

GEOPHILUS INSCULPTUS OR GEOPHILUS OLIGOPUS ?

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In his 1990 paper (Eason, 1990), Ted Eason suggested that the correct name for the species known to us at the time as *Geophilus insculptus* Attems was in fact *Geophilus oligopus* Attems. Since it was clear from Attems' drawing in his original description that he was looking at *Geophilus proximus* C.L.Koch when he drew what he labelled *G. insculptus*. The species drawn with the peg-like claw on the second maxillae being *G. oligopus*. This derived from the paper by Koren (1986) where *G. oligopus* (Attems, 1895) was shown as synonymous with *G. insculptus* Attems in the sense used in "Centipedes of the British Isles" (Eason, 1964). The *G. oligopus* of Attems "wurde womöglich an Hand eines juvenilen Tieres (39 Beinpa.) von nur einem Fundpunkt" i.e. a juvenile specimen with only 39 pairs of legs found in one locality (Obersteiermark) (Koren, *loc.cit.*).

According to Koren's account, the species *G. insculptus* of Attems becomes synonymous with *G. proximus* of C.L.Koch, 1847 and Latzel, 1880 and on this basis (Eason, 1990) would be correctly known by that name. The fact that the Attems' *G. oligopus* specimen had only 39 trunk segments, well outside the normal range for *G. insculptus* sensu Eason, 1964 is, in itself, of note.

Christian (1996) examined type specimens of various *Geophilus* species to clarify the status of these. Attems' account showed a claw structure on the second maxillae in his drawing of *G. insculptus* as indicated above but in the text this characteristic was not mentioned. On the basis of this arose further confusion!

Geophilus oligopus would appear to be a different species to *G. insculptus* with a much smaller number of leg pairs and has been recorded in recent years from Austria, North Italy, Slovenia and Bosnia. There are also differences in the appearance of the maxillae (Christian, *loc. cit.*) but both species have a peg rather than a claw on the second maxillae. From his table of characteristics the following is taken:

Species	Leg pairs	Coxal pores	Claw on last leg	Pretarsus of 2 nd maxillae	Sternal pores	Carpophagus structure
<i>G. insculptus</i>	(43-)49-53	4-7+1 v	+	conical	+	+
<i>G. oligopus</i>	37(-39)	2-5 v	+	conical	+	+

G. minimus Verhoeff, 1929 and *G. pauropus* Attems, 1927 are shown to be junior synonyms of *G. oligopus*.

In a recent paper, Foddai & Minelli (1999) give various characteristics of several species of *Geophilus*. In this the two species are very similar except:

Species	Leg pairs	Length (mm)	Length, antennae: cephalic shield	Cephalic shield breadth: length	Telopodite of 1 st max.	Sterna with pore fields
<i>G. insculptus</i>	43-47	25-30	3.1	0.92	2 articles	I to penultimate
<i>G. oligopus</i>	37-39	12	3.4	0.88	1 article	II to mid body

In his cladistic analysis, *G. oligopus* comes closest to the new troglomorphic *G. persephones* which also has a conical tubercle on the second maxillae, followed by *G. insculptus*.

Geophilus proximus has been recorded once from Britain and is distinguished by the normal claw on the second maxillae. It is described elsewhere in this volume.

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