

**LITHOBIUS QUADRIDENTATUS MENGE, 1851, THE SENIOR SYNONYM OF  
L.PICEUS L.KOCH, 1862.**

E.H.Eason

Bourton Far Hill, Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos. GL56 9TN.

In 1851 A.Menge recorded four species of *Lithobius* from the neighbourhood of Danzig (Gdansk) on the Baltic coast of Poland. He mistakenly ascribed *L.forticatus* (Linné, 1758) to Leach and described three new species, *L.octops*, *L.pleonops* and *L.quadridentatus*. The first two of these have been synonymised by Haase (1880) with *L.calcaratus* C.L.Koch, 1844 and *L.erythrocephalus* C.L.Koch, 1847 respectively and thus become junior synonyms. The third new species, *L.quadridentatus*, has received little mention by subsequent authors.

Menge's description of *Lithobius quadridentatus*, as well as mentioning a length of six lines (12.5mm), nine ocelli, 42 antennal articles and 4 + 4 prosternal teeth says "An der Innenseite der Oberschenkel der beiden letzten Fusspaare ein Kleiner Vorsprung mit einem Dorn auf demselben". If we take *Oberschenkel* to mean the prefemur this seems to refer to the prominent distomedial extremity of the 15th prefemur bearing the spine DpP which is very prominent in *L.piceus* L.Koch, 1862 (Brölemann 1930, fig.480; Eason 1964, fig.342). I have little doubt that *L.quadridentatus* was based on a pseudomaturus or small adult of *L.piceus* which is the only species recorded from Poland (Kaczmarek, 1979) fitting Menge's description and likely to be found so far north.

This synonymy was foreshadowed by Fanzago (1876) who described a specimen from northern Italy and identified it correctly as *Lithobius quadridentatus* Menge. But Fedrizzi (1877) re examined this specimen and finding it had 16 ocelli (as opposed to 9) and was violet (as opposed to reddish-yellow) which is often the case in recently moulted examples, made it the basis of a new species, *L.vidaceus* Fedrizzi. Cantoni (1880) mentioned that *L.violaceus* seemed to be close to Latzel's description of *L.piceus* and Eason & Minelli (1976) gave *L.violaceus* as a definite synonym of *L.piceus* but failed to notice the identity of *L.quadridentatus*.

Name changes are tedious, specially for well-known species, and I have asked the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature to use its plenary powers to suppress the specific name *quadridentatus* Menge in order to validate the name *piceus* L.Koch. This will be published in the Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature in the fairly near future. We can therefore still refer to this widespread European species which is quite common in parts of southern England as *Lithobius piceus*.

To those who are not taxonomists, establishment of the identity of *Lithobius quadridentatus* may seem a rather pointless exercise: but it clears up one of the loose ends of lithobiid taxonomy involving a British species.

#### REFERENCES

- Brölemann, H.W., (1930) Myriapodes. Chilopodes. *Faune Fr.*, 25:1-405.
- Cantoni, E., (1880) Miriapodi di Lombardia. *Atti Soc.ital.Sci.nat.*, 23:314-362.
- Eason, E.H., (1964) *Centipedes of the British Isles*. London: Warne.
- Eason, E.H. & Minelli, A., (1976) The identity of the species of Lithobiidae described by F.Fanzago and G.Fedrizzi from 1874 to 1881.
- Fanzago, F., (1876) Nuove contribuzioni alla fauna miripodologica italiana. *Annuar, Soc.nat.Modena*, 10:60-80.
- Fedrizzi, G., (1877) I litobi italiani. *Atti Soc.ven.-trent.Sci.nat.*, 5:184-233.
- Haase, E., (1880) *Schlesiens Chilopoden, I. Chilpoda anamorpha*. Inaugural-Dissertation. Breslau: A.Neumann.
- Kaczmarek, J., (1979) *Pareczniki (Chilopoda) Polski* Poznan: Drukarnia Uniwersytetu in Adama Mickiewicza.
- Menge, A., (1851) Myriapoden der Umgegend von Danzig. *Neue. Schr.naturf.Ges.Danzig*, 4(2):1-221.