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A new genus of Trachelipodidae Strouhal, 1953 (Crustacea, Isopoda, Oniscidea) from the eastern Mediterranean

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Abstract

Levantoniscus n. gen. is erected for two new species from Cyprus: *Levantoniscus bicostulatus* n. sp. and *Levantoniscus makrisi* n. sp. *Levantoniscus wahrmani* (Strouhal, 1968) n. comb. from Israel and southern Turkey is transferred from the genus *Bathytropa* Budde-Lund, 1885 and family Bathytropidae. The new genus is included in the family Trachelipodidae and is characterized by distinct dorsal ornamentation, interlocking pleopods and uncovered pleopodal lungs which are located in invaginations on pleopod 3–5 exopodites.

Key words: Oniscidea, *Levantoniscus*, new species, Cyprus, Near East

Introduction

The terrestrial isopod (Oniscidea) fauna of the eastern Mediterranean countries has not been studied in detail, with the only exception of Israel (Strouhal & Pretzmann 1975; Warburg & Hornung 1999). Furthermore, the taxonomy of several groups of Oniscidea needs a sound revision, as evinced also by the few recent molecular phylogenies produced for some taxa (e.g., Klossa-Kilia *et al.* 2006; Parmakelis *et al.* 2008; Kamilari *et al.* 2014) that revealed very high genetic variation even within neighbouring conspecific populations.

In the past few years we have undertaken a detailed study on the oniscidean fauna of Cyprus, during which we have collected material that includes new taxa and helps to elucidate the taxonomic status of other known taxa from the region. In this paper we describe two new species from Cyprus which share characters with a previously described species from the Near East assigned to the genus *Bathytropa* Budde-Lund, 1885 in the family Bathytropidae. The unique characters of these three species justify the establishment of a new genus which we consider to belong to the family Trachelipodidae.

Materials and methods

The specimens of the two new species described herein were collected on Cyprus and stored in 95% ethanol. The specimens of *Bathytropa wahrmani* Strouhal, 1968 were borrowed from the Steinhardt Museum of Natural History, Tel Aviv University, Israel, and had been identified by H. Schmalfuss, Stuttgart. The species were illustrated from the entire animals and micropreparations of body parts; figures were prepared with the aid of a camera lucida mounted on Wild M5 and M20 microscopes. For one species, some pictures were taken with a scanning electron microscope using a FEI ESEM QUANTA 200. Samples were dried and introduced in the measuring chamber with no pretreatments.