



## Correspondence

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### On the identity of *Bithoracochaeta sociabilis* Blanchard (Diptera: Muscidae): a new synonym of *Atherigona orientalis* Schiner

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Everard Eells Blanchard (1889-1971) was a distinguished figure of the Argentinean entomology. During his productive career, Blanchard described numerous species of Diptera, mostly on Tachinidae and Sarcophagidae, and published more than 150 articles (Cortés 1973). Blanchard worked for many years at the “División de Zoología Agrícola, Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería” (Agricultural Zoology Division, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock) and later (as director) at the “Instituto de Patología Vegetal (Institute of Plant Pathology). After Blanchard’s decease, most specimens of his collection were sent to “Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales “Bernardino Rivadavia”, Capital Federal, Buenos Aires (MACN), and some few specimens were retained at “Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria”, Castelar, Buenos Aires (INTA) (Dr. Axel O. Bachmann, pers. comm.).

Several endemic species of Muscidae from Argentina are only known from the original description and were never revised. As part of a continuous study on nominal species of Calyptratae and their name-bearing types housed in Argentinean institutions (Mulieri *et al.* 2010; Patitucci *et al.* 2011), the present work revises the only nominal species of Muscidae described by Blanchard.

*Bithoracochaeta sociabilis* was described by Blanchard (1937: 41) based on an unspecified number of males and females collected from Loreto, Misiones province, Argentina by Dr. A. Ogloblin, and from Chaco province, Argentina by Dr. P.C.L. Denier. Blanchard provided a detailed description and suggested this species would be close to *Bithoracochaeta leucoprocta* (Wiedemann). The specimens were designated as “cotipos” (syntypes according to ICZN 1999: Art 73.2) by Blanchard and, at the time, were deposited in his personal collection. After the original description, *B. sociabilis* was mentioned in few works. Albuquerque (1956) stated that *B. sociabilis* probably belong to the genus *Austrocoenosia* Malloch, and more recently, Couri and Motta (2000) transferred temporarily the species to the genus *Neodexiopsis* Malloch. However, in both proposed nomenclatural actions, the mentioned authors did not revise the type series of *B. sociabilis*.

We examined the type series of *B. sociabilis* deposited at Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria, Castelar, Buenos Aires (INTA), and found this nominal species to be a junior synonym of *Atherigona orientalis* Schiner, 1868. The morphological characters provided by Pont (1992) in his redescription of *A. orientalis*, were used here for the identification of specimens.

*Atherigona orientalis* is a widespread and common species throughout the warm areas of the Old World and New World, and their larvae usually breed in plant decaying matter. This species often produces secondary infestations on crop plants (cotton, fruits, vegetable, etc.) (Pont 1992) and is considered an important pest of fruits and vegetables (Rodrigues *et al.* 2006). The specimens examined by Blanchard were collected on cotton and tomato.

The distributional range of *A. orientalis* in the Neotropical region extends from the southern United States to northeast Argentina. The first record in Argentina was made by Pont (1992) based on specimens housed at the Natural History Museum, London, United Kingdom. He recorded the species to Iguazú (Misiones province). We provide here an update of the geographical distribution of this species in Argentina (Figure 4).

All the specimens studied belong to the following institutions (acronyms in parentheses): Administración Nacional de Laboratorios e Institutos de Salud “Dr. Carlos G. Malbrán”, CeNDIE - Departamento Vectores, Buenos Aires, Argentina (ANLIS); Instituto e Fundación Miguel Lillo, Tucumán, Argentina (IFML); Instituto Nacional de Tecnología Agropecuaria, Castelar, Buenos Aires (INTA).