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Less is more: eight new synonyms in Mediterranean spiders (Araneae), with a new *Pelecopsis* species from Tunisia (Linyphiidae)

Robert Bosmans & Christoph Hervé



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Abstract. The following eight new synonyms are proposed: *Araneus arganicola* Simon, 1909 = *Neoscona subfusca* (C. L. Koch, 1837) **syn. nov.**; *Drassus nugatorius* Karsch, 1881 = *Odontodrassus mundulus* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1881) **syn. nov.**; *Drassus sockniensis* Karsch, 1881 = *Poecilochroa pugnax* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1874) **syn. nov.**; *Drassus tarrhunensis* Karsch, 1881 = *Megamyrmaekion caudatum* Reuss, 1834 **syn. nov.**; *Prothesima kerimi* Pavesi, 1880 = *Zelotes tragicus* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1872) **syn. nov.**; *Prothesima quadridentata* Strand, 1906 = *Scotophaeus quadridentatus* Caporiacco, 1928 = *Setaphis mollis* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1874) **syn. nov.**; *Steatoda erigoniformis* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1872) = *Euryopsis albomaculata* Denis, 1951 **syn. nov.** The position of *Drassus obscurus* Lucas, 1846 in *Drassodes* is confirmed and the first figures of the female epigyne and vulva are given. The citation of *Dactylopiastes digiticeps* (Simon, 1881) from Tunisia by Pavesi (1884) is a misidentification and concerns *Thaumatoncus indicator* Simon, 1884. A new species is described: *Pelecopsis pavesii* **spec. nov.** from Tunisia, erroneously identified by Pavesi (1884) as *Pelecopsis parumpunctata* (Simon, 1881).

Keywords: Araneidae, Gnaphosidae, North Africa, Theridiidae, type material

Zusammenfassung. Weniger ist mehr: acht neue Synonymien mediterraner Spinnen (Araneae), mit einer neuen *Pelecopsis*-Art aus Tunesien (Linyphiidae). Folgende acht neue Synonymien werden vorgeschlagen: *Araneus arganicola* Simon, 1909 = *Neoscona subfusca* (C. L. Koch, 1837) **syn. nov.**; *Drassus nugatorius* Karsch, 1881 = *Odontodrassus mundulus* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1881) **syn. nov.**; *Drassus sockniensis* Karsch, 1881 = *Poecilochroa pugnax* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1874) **syn. nov.**; *Drassus tarrhunensis* Karsch, 1881 = *Megamyrmaekion caudatum* Reuss, 1834 **syn. nov.**; *Prothesima kerimi* Pavesi, 1880 = *Zelotes tragicus* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1872) **syn. nov.**; *Prothesima quadridentata* Strand, 1906 = *Scotophaeus quadridentatus* Caporiacco, 1928 = *Setaphis mollis* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1874) **syn. nov.**; *Steatoda erigoniformis* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1872) = *Euryopsis albomaculata* Denis, 1951 **syn. nov.** Die Zugehörigkeit von *Drassus obscurus* Lucas, 1846 zu *Drassodes* wird bestätigt und Epigyne und Vulva erstmals abgebildet. Die Nennung von *Dactylopiastes digiticeps* (Simon, 1881) aus Tunesien durch Pavesi (1884) beruht auf einer Fehlbestimmung und betrifft *Thaumatoncus indicator* Simon, 1884. Eine neue Art, *Pelecopsis pavesii* **spec. nov.**, wird aus Tunesien beschrieben; sie war von Pavesi (1884) fälschlicherweise als *Pelecopsis parumpunctata* (Simon, 1881) bestimmt worden.

At present 49089 species of spider are known (WSC 2021), and nearly every day new species are described. Species described in previous centuries often remain unstudied. Redescriptions of such taxons are necessary and ultimately increase the knowledge of the arachnofauna. If synonyms are discovered this leads to fewer valid species, but, in this case: less is more.

In the early days of spider systematics, the number of described genera was very limited and authors, all to the best of their knowledge, described species in large genera, such as *Araneus*, *Clubiona*, *Drassus* (= *Drassodes*), *Erigone*, *Linyphia*, *Melanophora* (= *Zelotes*), etc. The definitions and limitations of these genera have changed and improved considerably nowadays. During revisions it is difficult to assess these older species because many of them were never illustrated. The logical thing to do is to examine the type material, if available. Here, species from the Mediterranean region described by Caporiacco (1928), Denis (1951), Karsch (1881), Lucas (1846), Pavesi (1880, 1884) and Simon (1909) are reconsidered. Fortunately, type material from almost all of them was available for study. An examination of the material and original descriptions led to several new synonyms and overall fewer valid species in the region, but also increased our knowledge of the remaining species.

Materials and methods

Species were examined using a Nikon SMZ1270 stereo microscope. Details of male palps and female epigynes were

studied with an Olympus CH-2 microscope with a drawing tube. Photographs were taken with a Moticam 5MP camera attached to a Realux stereoscopic microscope.

Structures of the left palpus are depicted. All morphological measurements are given in millimetres. Somatic morphology measurements were taken using a scale reticule in the eyepiece of the stereo microscope. Measurements of the legs are taken from the dorsal side.

Male palps were detached and transferred to glycerol for examination under the microscope. Female genitalia were excised using sharpened needles and then transferred to clove oil for examination under the microscope. Later, palps and epigynes were returned to 70% ethanol.

Abbreviations

AME: anterior median eyes; ALE: anterior lateral eyes; d: dorsal; Fe: femur; Mt: metatarsus; PME: posterior median eyes; PLE: posterior lateral eyes; Pa: patella; pl: prolateral; rl: retrolateral; Ta: tarsus; Ti: tibia;
BMNH: British Museum of natural History, London;
CRB: Collection R. Bosmans;
HECO: Hope entomological Collection, Oxford;
MCSG: Museo civico di Storia naturale "G. Doria", Genova;
MNHN: Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris;
SMNS: Staatliches Museum für Naturkunde, Stuttgart;
ZMB: Zoologisches Museum, Berlin.

Systematics

Family Araneidae

Neoscona subfusca (C. L. Koch, 1837) (Fig. 1a-g)

Atea subfusca C. L. Koch, 1837: 4 (descr. ♂, ♀).

Araneus arganicola Simon, 1909: 26 (descr. ♂, ♀) **syn. nov.**

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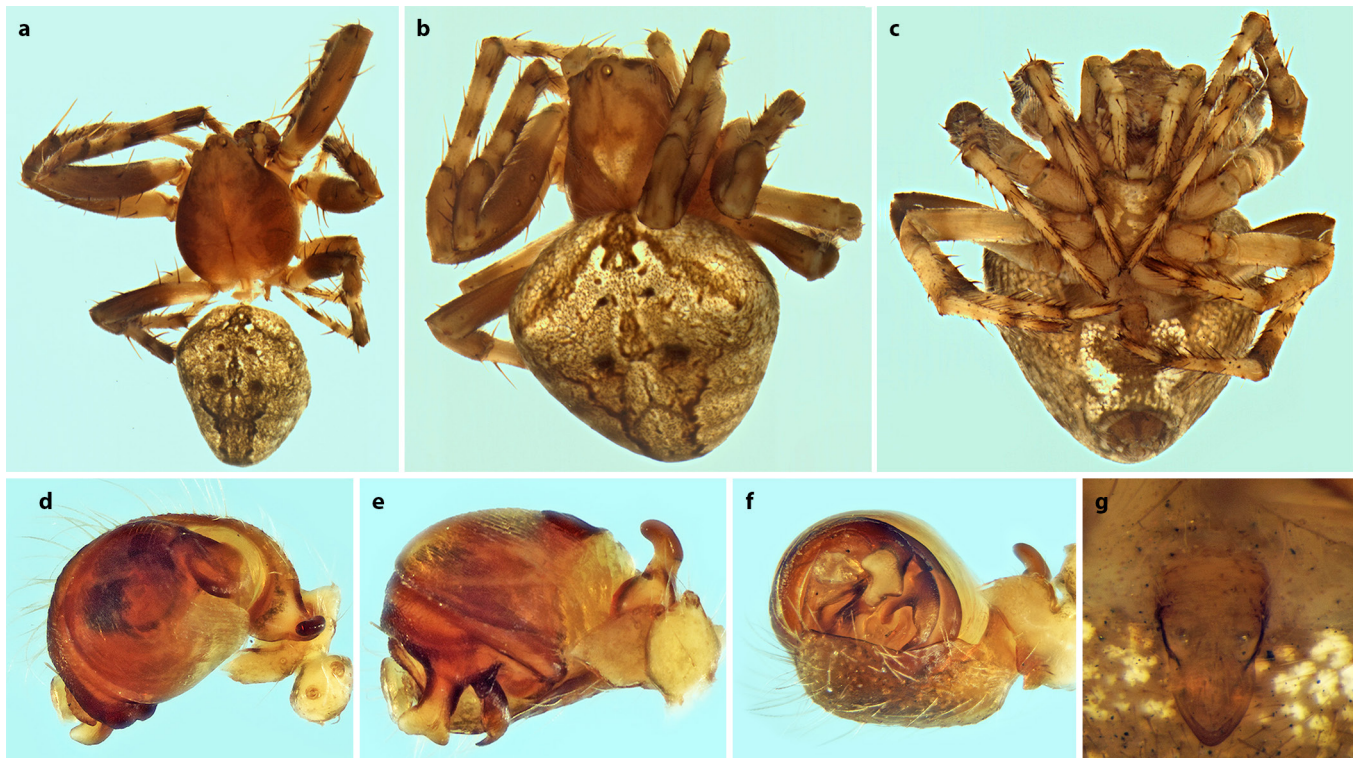


Fig. 1: *Neoscona subfusca* (C. L. Koch, 1837), type material of *Araneus arganicola* Simon, 1909. **a.** Male, dorsal view; **b.** Female, dorsal view; **c.** Female, ventral view; **d.** Male palp, retrolateral view; **e.** Idem, prolateral view; **f.** Idem, ventro-retrolateral view; **g.** Epigyne, ventral view

Neoscona subfusca; Grasshoff 1980: 406 (transfer from *Araneus* ♂, ♀).

Neoscona subfusca; Levy 1998a: 336, figs 96–107 (♂, ♀, synonymy). For a complete list of synonyms, see WSC (2021).

Type material. Syntypes of *Araneus arganicola* containing 1 ♂ 2 ♀♀ from Morocco, Mogador (= Essaouira), de La Escalera leg. (MNHN 15552 and 24415); examined.

Comments. *Araneus arganicola* was described from Morocco by Simon (1909). In his description, Simon thought it was closely related to *Neoscona dalmatica*, now a junior synonym of *N. subfusca*. Differences to *N. subfusca* or to the related *N. adianta* were not given. Examination of what we here select as the type material of *Neoscona arganicola* (Fig. 1a–g) reveals it is a synonym of *N. subfusca*. In the male palp, there is one terminal spike in the median apophysis (two in *N. adianta*) and the female epigyne has a relatively wide scape (narrow in *N. adianta*). *Araneus arganicola* also has the same opisthosomal pattern as *N. subfusca*, thus it does not differ morphologically from *Neoscona subfusca* and becomes its junior synonym.

Morano & Bonal (2018) also examined material of *A. arganicola* deposited in the MNHN, but they only saw subadult specimens. In their opinion, *A. arganicola* was a probable synonym of *A. subfusca*, which is confirmed here.

In Algeria, *Neoscona adianta* was only found in coastal regions, whereas *N. subfusca* occurs in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, as well as in the southern parts, including oases in the Sahara Desert (see examined material below). The type locality of *N. arganicola* is in the south of Morocco, therefore its habitat preferences are the same as those of *N. subfusca*.

Examined comparative material of *Neoscona subfusca* from North Africa. ALGERIA: M'sila: Baniou S., Chott el Hodna

(35.41°N, 4.34°E), 400 m a.s.l., 1 ♀, on herbs in salt marsh, 13. May 1988, R. Bosmans leg. (CRB). Tamanrasset: Gare de l'Assekrem (23.26°N, 5.63°E), 2700 m a.s.l., 1 ♀, Jul. 1979, R. Bosmans leg. (CRB).

MOROCCO: Fès-Boulemane: Missouri (33.00°N, 3.99°E), 880 m a.s.l., 2 ♀♀, pitfall traps in steppe, 13. Sep. 2002 (CRB). Souss-Massa: between Imitek and Tata (29.69°N, 3.83°E), 740 m a.s.l., 1 ♀, among stones in palm groove, 14. Feb. 2007, R. Bosmans leg. (CRB).

TUNISIA: Beja: Oued Zergha (35.40°N, 9.62°E), 2 ♂♂ 4 ♀♀, on olive trees, V. Bouters leg. (CRB). Bizerte: Teskraia E., NW Lake Ichgeul (37.17°N, 9.61°E), 495 m a.s.l., 1 ♂ 1 ♀, beating hedges, 7. May 2006, R. Bosmans leg. (CRB). Tozeur: Dhgoumes (33.98°N, 8.46°E), 15 m a.s.l., 1 ♀, in oasis, 14. Apr. 2004, K. De Smet (CRB).

Examined material of *Neoscona adianta* from North Africa.

ALGERIA: Bejaia: river mouth of Oued Daas near Tichi (36.87°N, 4.82°E), 5 m a.s.l., 4 ♀♀, beating bushes in dunes, 22. May 1988, R. Bosmans leg. (CRB); Adekar E. (36.68°N, 4.67°E), 800 m a.s.l., 2 ♀♀, 17. Apr. 1982, on herbs in mixed forest, R. Bosmans leg. (CRB). Blida: Atlas Blidéen, Maison Forestière de Meurdja (36.49°N, 3.14°E), 900 m a.s.l., 3 ♂♂, sweeping herbs in garden, 30. May 1987, R. Bosmans leg. (CRB).

Distribution. Southern Europe, Africa, Russia (Europe to Central Asia), Middle East (WSC 2021).

Family Gnaphosidae

***Drassodes obscurus* (Lucas, 1846)** (Fig. 2a)

Drassus obscurus Lucas, 1846: 214, pl. 13, fig. 1 (descr. ♀).

Amaurobius obscurus; Simon 1864: 139 (transfer).

Drassodes obscurus; Reimoser 1919: 162 (transfer).

Type material. Holotype ♀ of *Drassus obscurus* Lucas, 1846

from Algeria, El Kala (36.88°N, 8.43°E), collection Lucas (MNHN); examined.

Comments. *Drassus obscurus* was described from Algeria and the species has never been studied since. Roewer (1955) considered it a nomen nudum. In the WSC (2021), it is listed under *Drassodes*. The discovery of the holotype shows it is indeed a *Drassodes* species, belonging to the *D. lutescens* group, which is evident from the structure of the vulva shown in the Fig. 2a. The placement of the species in the genus *Drassodes* is confirmed here. A revision of the North African species of this genus has to be undertaken to establish its exact taxonomic status.

Megamyрмаekion caudatum Reuss, 1834 (Fig. 2b-c)

Megamyрмаekion caudatum Reuss, 1834: 212, pl. 18, fig. 12 (descr. juvenile).

Drassus tarrhunensis Karsch, 1881: 12, pl. 1, fig. 11 (descr. ♀)

syn. nov.

Megamyрмаekion caudatum; Levy 2009: 14, figs 29-32 (♀, synonymy).

Type material. Holotype ♀ of *Drassus tarrhunensis* from Lybia, Djebel Tarrhuna, Bir Milrha (32.43°N, 1.63°E), Dec. 1878, Rohlf's leg. (ZMB 3293); examined.

Comments. *Drassus tarrhunensis* Karsch, 1881 is only known from the original description and was never recorded again. It is mentioned in the WSC (2021) as *Drassodes tarrhunensis*. The holotype female was examined and is in a poor condition but the epigyne is intact. It shows a large, lenticular pit with an anterior hood and two pairs of receptacula at each side of the depression (Fig. 2b-c). This type of epigyne shows strong similarities to that of *Megamyрмаekion caudatum* and we consider *Drassus tarrhunensis* a junior synonym of that species.

Megamyрмаekion caudatum was described from Egypt and was redescribed by Levy (2009). Levy (op. cit.) also discovered that *M. pumilum* Simon, 1885, which Simon (1885) described from the Algerian, Tunisian and Egyptian Sahara, is a synonym of *Megamyрмаekion caudatum*. Caporiacco (1933) misidentified a specimen of *Megamyрмаekion caudatum* as *Zelotes fuscoviridis* (Simon, 1878) from Libya. During our numerous excursions in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, *Megamyрмаekion caudatum* was never collected.

Distribution. Desert areas of Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Israel and Iran.

Odontodrassus mundulus (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1872)

Drassus mundulus O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1872: 234, pl. 15, fig. 11 (descr. ♂, ♀).

Drassus nugatorius Karsch, 1881: 12, pl. 1, fig. 10 (♀) **syn. nov.**

Poecilochroa monodi Fage, 1929: figs 2-3 (descr. ♂, ♀); synonymy by Levy (1999).

Odontodrassus mundulus; Levy 1999: 448, figs 43-46 (transfer).

Type material. Syntypes 1 ♂, 2 ♀♀ of *Drassus mundulus* from Israel, plains of the Jordan (HECO, B. 243, t. 46, 1 ♀, t. 69, 1 ♀) and Egypt, Cairo (30.05°N, 31.23°E) (HECO, B. 241, t. 85, 1 ♂, 1 ♀); examined by Levy (1999).

Syntypes ♂♂, ♀♀ of *Poecilochroa monodi* from Algeria and Tunisia (MNHN, B. 623, t. 5218, t. 13198, t. 19524) and from Egypt (MNHN B. 623, t. 6234); examined by Levy (1999).

Holotype ♀ of *Drassus nugatorius* from Libya, palm garden near Sockna (29.07°N, 15.78°E), 4. Feb. 1879, Rohlf's leg. (ZMB 3294); examined.

Description. See Levy (1999).

Comments. *Drassus nugatorius* Karsch, 1881 is only known from the original description and has never been recorded again. In the WSC (2021), it is listed under *Drassodes*. The holotype female was examined and is in good condition. The epigyne is very typical and is identical to that of *Odontodrassus mundulus*. Moreover, the drawings of the epigynes by Pickard-Cambridge (1872, fig. 11), Karsch (1881, fig. 10) and Fage (1929, fig. 2) all show the curved copulatory ducts forming a letter X. *Drassus nugatorius* Karsch, 1884 thus becomes a junior synonym of *O. mundulus*. In the Maghreb, *O. mundulus* was reported from Libya by Caporiacco (1928, 1936a, 1936b) and from Algeria by Denis (1966).

New records. ALGERIA: El Bayadh: Brezina E. (33.09°N, 1.25°E), 800 m a.s.l., 1 ♂, stones in steppe, 8. Feb. 1987, R. Bosmans leg. (CRB). Illizi: Iherir (35.40°N, 8.40°E), 1200 m a.s.l., 1 ♀, 12. Feb. 1996, K. De Smet leg. (CRB); 70 km S to Illizi, Oued Djeret (26.29°N, 8.63°E), 700 m a.s.l., 1 ♀, 10. Feb. 1985 (CRB). M'sila: Ain Oghrab (33.09°N, 1.25°E), 650 m a.s.l., 1 ♂, pitfall traps in open *Pinus* forest, 20. Mar.-23. Jun. 1990, R. Bosmans leg. (CRB). Tamanrasset: Massif de l'Ahaggar, Oued Tit (22.90°N, 4.91°E), 1 ♀, 17. Feb. 1988, K. De Smet leg. (CRB).

MOROCCO: Marrakesh-Safi: Ait Barka (31.48°N, 7.44°E), 1300 m a.s.l., stones in *Pinus* forest, 6. Jun. 1999, R. Bosmans leg. (CRB). Souss-Massa: Barrage Youcef Ben-Tachfine (29.84°N, 9.49°E), 100 m a.s.l., 1 ♀, 27. Apr. 2012, R. Bosmans leg. (CRB).

TUNISIA: Kairouan: road Ain Djeloula-Oglet Tarfa (35.763611°N, 9.955833°E), 60 m a.s.l., 1 ♂, 23. Jan. 1995, R. Bosmans leg. (CRB).

JORDAN: At Tafela: Dana (30.67°N, 35.62°E), 1550 m a.s.l., 1 ♂, stones in irrigated garden, 17. Nov. 2007, R. Bosmans leg. (CRB). Al Karak: Shawbak castle (30.53°N, 33.65°E), 1250 m a.s.l., 1 ♂ 1 ♀, stones on slope to castle, 17. Nov. 2007, R. Bosmans leg. (CRB).

Distribution. *Odontodrassus mundulus* is known from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Israel. It is reported here for the first time in Jordan.

Poecilochroa pugnax (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1874) (Fig. 2d-e)

Drassus pugnax O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1874: 399, pl. 52, fig. 25 (descr. ♂).

Drassus sockniensis Karsch, 1881: 12, pl. 1, fig. 9 (descr. ♀) **syn. nov.**

Poecilochroa pugnax; Simon 1908: 423 (descr. ♀).

Poecilochroa lesserti Denis, 1947: 62 pl. 3, figs 8-10 (descr. ♂, ♀); synonymy by Levy (1999).

Poecilochroa pugnax; Levy 1999: 433, figs 10-14 (♂, ♀).

Type material. Holotype ♂ of *Drassus pugnax* from Egypt, Cairo (30.05°N, 31.23°E) (HECO, b.254); examined and redescribed by Levy (1999).

Syntypes 1 ♂ and 1 ♀ of *Poecilochroa lesserti* from Egypt, Siwa, (BMNH, ♂ 1936.7.10.136a, ♀ 1936.2.12.1049); examined by Levy (1999).

Holotype ♀ of *Drassus sockniensis* from Libya, palm garden near Sockna, 4. Feb. 1879, Rohlf's leg. (ZMB 3293); examined.

Comments. The holotype female of *Drassus sockniensis* is in very bad condition, but the epigyne and vulva is intact (Fig. 2d-e) and shows very large receptacula typical for the genus

Poecilochroa. In Libya, two species of *Poecilochroa* have been observed: *Poecilochroa pugnax* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1874) and *P. senilis* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1872). Both species are similar in having elongated, sausage-shaped receptacula. They differ by the presence of ducts reaching half the length of the receptacula in *P. senilis* and less than one third the length of the receptacula in *P. pugnax* (Levy 1999). In the type specimen of *Drassus sockniensis*, ducts are limited to the basal third of the receptacula (Fig. 2e), just like in *P. pugnax*, and we consider *P. sockniensis* (Karsch, 1881) and *P. pugnax* synonyms.

***Setaphis mollis* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1874)**

Prosthesima mollis O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1874: 381, pl. 51, fig. 9 (descr. ♀).

Echemus pharetratus Karsch, 1881: 11, pl. 1, fig. 8 (descr. ♀; synonymy by Bosmans & Janssen 1999).

Prosthesima quadridentata Strand, 1906: 613 (descr. ♀); Strand, 1908: 75 (descr. ♀) **syn. nov.** and removed from nomen dubium, contra Nentwig et al. (2020: 24).

Scotophaeus quadridentatus Caporiacco, 1928: 85, fig. 2 (descr. ♀) **syn. nov.**

Pseudodrassus quadridentatus; Caporiacco 1935: 286 (transfer). *Setaphis mollis*; Platnick & Murphy 1996: 12, figs 25-28 (descr. ♂); Levy 1998b: 97, figs 6-9 (♂, ♀); Bosmans & Janssen 1999: 86, figs 9-12 (♂, ♀; synonymy).

Type material. Holotype ♀ of *Prosthesima quadridentata* Strand, 1906 from Tunis (36.82°N, 10.15°E) (SMNS); not examined, type material destroyed.

Lectotype ♀ of *Scotophaeus quadridentatus* Caporiacco, 1928 by present designation, from Libya, Giarabub (29.72°N, 24.52°E) (MCSG); examined.

Description. See Platnick & Murphy (1996), Levy (1998b) and Bosmans & Janssen (1999).

Comments. Caporiacco (1928) described the female of *Scotophaeus quadridentatus* as a new species from Libya. Two localities are mentioned in the original description: Porto Bardia and the Giarabub Oasis. The female from the Giarabub Oasis was available for study and selected as the lectotype, and the specimen appears to be identical to *Setaphis mollis* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1874), and hence becomes a junior synonym. The name was probably given because of the sclerotic grooves in the epigyne forming a central quadrangle, also seen in Caporiacco's (1928) fig. 2.

It must be pure coincidence that Strand (1906: 613) gave the same species name, *Prosthesima quadridentata*, to a species he described from Tunisia. In Strand (1908: 76) the epigyne was described as follows: "Epigyne bildet in Fluidum gesehen ein abgerundet viereckiges, bräunliches Feld, das ein wenig länger als breit ist". Not only the shape of the epigyne but also the size of the spider and the yellowish brown general colour are similar. Since the type specimens no longer exist, it is our opinion this species should be considered a junior synonym of *Setaphis mollis* as well. Nentwig et al. (2020) suggested the species was a nomen dubium, but we are of the opinion that the arguments above are sufficient to consider it a junior synonym of *Setaphis mollis*.

Distribution. Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt.

***Zelotes tragicus* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1872) (Fig. 2f)**

Melanophora tragica O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1872: 243, pl. 16, fig. 22 (descr. ♂).

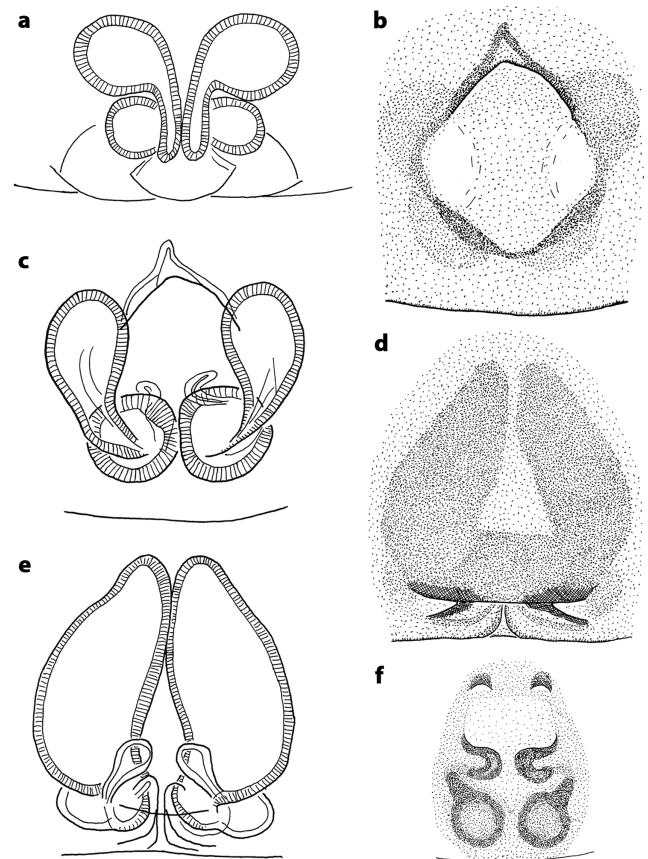


Fig. 2. a. *Drassodes obscurus* (Lucas, 1846), holotype female, vulva, dorsal view; b-c. *Megamyrmaekion caudatum* Reuss, 1834, holotype female of *Drassus tarhunensis* Karsch, 1881; b. Epigyne; c. Vulva, dorsal view; d-e. *Poecilochroa pugnax* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1874), holotype female of *Drassus sockniensis* Karsch, 1881; d. Epigyne; e. Vulva, dorsal view; f. *Zelotes tragicus* O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1872, lectotype female of *Prosthesima kerimi* Pavesi, 1880, epigyne

Prosthesima tragica; Simon 1878: 98 (transfer).

Prosthesima kerimi Pavesi, 1880: 348 (descr. ♂, ♀) **syn. nov.**

Zelotes tragicus; Levy 1998b: 133, figs 82-85 (descr. ♀).

Zelotes tragicus; FitzPatrick 2007: 121, figs 81-84 (♂, ♀).

Type material. Lectotype ♀, paralectotype ♂ (without palps), by present designation, of *Prosthesima kerimi* from Tunisia, Ludien near Tozeur (33.92°N, 10.28°E), Kerim leg. (MCSG); examined.

Description. See Levy (1998b) and FitzPatrick (2007).

Comments. *Prosthesima kerimi* was described more than 100 years ago by Pavesi (1880), but has never been illustrated nor clearly diagnosed. The type series could be examined and it is composed of one male, without palps, and one female, with the epigyne present (Fig. 2f). The female is therefore selected as the lectotype. It appears to be identical to *Zelotes tragicus* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1872), a common species in North Africa.

Distribution. Tunisia, Libya, Chad, Ethiopia, Israel.

Family Linyphiidae

***Pelecopsis pavesii* spec. nov.** (Figs 3a-g, 4a-e, Tab. 1)

Erigone parumpunctata; Pavesi 1884: 459 (misidentification).

Type material. ♂ holotype: TUNISIA, surroundings of Tunis ("dintorni di Tunis"), winter 1881-1882, G. & L. Doria leg.; coll. MCSG; misidentified as *Pelecopsis parumpuncta* (Simon, 1881) by Pavesi (1884).



Fig. 3: *Pelecopsis pavesii* **spec. nov.** **a.** Male, dorsal view; **b.** Idem, lateral view; **c.** Idem, frontal view; **d.** Male palpal tibia, dorsal view; **e.** Male palp, retrolateral view; **f.** Idem, pro-lateral view; **g.** Embolic division, ventral view

Comments. *Pelecopsis parumpunctata* was described by Simon (1881a) from France and recorded in Tunisia by Pavesi (1884). Denis (1964: 345) synonymized it with *Pelecopsis mengei* (Simon, 1884). Although *Pelecopsis parumpunctata* was described before *P. mengei* and should have priority, the name *P. parumpunctata* was apparently suppressed for lack of usage (see WSC 2021). In their revisions of North African *Pelecopsis* species, neither Denis (1962), nor Bosmans & Abrous (1992) mention *P. mengei* from North Africa. Examination of the specimen cited by Pavesi (1884) reveals that it is not *P. mengei* but an unknown species described below.

Diagnosis. By the presence of a basal cymbial tubercle, the species is similar to *Pelecopsis kalaensis* Bosmans, 1992, *P. laptevi* Tanasevitch & Fet, 1986, *P. odontophora* (Kulczyński, 1895), *P. paralleloides* Tanasevitch & Fet, 1986, *P. pavidata* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1872) and *P. susannae* (Simon, 1915). Of these, only *Pelecopsis kalaensis* occurs in North Africa and this species differs from the new species by the palp with a rectangular dorsal tibial apophysis, which is triangular in *P. pavesii* **spec. nov.** (Figs 3d, 4c) and also by the elongated palpal femur (Fig. 3b) in *P. pavesii* **spec. nov.**

Etymology. The species is dedicated to Pietro Pavesi, author of two important contributions to the arachnofauna of Tunisia.

Description. Measurements: Total length 1.5; prosoma 0.85 wide, 0.63 wide. Legs (Tab. 1).

Colour: The specimen is too faded to give information on this feature.

Carapace (Figs 3a-c, 4a-b): With large cephalic elevation carrying PME, a transverse frontal groove, oval postocular sulci, twice the diameter of the PLE and two lines of impressed dots between the PME; AME separated by 2.5 times their diameter, from ALE by 2.5 times their diameter; PME separated by 4 times their diameter.

Tab. 1: Leg measurements of the holotype

	Fe	Pa	Ti	Mt	Ta	Total
I	0.61	0.24	0.49	0.40	0.34	2.08
II	0.60	0.23	0.45	0.39	0.31	1.98
III	0.49	0.21	0.39	0.36	0.30	1.75
IV	0.64	0.23	0.65	0.48	0.31	2.31
Palp	0.42	–	0.37	0.20	0.35	1.34

Opisthosoma: Covered with opaque scutum.

Legs: No spines or trichobothria observed in this old, faded specimen, probably detached and no sign of attachment places.

Palp (Figs 3d-g, 4c-e): Femur elongated, three times longer than wide; tibia with three triangular apophyses, two small retro- and pro-lateral and a pointed median apophysis. Cymbium with basal tubercle; protegulum protruding; embolus ribbon-like, semi-circular, terminally bent in anterior direction as seen in retrolateral view.

Thaumatococcus indicator Simon, 1884

Thaumatococcus indicator Simon, 1884: 581 (descr. ♂)

Erigone digiticeps Simon, 1881a; Pavesi 1884: 46 (misidentification).

Thaumatococcus indicator; Bosmans 2002: 19 (♂).

Material examined. TUNISIA: Surroundings of Tunis (“dintorni di Tunis”), 2 ♂♂, winter 1881–1882, G. & L. Doria leg. (MCSG); examined.

Comments. Pavesi (1884) cited *Erigone digiticeps* Simon, 1881, now *Dactylopisthes digiticeps* (Simon, 1881), from Tunisia. This species has never been found in North Africa and Bosmans (1996) considered it a misidentification of *Delorhhipis fronticornis* Simon, 1884. Examination of Pavesi’s specimen now reveals it is *Thaumatococcus indicator*, a fairly common

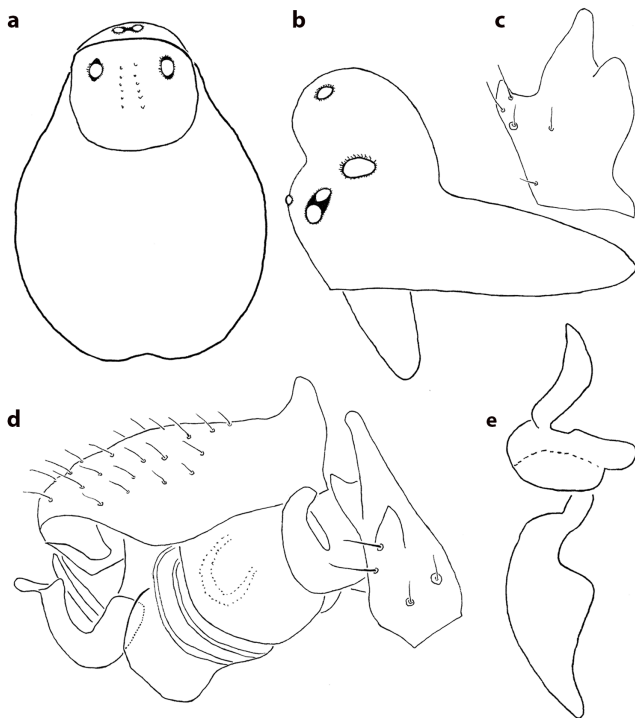


Fig. 4: *Pelecopsis pavesii* spec. nov. **a.** Male, dorsal view; **b.** Idem, lateral view; **c.** Male palpal tibia, dorsal view; **d.** Male palp, retrolateral view; **e.** Embolic division, ventral view

species in Tunisia (Bosmans 2002). *Delorrhapis fronticornis* should be deleted from the spider species list of Tunisia.

Distribution. Algeria, Tunisia, Spain, S. France (Bosmans 2002, WSC 2021).

Family Theridiidae

Steatoda erigoniformis (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1872) (Fig. 5a-f)

Theridion erigoniforme O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1872: 284 (descr. ♂, ♀).

Steatoda signata O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1876: 568 (descr. ♀; synonymy by Levy & Amitai, 1982).

Lithyphantes septemmaculatus Keyserling, 1884: 141, pl. 6, fig. 88 (descr. ♀).

Steatoda erigoniformis; Levy & Amitai 1982: 26, figs 63-71 (redescr. ♂, ♀; synonymy).

Euryopsis albomaculata Denis, 1951: 313, fig. 1 (descr. ♀) **syn. nov.**

Type material. Holotype ♀ of *Euryopsis albomaculata* from Egypt, Sawaleh, 5 km S. Fakous (30.07°N 1.83°E), 7. Sep. 1949, M. B. Condé leg. (MNHN); not examined.

Comments. *Steatoda erigoniformis* has a complex taxonomic history. It was first described in the genus *Theridion* by Pickard-Cambridge (1872). Later, it was redescribed several times as a new species in two different genera: as *Steatoda signata* by Pickard-Cambridge (1876), and as *Lithyphantes septemmaculatus* by Keyserling (1884). It has also been placed in several other genera: in *Asagenella* by Schenkel (1937) and in *Crustullina* by Simon (1881b). *Euryopsis albomaculata* Denis, 1951, described from Egypt, appears to be another junior synonym. Comparing Denis' fig. 1 of the epigyne with fig. 70 of Levy & Amitai (1982) (see Fig. 5c-f) and regarding also the small size and the opisthosomal white spots of both species it is evident they are synonyms.

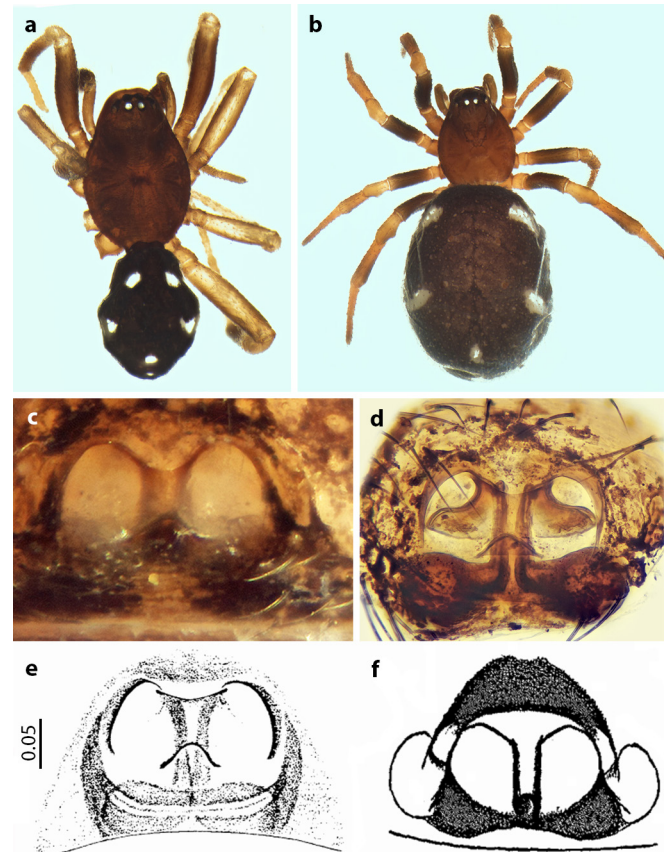


Fig. 5: *Steatoda erigoniformis* O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1872. **a.** Male, dorsal view; **b.** Female, dorsal view; **c.** Epigyne; **d.** Vulva; **e.** Epigyne, drawing by Levy & Amitai (1982) of *Steatoda erigoniformis*; **f.** Epigyne, drawing of *Euryopsis albomaculata* by Denis (1951)

Distribution. East Mediterranean to Middle East, Caucasus, China, Korea, Japan. Introduced to the Caribbean (WSC 2021).

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