeastern Algeria, as *Meinerteuma edoughensis* (family Chamaesomatidae). Although suspecting that *Craspedosoma polydesmoides sensu* Lucas (1849) and *Basigona lucasii* might actually be conspecific with *M. edoughensis*, he could not make any definite statement on their identity since type material of both species was at that time inaccessible for study (Mauriès 1982). This was until now the most recent contribution to the study of Chordeumatida in North Africa.

New chordeumatidan specimens, including one male (Fig. 1), were collected by N. A., P. S. and H. E. during two field trips in Tunisia in March 2008 and March 2009 from the region of Aïn Draham (Kroumirie) in Tunisia, the type locality of *B. lucasii*. All specimens were preserved in 70% ethanol and deposited in the Natural History Museum of Copenhagen, Denmark (ZMUC). The type series of *Basigona lucasii* (Museo civico di Storia naturale in Genova, MCSNG) as well as material of *Meinerteuma lucasii*: type (ZMUC) and non type series (Museo Regionale di Scienze Naturali, Torino, MRSN) were obtained from the respective repositories for study. The photograph was taken using a Leica DFC 420 digital camera mounted on a Leica MZ16A stereomicroscope. Automontage Pro software from Syncroscopy was used for image-stacking. Drawings were made using a camera lucida mounted on a Leica Wild M10.

The study of the male has revealed that the collected material is morphologically identical with *M. edoughensis* from Algeria. The side-by-side comparison with the newly collected specimens has shown unequivocally that *Basigona*