

The female of *Typhochrestus simoni* de Lessert (Araneae: Linyphiidae)

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Introduction

In this paper the female of *Typhochrestus simoni* de Lessert is described, and some details of the known distribution of the species in Britain are given.

The male was first taken in Britain at Lliwedd, Gwynedd, North Wales by Dr R. Goodier in a pitfall trap on *Festuca-Nardus* grassland at an altitude of about 300 m, in March – April 1966. Cooke (1967) explains the confusion which had surrounded the identity of this species and of *T. dorsuosus* Simon and *T. digitatus* O.P.-C. The male was first described as *T. simoni* from specimens collected in the French and Swiss Alps (de Lessert, 1907).

The female has never been described. However Mr J. Wunderlich of Neuenbürg, Germany, has also taken both sexes of *T. simoni* and is preparing a paper on the genus *Typhochrestus* which will include a description of the female of *T. simoni* (pers. comm., June 1977).

In 1973 a party of arachnologists led by Dr E. Duffey conducted a survey of spiders on the Ministry of Defence Experimental Ranges at Porton Down in Wiltshire and Hampshire. Because of its biological interest and the fact that this chalk downland (some 6,800 acres) has extensive areas undisturbed by agriculture and grazing for many years, the area has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest by the Nature Conservancy Council. Between November 1973 and October 1974, a study was undertaken by one of us (R.B.C.) using pitfall traps. Ten traps containing ethylene glycol were placed in a line 1 m apart

in each of three selected habitats, and were emptied monthly. The results of the survey have been reported in a series of articles in the British Arachnological Society Newsletter (1977). Two males of *T. simoni* were taken during this survey, so further trapping was done in 1976-77 when numerous specimens of both sexes were caught.

Genus TYPHOCHRESTUS E. Simon 1884

Typhochrestus simoni de Lessert 1907

Typhochrestus dorsuosus E. Simon 1884, p. 586: *Typhochraestus dorsuosus* E. Simon 1926, p. 395, 500; *Typhochrestus simoni* R. de Lessert 1907, p. 109. (nom.nov.); J. A. L. Cooke 1967, p. 137.

Description of female taken in Britain

Total length: 2 mm: *Carapace:* length: 0.8 mm; brown with a thin dark border and faint striae. Head slightly elevated behind the eyes. As in the male a row of minute forward-directed bristles extends from the median fovea to the eyes. *Eyes:* Posterior eyes all ca 1.25 diam. apart. *Abdomen:* Blackish-grey. *Sternum:* Shiny, yellow-brown marked with dark blotches. *Legs:* Tm I ca 0.4: Tm IV absent. Yellow-brown. Tibiae I-III each with two minute dorsal spines, tibia IV with one spine equal in length to width of tibia at the point of insertion. *Chelicerae:* With five prominent teeth on outer edge. There are weak stridulation ridges on the lateral surface which

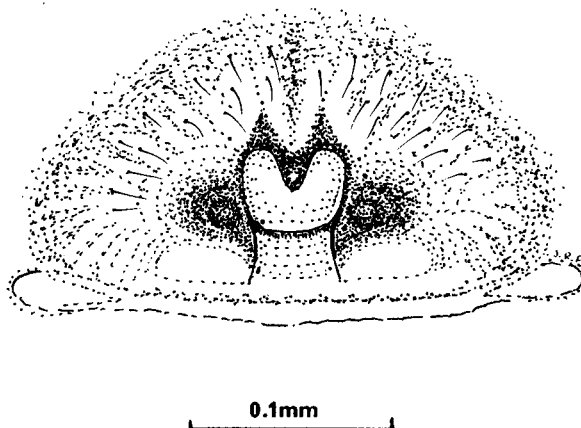


Fig. 1: *Typhochrestus simoni* de Lessert: Epigyne.

are difficult to see. *Epigyne*: Fig. 1. The small dark, bluntly pointed scape which projects over the pit is distinctive.

Description of male

The male has been described by Cooke (1967) and Locket, Millidge & Merrett (1974). To these descriptions it may be added that the lateral surfaces of the male chelicerae bear stridulating ridges and the sternum is shiny. Tibiae I-III each have two spines, and tibiae IV have one spine, all of which are minute and difficult to see. This conforms with the spinal armature described for the genus (Locket & Millidge, 1953). The number of spines stated by Cooke (1967) and Locket, Millidge & Merrett (1974) is incorrect. It is probable that these minute, fragile spines easily become detached in preserved specimens.

Material

One male was taken in November 1973 and another in February 1974. In 1976 trapping was resumed for this species and continued at monthly intervals until the beginning of April 1977. The results are shown in Table 1. This clearly shows that there was an increase in adult activity during the spring of 1977 and that the peak period may extend into the early summer.

Ecology and Distribution

All the specimens of *T. simoni* were collected in one area of grassland (Nat. Grid. Ref: SU (41) 250 382), rich in herbs and lichens on a shallow nutrient-poor soil with flints, chalk rubble and stones on the surface. There is up to 80% cover of lichens, grasses and herbs. The flowering herbs included *Hieracium pilosella* L., *Centaureum erythraea* Rafn., *Linum catharticum* L., *Anthyllis vulneraria* L., *Erigeron acer* L. and *Leontodon hispidus* L. The grasses are *Festuca*

ovina L. and *Trisetum flavescens* (L.). The lichen mat is, however, predominant and comprises about 60% of the ground vegetation.

Other spider species collected in the habitat during the year were:

Atypus affinis Eichwald*, *Dysdera crocata* C.L. Koch, *Drassodes cupreus* (Bl.), *D. pubescens* (Thor.), *Haplodrassus signifer* (C.L. Koch), *Zelotes latreillei* (Simon), *Scotina celans* (Bl.), *S. palliardi* (L. Koch)*, *Xysticus cristatus* (Cl.), *X. erraticus* (Bl.), *Oxyptila atomaria* (Panzer), *O. nigrita* (Thor.)*, *Pardosa monticola* (Cl.), *P. nigriceps* (Thor.), *P. pullata* (Cl.), *Alopecosa pulverentula* (Cl.), *A. accentuata* (Latr.), *Trochosa terricola* Thor., *Cicurina cicur* (Fabr.)*, *Hahnina nava* (Bl.)*, *Pachygnatha degeeri* Sund., *Hypsosinga albovittata* (Westr.), *Walckenaera acuminata* Bl.*, *W. monoceros* (Wider)*, *Pelecopsis parallela* (Wider)*, *P. nemoralis* (Bl.)*, *Milleriana inerrans* (O.P.-C.), *Erigone atra* (Bl.)*, *E. dentipalpis* (Bl.)*, *Centromerus expertus* (O.P.-C.)*, *C. incilium* (L. Koch)*, *Centromerita bicolor* (Bl.)*, *C. concinna* (Thor.)*, *Bathyphanes gracilis* (Bl.)*, *Lepthyphantes tenuis* (Bl.)*, *L. ericaeus* (Bl.)*, *L. insignis* O.P.-C.

The species marked * were adult between January to April when *T. simoni* was also mature.

De Lessert's males were taken from moss in a sandy area during October and November, 1906 at Lavigny (Vaud), Switzerland. Other early continental records and that for Wales also seemed to indicate *T. simoni* to be a montane species. However the recent records from Porton Down show that this is not entirely so, and this is supported by the trapping on 31 January 1976, by Mr R. Snazell of the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Furzebrook Research Station, of a single male on a steep southward-facing slope of short rabbit-grazed chalk grassland near Lulworth Cove, Dorset (Nat. Grid Ref: SY 837 802). Males were also collected in a dry exposed area at Kaiserstuhl in Germany (Wunderlich, 1975).

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank Dr E. Duffey who arranged the survey and obtained the approval of the Nature Conservancy Council and the Ministry of Defence at Porton Down. We are also indebted to Mr W. E. A. Whatley, Head of the Range Section at Porton Down for his kind co-operation and assistance; to Dr K.

	11 Dec.	9 Jan.	17 Feb.	5 Mar.	2 Apr.
♀	0	1	1	2	5
♂	0	2	4	10	31

Table 1: *Typhochrestus simoni* de Lessert. Numbers of both sexes collected in pitfall traps, 1976-77

Thaler (Innsbruck), Mr R. Snazell and Mr J. Wunderlich for information regarding the continental literature and records of the species. We are grateful to Dr A. F. Millidge who kindly read this paper.

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A note on the types of *Dicymbium brevisetosum* (Araneae: Linyphiidae)

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Dicymbium brevisetosum Locket was originally described as a sub-species of *D. nigrum* (Blackwall) (Locket, 1962, p. 7) and later as a separate species (Locket, Millidge & Merrett, 1974, p. 74). On neither

occasion were type specimens mentioned. A lectotype male has now been designated, and this, along with two paralectotype males and several paralectotype females, is deposited in the British Museum (Natural History), the locality being Malham Tarn (Yorkshire).

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