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On the importance of robust species descriptions for Rotifera: re-descriptions of *Synchaeta stylata* and *Synchaeta longipes* and a comparison to *Synchaeta jollyae*

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Abstract

Comprehensive re-descriptions of the two morphological similar species *Synchaeta stylata* Wierzejski, 1893 and *Synchaeta longipes* Gosse, 1887 were made with the aim of providing unique and unambiguous morphological character sets for the identification of each species. The re-descriptions revolve around a morphological analysis of the habitus of live and SEM-prepared individuals—with the focus on robust and easily discernible features—together with a comprehensive examination of the trophus. In addition, we also undertake a detailed comparison of these species with descriptions of *Synchaeta jollyae* Shiel and Koste, 1993, another morphologically similar species that has been described solely on the basis of preserved and partly contracted specimens. In so doing, we found no convincing morphological differences to *S. stylata* that are robust to potential preparation artefacts. We therefore recommend that a thorough re-examination of the taxonomic status of *S. jollyae* should be performed based on the sampling of live, unpreserved topotypes from the type locality of this species (Queensland, Australia).

Keywords

Rotifera; morphology; trophus; species delimitation; synonymy; preparation artefacts.

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