

Articles and new taxa dealing with scorpions authored by Dr. Gershom Levy (1937-2009)

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In the March issue of "The Scorpion Files Newsblog" (<http://scorpion-files.blogspot.com/>), editor Jan Ove Rein has paid some attention to the sudden death of Dr. Gershom Levy, a specialist on spiders and scorpions in Israel.

Gershom, or "Gerele" as he was known among friends and colleagues, was born in 1937 in Tel Aviv, but his parents moved to Jerusalem in 1943, which remained his residence for the rest of his life. He finished high school in 1955, followed by a M.Sc. in Zoology, Chemistry and Parasitology at the Hebrew University in 1964, where he also received his Ph.D. in 1969. His thesis was dealing with "The biology and colour change in *Thomisus onustus* and the systematics of the Thomisidae (Aranea) of Israel". It was not his first paper on Arachnids, but from that moment all his scientific writings were dealing with either Aranea or Scorpiones. Almost each year one or more revisions of certain groups of Arachnids living in Israel were published by him.

As a matter of fact only in very rare cases he was dealing with material from outside Israel. One particular event that comes to my mind that he "handled" scorpions from farther away happened about ten years ago, when some were encountered in the consular premises of Israel in Italy. Only after a lot of outside pressure he agreed, although reluctantly, to identify them. Fortunately they turned out to be a more or less harmless species.



Dr. Gershom Levy (1937-2009) amidst the superbly arranged systematic collection of Arachnida in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Photo: Dr. Nechama Ben-Eliahu)



Buthacus leptochelys nitzani Levy, Amitai & Shulov, 1973 was one of the scorpion taxa described by Dr. Levy (Photo: Jan Ove Rein, The scorpion Files).

Gershon was also very much interested in art. If he had "discovered" a local painter then he liked to know everything about him. One of his favourites was also the Dutch graphic artist Esscher. However, one aspect of his interest in art brings us back to the scorpions: the use of (part of) scorpions as an anti-semitic symbol in medieval paintings. Although he could talk for hours about that subject, he never wrote down his observations.

When Gershon was diagnosed as suffering from cancer of the pancreas, he passed away within a relatively short time on 21 March 2009. With him we lost not only the foremost specialist in the field of spiders and scorpions in the Levant in general and in Israel in particular, but also a highly esteemed colleague and good friend.

An obituary with a full list of his publications will appear in the Israel Journal of Entomology (Lubin & Gavish-Regev, in print).

Below is a list of his articles dealing with scorpions, his new taxa among the scorpions and an eponym (i.e. a scorpion taxon named after him).

Articles dealing with Scorpions authored by Gershon Levy

Levy, G., Amitai, P. & Shulov, A., 1970. *Leiurus quinquestriatus hebraeus* (Birula, 1908) (Scorpiones; Buthidae) and its systematic position. Israel Journal of Zoology, 19 (4): 231-242.

Levy, G., Amitai, P. & Shulov, A., 1973. New Scorpions from Israel, Jordan and Arabia. Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society, London, 52 (2): 113-140.

Shulov, A. & Levy, G., 1978. Systematics and biology of Buthinae (Arachnida: Scorpiones). In: S. Bettini (Ed.): Handbook of Experimental Pharmacology; Arthropod Venoms, 48: 309-312. Springer Verlag, Berlin & New York.

Levy, G. & Amitai, P., 1980. *Scorpiones*. Fauna Palaestina - Arachnida I: VI+134 pp. Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Jerusalem.

Levy, G., 1985. Scorpiones. In G. Levy (Ed.): Plants and Animals of the Land of Israel, 2: Terrestrial Invertebrates, 16-28. Publishing House of the Ministry of Defence & The Society for the Protection of Nature, Tel Aviv. (in Hebrew)

Fet, V., Hendrixson, B.E., Sissom, W.D. & Levy, G., 2001. First record for the genus *Mesobuthus* Vachon, 1950 in Israel: *Mesobuthus nigrocinctus* (Ehrenberg, 1828), n. comb. (Scorpiones: Buthidae) from Mt. Hermon. Israel Journal of Zoology, 46 (4): 287-295. (dated 2000, but published February 2001)

Levy, G., 2007. The first Troglolite scorpion from Israel and a new Chactoid family (Arachnida: Scorpiones). Zoology in the Middle East, 40: 91-96.

New scorpion taxa described by Gershon Levy

Akravidae Levy, 2007

Akrav Levy, 2007

Akrav israchanani Levy, 2007

Buthacus leptochelys nitzani Levy, Amitai & Shulov, 1973

Buthacus minipektenibus Levy, Amitai & Shulov, 1973

Buthacus yotvatensis Levy, Amitai & Shulov, 1973

Buthacus yotvatensis nigroaculeatus Levy, Amitai & Shulov, 1973

Compsobuthus arabicus Levy, Amitai & Shulov, 1973

Compsobuthus carmelitis Levy, Amitai & Shulov, 1973

Compsobuthus jordanensis Levy, Amitai & Shulov, 1973

Compsobuthus longipalpis Levy, Amitai & Shulov, 1973

Vachoniolus Levy, Amitai & Shulov, 1973

Vachoniolus globimanus Levy, Amitai & Shulov, 1973

Scorpion taxon named after Gershon Levy

Androctonus amoreuxi levyi Fet, 1997