

**The priority of *Blothrus* Schiödte, 1847, over *Neobisium* Chamberlin, 1930 (Neobisiidae: Pseudoscorpionida)**

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The genus *Neobisium* Chamberlin, 1930 (type species by original designation *Obisium muscorum* Leach, 1817), as currently defined, is the largest known genus of pseudoscorpions and contains approximately 200 species. It has been divided into four subgenera: *Neobisium s. str.*, *Blothrus* Schiödte, 1847, *Ommatoblothrus* Beier, 1956 and *Heoblothrus* Beier, 1963. It was proposed by Chamberlin (1930) for many of the species previously placed in *Obisium* Illiger, 1798, which was found by Kew (1911) to be synonymous with *Chelifer* Geoffroy, 1762, since both claimed *Acarus cancroides* Linnaeus, 1758 as type species.

The genus-group name *Blothrus* was proposed by Schiödte (1847) for a cave-dwelling pseudoscorpion from Yugoslavia, *B. spelaeus* Schiödte, 1847 (type species by monotypy). Schiödte's paper of 1849 has generally been regarded as the first publication of *Blothrus*, but it was his paper of 1847 in which it first appeared. Chamberlin (1930) considered *Blothrus* and *Neobisium* to be separate genera. Beier (1932), and most subsequent authors, treated *Blothrus* as a subgenus of *Neobisium*, even though *Blothrus* antedates *Neobisium* by 80 years. It would appear that Beier retained *Neobisium* because it is the type genus of the family Neobisiidae. Nevertheless, Article 23e(i) of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature clearly states that the valid name formed by the union of two or more genus-group names is the oldest valid name among those of its components. Thus, *Blothrus* is the senior synonym of *Neobisium* with the following subgeneric arrangement:

*Blothrus* (*Blothrus*) Schiödte, 1847

*Blothrus* (*Neobisium*) Chamberlin, 1930, new status

Gardini (1982) has indicated that there is some doubt as to whether these subgeneric names should be retained, because the subgenus *Blothrus* may simply be a paraphyletic assemblage of cave-dwelling forms. No matter what the outcome of these studies, *Blothrus* retains its priority over *Neobisium*.

Two other options are available, but they both have significant disadvantages in that the plenary powers of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature would have to be invoked. The first is to request the Commission to suppress the genus-group name *Blothrus*; this would mean that those species currently included in the subgenus *Blothrus* would be without a name (if one is needed). The second involves requesting the Commission to change the type species of *Obisium* to *Obisium muscorum* Leach, 1817 which automatically makes *Neobisium* its junior synonym. This is quite drastic and would not solve the problem of the type genus of the family, because Article 40 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature requires that Neobisiidae still be used (perhaps the Commission could also be requested to validate Obisiidae over the Neobisiidae).

Nevertheless, I feel that these cases are not strong enough to warrant such action, and I prefer the original solution – to treat *Blothrus* as the senior synonym of *Neobisium* – even though we shall be subjected to a certain amount of initial confusion.

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### Nomenclatural Note

The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature gives six months' notice of the possible use of its plenary powers in the following cases, published in *Bull.zool.Nom.* **42** (1), on 2 April 1985, and welcomes comments and advice on them from interested zoologists.

Case No. 1481 *Argyrodes* Simon, 1864 and *Robertus* O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1879 (Araneae): proposed conservation by the suppression of *Argyrodes* Guenée, 1845 and *Ctenium* Menge, 1871.

Case No. 2484 *Olpium* L. Koch, 1873 (Pseudoscorpionida, Olpiidae): proposed designation of type species and related problems.

Case No. 2480 *Erigone* Audouin, 1826 (Araneae): proposed designation of type species.

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Editor

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