



Two new species of the millipede family Blaniulidae (Diplopoda, Julida) from caves in central and southeastern Europe

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Abstract

Two new species, one each of the previously monotypic genera *Cibiniulus* Verhoeff, 1927, and *Thassoblaniulus* Mauriès, 1985, are described from caves in Slovakia and Albania, respectively: *C. slovacus* Antić, Mock & Enghoff, **sp. n.** and *T. radjai* Antić & Enghoff **sp. n.** Brief discussions on relationships with congeners and on the taxonomic position of the genera *Cibiniulus* and *Thassoblaniulus* within Blaniulidae are presented, as well as a distribution map for both genera.

Key words: taxonomy, caves, millipedes, Albania, Slovakia, Nopoiulinae

Introduction

The family Blaniulidae includes more than fifty, mainly very small and slender, epigeal or cave-dwelling species. The natural distribution area of the family is the Western Palearctic subregion, from the Elburz Mts. in Iran to the Canary Islands, but one species may be indigenous to southeastern North America. Many of the species in this family have very limited distributions, but some are very widespread, in most cases probably due to human activities (Enghoff 1984).

Within Europe, the greatest number of epigeal and cave-dwelling blaniulid species occur in France and the Iberian Peninsula. Generally, very few blaniulid species are known from the east-central and southeastern parts of Europe, and the vast majority of these are species with a wide distribution (*Archiboreoiulus pallidus* (Brade-Birks, 1920), *Blaniulus guttulatus* (Fabricius, 1798), *Boreoiulus tenuis* (Bigler, 1913), *Choneiulus palmatus*, *Cibiniulus phlepsii* (Verhoeff, 1897), *Nopoiulus kochii* (Gervais, 1847), *Proteroiulus fuscus* (Am Stein, 1857)). These species are known from the surface, but some of them also from underground. Only one species has so far been described from caves in this part of Europe, viz., *Thassoblaniulus simplarius* Mauriès, 1985, from Greece. The discovery of two new blaniulid species from underground habitats in Albania and Slovakia is thus significant and reminds us that knowledge of not only blaniulids, but of the European millipede fauna in general, is far from complete, especially in the Balkan Peninsula.

In the most recent major paper on blaniulid classification, Enghoff (1984) divided the family Blaniulidae into four subfamilies: Mesoblaniulinae (monotypic), Choneiulinae (four genera), Blaniulinae (12 genera), and Nopoiulinae (four genera). The genus *Thassoblaniulus* Mauriès, 1985, was originally assigned to the Blaniulinae (Mauriès 1985), but was transferred to Nopoiulinae by Enghoff (1990), who suggested that it might be the sister-group of *Cibiniulus* Verhoeff, 1927. Beside these two genera, Nopoiulinae *sensu* Enghoff (1984) includes the monotypic genus *Virgoiulus* Enghoff, 1984, from North America, and *Nopoiulus* Menge, 1851, the largest genus (11 species known) within the subfamily.