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On the identity of the generic name Iulidesmus Silvestri, 1895 (Polydesmida: Paradoxosomatidae)

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One of the most enigmatic of the early generic names impacting negatively on the taxonomy and nomenclature of Neotropical diplopods is *Iulidesmus*, proposed by Filippo Silvestri in 1895. The type species *Iulidesmus typicus* was based upon a female holotype, so that the structure of the male genitalia was (and remains) unknown for the species and genus. The original diagnosis provided little solid substance for other investigators :

> "*Genus generi Strongylosomati finitimum, sed differt: carinis nullis, segmentis in partibus duabus distinctis non partitis, segmento singulo praeter foramina repugntoria utrimque poris binis parvis inter sese aliquantum remotis instructa*."

The brief description of *I. typicus* that followed was equally uninformative. Under such circumstances it can be appreciated that *Iulidesmus* has remained a frustrating *nomen inquirendum*, with the potential for upsetting some younger generic name if and when it could ever be identified.

Iulidesmus was originally contrasted with *Strongylosoma* (in the very inclusive circumscription of the time), and for this reason it was frequently placed by Graf Attems in the family he knew as Strongylosomidae, right down to his monograph on the group in 1937. In that treatment, not having seen authentic material of *typicus*, he distinguished the genus from others of the family solely on the basis of Silvestri's asserted ozopore character: *"Die Beschriebung ist völlig ungenügend und das einzige Mittel die Gattung wiederzuerkennen sind die 2 Poren, die ausser den Saftlöchen vorhanden sind."* [The description is totally inadequate and the only means for recognizing the genus again are the 2 pores, which are present in addition to the ozopores].

Silvestri himself was unable to adequately dispose of *Iulidesmus.* In 1897 he set up the genus *Leiosoma* (later replaced with *Catharosoma*) for species closely related to *typicus*, and in 1903 described a second species (*Iulidesmus chiliensis*) which is now known to be neither congeneric nor confamilial with it.

After 1937 *Iulidesmus* became excluded from the "Strongylosomidae" [now Paradoxosomatidae]. A general survey of the Neotropical members of that family by Kraus (1956) did not mention it in any context. A later review of the same fauna by Jeekel (1968) stated that *Iulidesmus* belonged in the family Sphaerotrichopidae [now Dalodesmidae], doubtless because *I. chiliensis* clearly *is* a true dalodesmid. That the two species *typicus* and *chiliensis* were congeneric, however, rested entirely on Silvestri's perception (for that time, very thin ice indeed).

Some decades past, whilst working on some chelodesmid millipeds also named by Silvestri in the 1890s, I noticed that the type locality for *I. typicus* (Corocoi, Bolivia) lies in the Yungas region on the *eastern* slope of the Andes: outside the established range for American dalodesmids (Chile, southern Argentina). On this biogeographic implication I ventured to return *Iulidesmus* to the Paradoxosomatidae in my 1980 "Classification of the Diplopoda" while expressing a suspicion that it might prove to be a senior synonym to *Mestosoma.* In his recent review of the paradoxosomatid fauna of southern South America, Prof. Golovatch (2006) acknowledged that the collection of topotypic material at Corocoi might substantiate my guess (see comment in a following paragraph).

The type material of *typicus* was held for many years in the Silvestri collection of the Istituto Entomologia Agraria, Portici[1]. Presumably Silvestri had borrowed it (and much other material) from the Genova collection in connection with a proposed monograph on Diplopoda, and failed to return it. Upon my request, Dr. Gennaro Viggiani very kindly transmitted the specimen to me for inspection. This long-overdue precaution showed at once that my surmise was

1. The Silvestri Collection was transferred *in toto* from Portici to the Museu Civico di Storia Naturale "Giacoma Doria" in Genova in 2005.

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