

Further considerations on the genus *Butheolus* Simon, 1882 and description of one new species from Saudi Arabia (Scorpiones: Buthidae)

by Wilson R. Lourenço and Jian-xin Qi

Abstract. New considerations are put forward regarding the buthid genus *Butheolus* Simon, 1882, and a new species is described from the region of the Hijaz Southern Plateau, E of Khamis Mushayt in the south-western part of the Arabian Peninsula. With the description of *Butheolus arabicus* sp. n., two species are now confirmed from this country and the total number of *Butheolus* species is raised to five. Some additional comments are added as to the validity of the genus *Neobuthus*.

Kurzfassung. Bezüglich des taxonomischen Ranges der Skorpion-Gattung *Butheolus* Simon, 1882, werden neue Überlegungen angestellt, und aus der Region des südlichen Hijaz-Plateaus, östlich von Khamis Mushayt im Südwesten Saudi-Arabiens, wird eine neue Art beschrieben. Mit der Beschreibung von *Butheolus arabicus* sp. n. sind nun zwei Arten aus Saudi-Arabien bekannt, und die Gesamtzahl der *Butheolus*-Arten steigt damit auf fünf. Es werden zusätzliche Kommentare zur Validität der Gattung *Neobuthus* gemacht.

Key words. Scorpion, Buthidae, Arabia, taxonomy, new species, *Butheolus*.

The genus *Butheolus* was created by SIMON (1882) for a new species *Butheolus thalassinus* which he described from Aden (Yemen). Since its description, the validity of the genus *Butheolus* has never been discussed on its own merits. On several occasions, however, other distinct genera have been associated with or even placed in synonymy with *Butheolus*. Subsequently, other species of *Butheolus* have been described or transferred to this genus, namely *Butheolus ferrugineus* Kraepelin, 1898, from Tadjoura Bay (Tadscharabay), Gulf of Aden, Djibouti, *Butheolus gallagheri* Vachon, 1980, from Wadi Rabkut (Raykhut), Jabal Samhan, Dhofar, Oman, and *Butheolus anthracinus* (Pocock, 1895), from Hadramaut, Yemen, originally placed in the genus *Buthus* and then transferred to *Butheolus*.

The taxonomic stability of *Butheolus* has not necessarily been observed in other genera of small buthids. This is particularly true of the genus *Orthochirus* which, since its creation by KARSCH in 1891, has been the subject of much confusion. It was first considered by KRAEPELIN (1899) to be merely a synonym of the genus *Butheolus*, but was later re-established by SIMON (1910) as a valid genus.

By the beginning of the 20th century, two other genera of small buthids had been created, but these remain much less well known than those just discussed. They were: *Nanobuthus* Pocock (1895), created for the species *N. andersoni* found in Dufoor (Darfur), Sudan, and *Neobuthus* Hirst (1911) for the species *N. berberensis* found at Berbera, Somalia. When these genera were first described, both authors discussed their similarities to the genus