

The genus *Opistoxys* Simon — a new synonym in Linyphiid spiders

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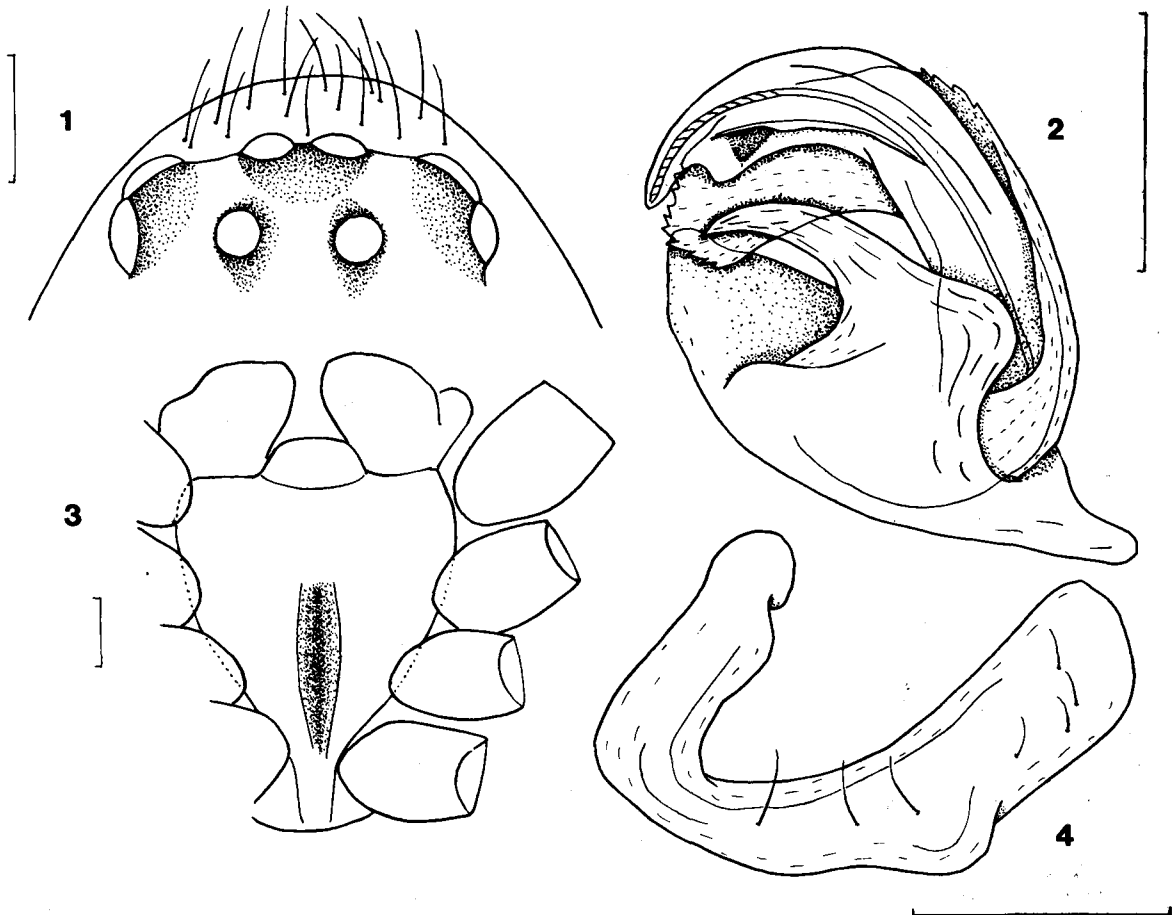
According to Bonnet (1961), 5,407 of the 9,806 spider species described in the "Golden Age of Arachnology" (as Bonnet (1945: 13) has called the period 1850-1899) had been collected only once up to 1939. Although there must be some rare species, living in unusual or remote places, some of them possibly already extinct — there remains an enormous bulk of nominal species, many of them probably senior or junior synonyms, a serious task for taxonomic arachnology.

The type species *Opistoxys acuta* Simon has succeeded in escaping further observation now for over 90 years. It was collected by Sédillot in northern France (Dép. Aisne: Guise, presumably a single male; numbers, date and habitat are not recorded) and described by Simon (1884: 372). Two figures illustrating the palpal organ (retrolateral view) and sternum are included, the female being unknown. Comments on this species in Simon's later works (1894, 1926) repeat without further details information already presented, his diagnosis of 1894 (p. 702) being an excellent summary: "A *Porrhommati*, cui valde affinis est, tantum differt sterno postice, inter coxas, acute producto et non inflexo". The figure of the palp (1884, fig. 148) seems to corroborate the affinity proposed, and the sternum, projecting sharply and straight between the 4th coxae, should be characteristic. Nevertheless, *O. acuta* has remained *species inquirenda*, though it was proposed with a detailed description in a famous work in common use, its type locality being situated in an arachnologically well known part of Europe.

Through the courtesy of Dr M. Hubert (whose co-operation is gratefully acknowledged here) I had the opportunity to examine a single male preserved in the Simon collection (Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris, local 943, tube 4776). The results of this investigation can be briefly summarized as follows:

1. The shape of the sternum is very peculiar indeed, see Fig. 3. There exists a median furrow in its posterior half, suggesting a mechanical deformation perhaps received during the capture of the spider.
2. The embolic division (Fig. 2), consisting of a modified lamella, membrane and embolus (sensu Merrett 1963: 378), corresponds totally with the palpal morphology of *Porrhomma*-spp. The embolus and superior apophysis are distinctly formed and permit identification with *P. m. microphthalmum* (O. P.-Cambridge), the body dimensions (prosoma length 0.91, width 0.69 mm) and eyes (Fig. 1) also being in accordance.
3. The type species *O. acuta* is thus a junior subjective synonym of *P. m. microphthalmum*. This species indeed has been recorded from France in recent times (e.g. Fage 1931, Denis 1968, Dresco and Hubert 1968). The genera *Opistoxys* and *Porrhomma*, simultaneously published (Simon 1884: 353, 372), are therefore also subjective synonyms. *Porrhomma* is chosen here as the valid name for reasons of nomenclatural stability and of page priority. *O. subacuta* O. P.-Cambridge, the second species of the genus according to Bonnet (1958: 3196), was recognized as a "typical *Centromerus*" by Jackson (1916: 166), and quite recently as a junior synonym of *C. prudens* (O. P.-Cambridge) by Locket, Millidge and Merrett (1974: 107).

This correction does not affect the complex taxonomy of the *microphthalmum*-group, it only adds a small supplement concerning the dark, surface-dwelling nominate "subspecies". The group has been studied carefully in central and mid-Europe by Miller and Kratochvil (1940) and by Tretzel (1956). Problems not resolved by these authors are still open, e.g. the true identities of *P. fonsfrigidum* Drensky, *P. indecorum* Simon, *P. jacksoni*, Simon, *P. subterraneum* Simon. Moreover, the known distribution areas of some of their forms have been widened considerably by recent investigations and are raising new problems: *P. m. microps* (Roewer) (= *P. kolosvaryi* Kratochvil, Thaler 1967), conceived as a subterranean "subspecies" in northern Yugoslavia and adjoining regions, has been found recently in Germany (Dobat 1969) and Sweden (Holm 1968). Loksa (1970) has discovered the new subspecies *P. rosenhaueri hungaricum* in the Bükk-Mountains (Hungary), where earlier authors had collected *P. m. profundum* (Dahl).



Figs. 1-4 *Opistoxys acuta* Simon: 1 Head from above. 2 Embolic division. 3 Sternum. 4 Paracymbium.
Scale lines equal 0.10 mm.

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A note on the female of *Diplocephalus protuberans* (O.P.-C.)

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In November 1974 specimens of *Diplocephalus protuberans* (O.P.-C.) were found in moss alongside a small stream at Ddôl marl pit, Flints. (North Wales Naturalists' Trust reserve, Grid ref. SJ 142 714). *Agyneta ramosa* Jackson is also present in the same spot.

As the epigyne of *D. protuberans* figured by Locket & Millidge (1953, p. 296, fig. 179 G) was possibly drawn from an old and faded specimen (there being little material available at that time), it was felt that a drawing taken from a fresh specimen (Fig. 1) would be helpful. Although this appears

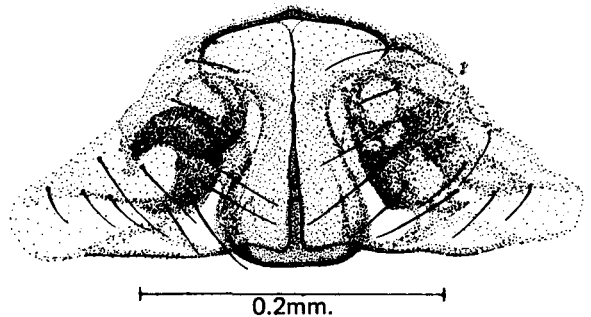


Fig. 1: *Diplocephalus protuberans* (O.P.-C.). Epigyne.

rather similar to the epigyne of *Erigonella hiemalis* (Bl.), consideration of other features (especially the eyes) makes confusion between the two species impossible.

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