



A review of the Chinese species of *Hessebius* Verhoeff, 1941 (Chilopoda: Lithobiomorpha: Lithobiidae)

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Abstract

The present paper reviews the centipede species of the genus *Hessebius* Verhoeff, 1941 (Chilopoda: Lithobiomorpha: Lithobiidae) of the Chinese fauna, *H. jangtseanus* (Verhoeff, 1942), *H. longispinipes* Ma, Pei & Zhu, 2009 and *H. multiforminis* Pei, Ma, Zapparoli & Zhu, **sp. nov.** *H. kosswigi* Verhoeff, 1941, from Turkey, is selected by subsequent designation as type species of the genus, which was previously unavailable. *Schizotergitius styliferus* Loksa, 1978, from Mongolia, is transferred in *Hessebius* (**n. comb.**) and its relationships with *H. longispinipes* are briefly discussed. A comparative table of the diagnostic characters of the Sino–Mongolian species of the genus is given.

Key words: Chilopoda, Lithobiidae, *Hessebius*, type species by subsequent designation, China, Mongolia

Introduction

The myriapod fauna of China is still poorly known and very little attention was paid to the study of Lithobiomorpha. About 60 species have been recorded in this country, up to now (see Wang & Mauriès 1996 for a review; Zhang 1996; Chao 2005; Ma *et al.* 2007a, b; 2008a, b; 2009).

Hessebius was originally proposed as a genus in the family Lithobiidae by Verhoeff (1941) to accommodate two species described from Turkey, *H. kosswigi* Verhoeff, 1941 and *H. tauricus* Verhoeff, 1941, the latter currently included in *Lithobius* Leach, 1814 according to Zapparoli (1999). Zalesskaja (1978) provided a diagnosis of the taxon. According to Eason (1981), *Hessebius* would be a natural group probably having no more than subgeneric status although he still treated it at generic rank as originally proposed. The taxonomic status of *Hessebius* had never been debated and it is considered here at generic rank. Presently, it comprises about 10 species. Its recorded distribution extends from Mongolia and south-east China through central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan), southern Urals, south-west Russia (Kalmykia and adjacent areas), westwards up to Middle East and eastern Mediterranean basin (Iran, Armenia, south-west Turkey, Rhodos, Cyprus, Syria, Palestine, Israel, Jordan, north Egypt, Cyrenaica) (Porat 1893; Muralevitch 1907; Verhoeff 1941, 1942, 1943; Folkmanová 1958; Folkmanová & Dobroruka 1960; Zalesskaja 1978; Eason 1981, 1983, 1992a, b; Negrea & Matic 1995; Zapparoli 1991, 1999; summary by Zapparoli 2006; see also Farzalieva & Esyunin 2008; Ma *et al.* 2009). The quotation of *Arebius vosslerii* (Verhoeff, 1941), a possible junior synonym of *Hessebius barbipes* (Porat, 1893) according to Eason (1983), based on a single male from Sendai, Japan (Chamberlin & Wang 1952: 182), is unreliable and probably due to a misidentification. Only two species are currently known from China (Zapparoli 2006; Ma *et al.* 2009). A review of these species and the description of a new one are given below.