

THE GENERIC NAME *TROMBICULOIDES* JACOT, 1938¹

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Jacot (1938) obtained some specimens of mites and identified them as *Trombidium scabrum* Say, 1821. However, he realized that his specimens were not representative of the genus *Trombidium*. Therefore the new generic name *Trombiculoides* was proposed, with *Trombidium scabrum* designated as type. His generic diagnosis was based however, on his specimens and not on Say's description. Say's description was disregarded whenever a discrepancy arose between the specimens and the description.

Ewing 1946 reported that Jacot had misidentified his specimens and that *Trombidium scabrum* was in reality a species of *Sericothrombium*. Ewing therefore considered *Trombiculoides* a synonym of *Sericothrombium* Berlese, 1910. Furthermore he points out that Howard (1918) had given an excellent account of the species including figures of both larval and adult stages. It is obvious from the descriptions of Howard and Jacot that they are not dealing with the same or even closely related species. On the other hand it is also obvious that Say's description is so incomplete that his name *T. scabrum* might apply to any one of several species in different families, or might refer to a concept that includes a complex of several species.

Jacot's specimens were borrowed from the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy through the courtesy of Dr. Bequaert. A study of the specimens showed that they were compared with specimens of *Eutrombicula alfreddugèsi* Oudemans, 1910 from cultures, and no significant differences between the two could be noted. It is impossible to identify Jacot's specimens as *Eutrombicula alfreddugèsi* at the present time, however, because this species can be

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recognized as distinct from *Eutrombicula masoni* (Ewing, 1943) only on the basis of larval characteristics.

According to Opinion 168 of the International Commission on Zoölogical Nomenclature, "it is to be assumed that the original author of a genus correctly identified the species assigned by him there to, but that, where there is evidence that (this) assumption(s) is at variance with the facts, the case should be submitted with full details to the International Commission on Zoölogical Nomenclature, and that pending their decision thereon, the genus should be regarded as of doubtful status."

In this case it seems that there is evidence that Jacot misidentified the specimens on which he based *Trombiculoides*. The facts will be presented to the International Commission on Zoölogical Nomenclature. It therefore follows that until the Commission acts, *Trombiculoides* Jacot, 1938 must be considered as of doubtful status.

Fortunately *Eutrombicula* Ewing, 1938, the name now used for the genus that includes the specimens on which Jacot based his *Trombiculoides*, has priority over *Trombiculoides* Jacot, 1938. The date of *Eutrombicula* is 15 June 1938 while that of *Trombiculoides* is 10 October 1938. Therefore no change in the generic names is anticipated in settling the status of *Trombiculoides* Jacot, 1938.

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