

Chelifer longimanus Kollar, 1848: a nomen nudum corresponding to *Neobisium spelaenum* (Schiödte, 1847) (Pseudoscorpiones: Chelonethi: Neobisiidae)

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Abstract: The manuscript name *Chelifer longimanus* Kollar, 1848, most often cited as *Obisium longimanum* Kollar, was first introduced in a note by KOLLAR (1848) that has been overlooked in the taxonomic literature on pseudoscorpions. No description or indication has been associated with this name, which is therefore a nomen nudum. It corresponds to the valid pseudoscorpion species *Neobisium spelaenum* (Schiödte, 1847), having been found at one of the type localities of the latter (Postojna Cave, Slovenia). Two specimens originally identified as *O. longimanum* (probably by V. Kollar) are present in the collections of the Naturhistorisches Museum Wien.

Key words: Nomenclature, Postojna cave, pseudoscorpion, Slovenia

The early literature on karst animals contains frequent references to a pseudoscorpion with the manuscript name *Obisium longimanum* Kollar (KHEVENHÜLLER-METSCH 1852, 1853, POKORNY 1854, SCHINER 1854, 1870, HALIDAY in WRIGHT 1857, LÖW 1862, FRIES 1874). Thereafter, this name was generally ignored, except for the catalogue of WOLF (1938). It has not been mentioned in the specialist literature on pseudoscorpions, being absent from the lists of nomina nuda provided by BEIER (1932) and HARVEY (1991, 2011). Here we clarify the status of this name, based on a literature survey and an examination of two surviving specimens originally attributed to *O. longimanum*.

Identity of *Chelifer longimanus* Kollar

The name *Chelifer longimanus* was introduced by KOLLAR (1848), who wrote:

“Auch aus der Classe der *Arachniden* entdeckte Herr Schmid eine ausgezeichnete Art der Afterscorpione *Chelifer*, welche ich *Chelifer longimanus* nenne, bei dem ebenfalls keine Augen sichtbar sind.” [Also from the class of arachnids Mr Schmid discovered a distinctive species of *Chelifer* false-scorpions, which I call *Chelifer longimanus*, in which also no eyes are visible.] KOLLAR (1848) only mentioned the absence of eyes with reference to other cave dwelling animals, not to

other pseudoscorpions. It was not being proposed as a diagnostic character and it did not define the species because other eyeless pseudoscorpions were known by that time. The “Herr Schmid” credited with the discovery of the species is F.J. Schmidt, who first mentioned it in a talk given to the Eighth Assembly of Hungarian Physicians and Naturalists in Oedenburg on 16 August 1847. The name Schmidt proposed there, *Chelifer troglodytes*, was mentioned (as a nomen nudum) in reports of the meeting by HAMMERSCHMIDT (1847, p. 196) and ZIPSER (1847). SCHMIDT (1848) later described the species as *Obisium troglodytes* Schmidt, 1848, which is now considered a junior synonym of *Neobisium spelaenum* (Schiödte, 1847) (see JUDSON 2012). Kollar’s paper was read to the Austrian Academy during its meeting of 30 March 1848, but he does seem to have been aware of Schmidt’s description of *O. troglodytes*, which had been published in the supplement (*Illyrisches Blatt*) of a local newspaper (*Laibacher Zeitung*) on 8 January 1848. Because KOLLAR (1848) did not mention *O. troglodytes* by name, *C. longimanus* cannot be considered a nomen novum for that species. The simple mention of Schmidt’s discovery is too vague to constitute an indication in the sense of the INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE (1999), which requires “a bibliographic reference to a previously published description or definition” (Article 12.2.1). Thus, in the absence of a description or indication, *Chelifer longimanus* is a nomen nudum. KOLLAR (1848) also seems to have been unaware of SCHIÖDTE’s (1847) description of *Blothrus spelaenus* from Postojna cave, which had been published on 12 August 1847 (JUDSON 2012).

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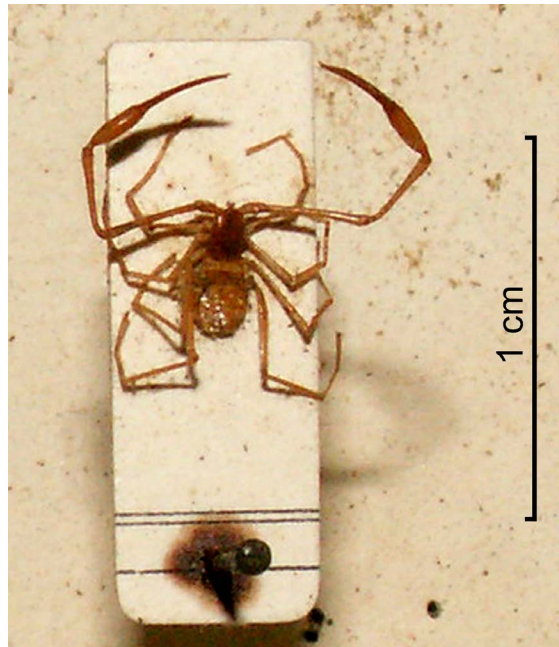


Fig. 1: Two specimens of *Neobisium spelaeum* in the Naturhistorisches Museum Wien previously identified as '*Obisium longimanum*' (nomen nudum), conserved dry in box (8 × 6.5 × 5 cm; glass lid removed), with Beier's identification label pinned above original label.

Fig. 2: One of the two specimens of *Neobisium spelaeum* in the Naturhistorisches Museum Wien previously identified as '*Obisium longimanum*' (nomen nudum).

"*Chelifer longimanus* Koll" was later mentioned by SCHINER (1851), who noted that three specimens had been found in Adelsberg cave (now Postojna cave, Slovenia) by KHEVENHÜLLER-METSCH, in

August 1850. SCHINER (1852) also reported evidence that this pseudoscorpion fed on the beetle *Leptodirus hochenwartii* Schmidt, 1832, and stated that this confirmed Schmidt's suspicions on this subject. No reference is given, but this may be an allusion to SCHMIDT's (1848) article, where he writes "Das Thier lebt allem Anschein nach gleich seinen Stammverwandten von Insecten, und ich habe allen Grund zu vermuthen, daß ihm der etwas träge *Leptodirus* nicht selten zur Beute wird, nachdem ich an einigen Orten, wo mir das *Obisium troglodytes* zu Theil

wurde, Ueberreste von Hohenwart's Höhlenkäfern fand." [This animal seems to live on insects like its relatives, and I have every reason to suppose that the somewhat sluggish *Leptodirus* is often the prey, since in places where *Obisium troglodytes* occurred, I found remains of Hohenwart's cave beetle.]

KHEVENHÜLLER-METSCH (1852) referred to the pseudoscorpion he had collected from Postojna cave as "*Obisium longimanum* Koll. (*Blothrus spelaeus* Schiödte)". This was the first time that the identity of *C. longimanus* with *B. spelaeus* had been recognized. However, the way in which it was presented led to some confusion. FRIES (1874) mistakenly treated *O. longimanum* as a senior synonym of *B. spelaeus*, while other authors, such as POKORNY (1854), MÜLLER (1857: as *C. longimanus*) and SCHINER (1870), treated it as a valid name, without mentioning the synonymy. HALIDAY (in WRIGHT 1857) even listed *O. longimanum* and *B. spelaeus* as distinct species in separate genera. These errors could have been avoided because SCHINER (1854: 264) had clearly summarized the situation when he wrote "*Blothrus spelaeus*. (*Obisium troglodytes* Schmidt. — *Obisium longimanum* Kollar in litt.)" in a standard reference on the karst fauna.

It is not clear why KHEVENHÜLLER-METSCH (1852) decided that the combination *Obisium longimanum* should be used, given that *Obisium* was used in two different senses during the 19th century (JUDSON 2012). If the genus intended was *Obisium* Illiger, 1798 (a synonym of *Chelifer* Geoffroy, 1792), this would simply indicate a lack of familiarity with the taxonomic literature on pseudoscorpions. If, however,

Obisium auct. was intended, this would be remarkably perspicacious because it was not until much later that *Blothrus* Schiödte, 1847 was recognized to be a polyphyletic assemblage of cavernicolous species within *Neobisium* Chamberlin, 1930 (= *Obisium* auct.).

KHEVENHÜLLER-METSCH stated that he had visited Postojna cave in September 1850, August and December 1851, and May 1852 (KHEVENHÜLLER-METSCH 1852, 1853), and mentioned collecting five specimens of *O. longimanum*, three of which were preserved in alcohol and two dry. The latter two specimens probably correspond to those listed under the name *O. longimanum* by LÖW (1862, p. 57, table) as being in the collections of the Kaiserlich-königliche zoologisch-botanische Gesellschaft. These are still preserved dry in the collections of the Naturhistorisches Museum Wien (Figs 1–2), labelled “*Obisium longimanus* [sic] gestiftet im J[ahre] 1851 oder 1852 von Hr Fürst von Khevenhüller, ... [illegible], 14/2” (old handwritten label; Fig. 3) and “*Obisium (Blothrus) spelaeum* Schiödte, det. Dr. Beier” (label in Beier’s handwriting; Fig. 1). These specimens were listed amongst the material of *N. spelaeum* examined by BEIER (1928), who did not mention the manuscript name. Because Kollar was the curator of the natural history collections of the Kaiserlich-königliche zoologisch-botanische Gesellschaft (THALER & GRUBER 2003)—hence the references to “Kustos Kollar” in SCHINER (1852) and KHEVENHÜLLER-METSCH (1852, 1853)—he must have seen these specimens and may well have been responsible for their identification. Thus they provide an indirect confirmation that *C. longimanus* and *N. spelaeum* refer to one and the same species.

Was *Obisium longimanum* made available under Article 11.6 of the Code?

Article 11.6 of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature states that “A name which when first published in an available work was treated as a junior synonym of a name then used as valid is not thereby made available”. However, Article 11.6.1 goes on to specify the conditions under which such a name could later be made available: “if such a name published as a junior synonym had been treated before 1961 as

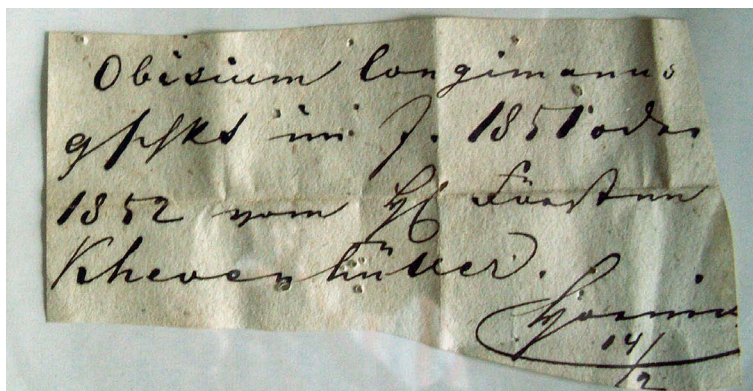


Fig. 3: Original label accompanying the specimens of *Neobisium spelaeum* in the Naturhistorisches Museum Wien, previously identified as ‘*Obisium longimanum*’ (nomen nudum).

an available name and either adopted as the name of a taxon or treated as a senior homonym, it is made available thereby but dates from its first publication as a synonym.” A literal reading of Article 11.6 might suggest that it only applies to the first work in which the name appeared, but the entry for ‘nomen nudum’ in the glossary makes it clear that this is not the case: “A nomen nudum is not an available name, and therefore the same name may be made available later for the same or a different concept; in such a case it would take authorship and date from that act of establishment, not from any earlier publication as a nomen nudum.”

It could be argued that KHEVENHÜLLER-METSCH (1852) published *O. longimanum* as a junior synonym of *Blothrus spelaeus* Schiödte, 1847 and that this name was adopted as the name of the species by POKORNY (1854), MÜLLER (1857), SCHINER (1870) and FRIES (1874), thus making it an available name in accordance with Article 11.6. However, we do not think that this would be correct. There is an ambiguity in Article 11.6.1, due to the unqualified use of the word “adopted”. Does this mean generally adopted, or just adopted by at least one author? We think it unlikely that this article was intended to be used to allow nomina nuda to be treated as available names simply through subsequent erroneous usage, as in the case of the authors cited above who used *O. longimanum* as if it were a valid name. We therefore interpret Article 11.6 as applying only to names that were generally adopted by taxonomists familiar with the group. Because the great majority of authors have always recognized *Blothrus spelaeus* (and later combinations) as the valid name for the species, we do not consider *O. longimanum* to have been made

available from KHEVENHÜLLER-METSCH (1852) by any subsequent work.

Potential value of nomina nuda

From a strictly nomenclatural point of view, nomina nuda are nothing more than a nuisance and ought to be avoided. Nevertheless, once created they should not be entirely ignored, since pertinent information concerning a species may be associated with such names in the literature. In the case of *O. longimanum*, for example, KHEVENHÜLLER-METSCH (1852) and SCHINER (1852, 1854) reported indirect evidence of predation on the cave beetle *Leptodirus hochenwartii* Schmidt, 1832 (Leiodidae) and SCHINER (1870) observed apparent avoidance of the pseudoscorpion by the beetle. Because very little is yet known about the biology of cavernicolous pseudoscorpions, even such anecdotal observations still have some worth. Other types of information, such as distribution records, may also be associated with nomina nuda, so it is useful to keep track of them and, when possible, to identify them with valid names.

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