



Taxonomy of European Damaeidae (Acari: Oribatida) VI. The oribatid mite genus *Parabelbella*: Redescription of *P. elisabethae* and synonymy of *Akrodamaeus*

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Abstract

The mite genus *Parabelbella* Bulanova-Zachvatkina, 1972, one of the poorest known genera of Damaeidae, is redefined on the basis of redescription of *P. elisabethae* Bulanova-Zachvatkina, 1967, collected by the authors in Russia and following study of the type material of Bulanova-Zachvatkina. *Akrodamaeus* Norton, 1979 is considered as a junior synonym of *Parabelbella* based on the new diagnosis. Altogether 7 known species belong to *Parabelbella*, with known distribution in Russia, Central Asia and America. Development of the concept of the genus is discussed, concluding that the generic name is available only since the year 1972, when *P. crenatosetosa* was established as its type. It was found that the type species was described by Bulanova-Zachvatkina in 1967 and not in 1957 as earlier presented. Recently proposed synonymies of *Heterodamaeus* Mihelčič, 1964, *Miobelba* Pérez-Iñigo et Peña, 1994, *Tectodamaeus* Aoki, 1984 and *Nododamaeus* Hammer, 1977 with *Parabelbella* are considered unacceptable without additional information and synonymy of *Akrodamaeus* with *Metabelbella* Bulanova-Zachvatkina, 1957 is rejected. The key of European species of *Parabelbella* is given.

Key words: Acari, Oribatida, Damaeidae, *Parabelbella elisabethae*, redescription, *Parabelbella crenatosetosa*, *Akrodamaeus*, synonymy.

Introduction

The genus *Parabelbella* is among the most poorly known in the oribatid mite family Damaeidae. This is mostly because of the lack of a comprehensive description not only of genus itself, but also of two species that have been mentioned by different authors as the type-species. The name was first used by Bulanova-Zachvatkina (1965), but no diagnosis or type species was mentioned, nor was any illustration provided. According to the Rules of Zoological Nomenclature (article 13), the name was unavailable. Later, Bulanova-Zachvatkina (1967) proposed the name *Parabelbella* again as a new genus. Two species were mentioned as belonging to the new genus – *P. crenatosetosa* and *P. elisabethae*. While the first species was mentioned as being described by Bulanova-Zachvatkina in 1957, latter was proposed as a new species. None of the two species was designed as type species of the proposed genus, thus name remained to be unavailable.

In his determination keys, Balogh (1972) used the name *Parabelbella* again, and designated *P. crenatosetosa*, first of the two species mentioned by Bulanova-Zachvatkina (1967), as a type. Based on that, the name of genus is available since 1972. Authorship remains for Bulanova-Zachvatkina, as Balogh gave her explicit credit by naming her as author of the name. The proper name therefore should read *Parabelbella* Bulanova-Zachvatkina, 1972 (and not 1967).

Later, Bulanova-Zachvatkina (1975) indicated that *P. elisabethae* was the type-species, but this cannot be accepted as a type designation since *P. crenatosetosa* was fixed as type earlier by Balogh (1972).

The available information on both species of Bulanova-Zachvatkina is fragmentary and incomplete. While the few mentioned characters were perhaps sufficient at that time to distinguish the two species from other Damaeidae,