

A new *Harpactea* from Iran (Araneae, Dysderidae)*

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Summary

Harpactea parthica n.sp. (♀, ♂ unknown, from Dowlat Abad, Khorassan) is described; it is the first species of the genus known from Iran and the first record of a *Harpactea* east of Turkey and the Caucasus. The few records of Dysderidae from Iran are discussed; all are doubtful.

Introduction

In the whole Palearctic region there are few countries arachnologically less explored than Iran; the only paper of some importance published until now is that by Roewer (1955) on the material collected by the Austrian Expedition of 1949-50. In the years 1975-76 I travelled extensively in Iran together with Dr P. Bianco, Mr M. Di Rao and Mr S. Zerunian but, as we could leave Italy only during June and July, we collected less spiders than might have been expected. Especially in central and southern Iran (regions of Esfahan, Shiraz, Buschir, Bandar Abbas), in many places it was exceedingly difficult to find any trace of animal life. Notwithstanding intensive disturbance by man, we had better results along the coast of the Caspian Sea.

* More than two years ago a manuscript with the description of the species described here was sent by me to Iran (as "Spiders from Iran III. A new *Harpactea* from Khorassan" it has appeared in some CIDA lists), but since then I have not received any direct answer on its fate. Before the revolution, through some relatives of a student of mine who worked in Teheran it was possible, not without difficulty, to contact the scientist to whom my manuscript had been sent; it was ascertained that the publication of the *Acta Ecologica Iranica* had been provisionally stopped and that my paper had been forwarded to another – unnamed – journal. As the recent, tragic, developments of the Iranian revolution do not seem to encourage the continuation of zoological research in Iran, at least for some time, and as the species described here is of special zoogeographical interest, I resolved to prepare a shortened manuscript on the same subject.

The Dysderidae are one of the few spider families which are not distributed world-wide (naturally, I do not include in them the Segestriidae); their distribution is especially interesting as by far the largest number of species live in a region which corresponds roughly to the coasts of the ancient Mediterranean (Tethys) which extended deeply into Asia. The limits of the range of this family in Asia are still unclear. Many species are known from Soviet Caucasus and Turkey; a few are known from Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Israel and Jordan; six *Dysdera* species have been recorded from Soviet Turkestan (Charitonov, 1956) and three more species of the same genus are known from Afghanistan (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1885; Denis, 1958; Roewer, 1960).

Only three *Dysdera* have been named from Iran: Pocock (1889) recorded *D. concinna* L. Koch, 1878 from Khorassan (region between Mashad and the Hari-rud valley), and Roewer (1955) named *D. erythrina* (Walckenaer, 1802) from Pirkakran (somewhere in the Zagros, 150 km west of Esfahan) and Chalus (near the coast of the Caspian Sea, north of Teheran) and *D. asiatica* Nosek, 1905 from Pirkakran and from the valley of the Halil river, near Sabzevaran, at the border of the Mekran (south-eastern Iran).

None of these records can be accepted without discussion; *D. concinna*, originally described from Lenkoran (Soviet Azerbaidjan, near the Iranian border) is a *species inquirenda*, as are all dysderids described on females without illustrations of the genitalia; Pocock himself was not sure of his determination and suggested that his individual (♀) could also belong to *D. aculeata* Kroneberg, 1875 (described from Turkestan).

Of the records by Roewer, those of *D. asiatica*, based on females, cannot be accepted as this species has been described only on the male from Turkey (Erciyas Dag, near Kayseri); in most genera of the Dysderidae it is impossible to match isolated females and males.

D. erythrina is a common European species which has never been found in the Caucasus or in the Near East; Roewer (1959) named it from Turkey (Sile; sex of the specimen not indicated); as most spider determinations by this author in his papers on the Mediterranean and the Near East of the period 1953-60 appear careless and often have been found wrong,

these records are also very doubtful.

The finding of a *Harpactea* at the border of Khorassan, east of the Caspian Sea, is especially remarkable because previously no species of the genus were known east of the line Georgia-Israel; *Harpactea* is therefore not a Mediterranean or Mediterranean-Pontic element, as could have been supposed, but is, like *Dysdera*, a genus which also links together the Mediterranean with Central Asia.

Harpactea parthica n.sp. (Fig. 1)

Material: 1 female (Holotype, in my collection), coll. M. Di Rao, 18 July 1975, at Dowlat Abad, Khorassan, on the road between Gorgan and Bojnurd, approx. 90 km east of Gorgan, in a small – artificial? – grove of *Platanus*, very humid (with small streams – for irrigation?), under a stone.

Description: female (male unknown): prosoma brownish, smooth, not polygonal; 6 eyes in a closed ring, AME larger than the other eyes (5:4). Chelicerae, labium, sternum and opisthosoma as usual in

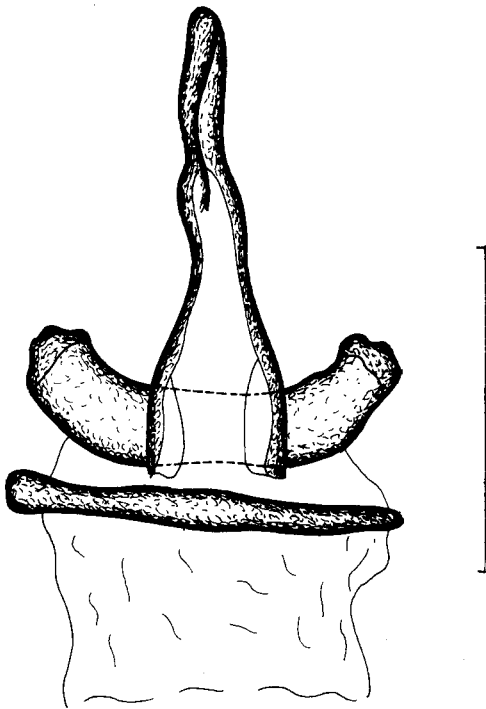


Fig. 1: *Harpactea parthica* n.sp. Vulva, from the outside. Scale line 0.2 mm.

the genus. Femora I with 2 spines in a pair, II with 2 in a series. Vulva, see Fig. 1.

Measurements (in mm, somewhat approximate): prosoma 1.85 long, 1.36 wide; opisthosoma 3.50 long. Total length 5.35.

Leg	Femur	Patella	Tibia	Meta-tarsus	Tarsus	Total
I	1.50	0.87	1.17	1.08	0.42	5.04
II	1.30	0.80	1.05	0.95	0.40	4.50
III	1.12	0.45	0.77	1.07	0.40	3.81
IV	1.62	0.70	1.20	1.45	0.45	5.42

Derivatio nominis: Khorassan was the hearth of the Parthic kingdom, hence the name.

Discussion

H. parthica can easily be distinguished from the other known species by the vulva; as I pointed out elsewhere (Brignoli, 1978), in the absence of males it is often difficult to attribute a species to one of the groups I proposed; from the vulva this species seems fairly close to some species I attributed, with hesitation, to the subgroup *hombergi*, e.g. *H. medeae* Brignoli, 1978, *H. lazonum* Brignoli, 1978 and *H. colchidis* Brignoli, 1978. All these species live in Pontic Turkey, which is ecologically not dissimilar from some parts of the Caspian coast (the locality in which *H. parthica* was found is surrounded by a Querc-Carpinetum which extends also along part of the Caspian coast and which is very different from the vegetation of most of Iran); it would therefore not be surprising to find the same group in Iran.

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Erigone aletris Crosby & Bishop, a spider new to Britain (Araneae: Linyphiidae)

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Summary

Both sexes of *Erigone aletris* Crosby & Bishop, a species new to Britain, are described. Its taxonomic affinities are discussed, and *Erigone olympias* Crosby & Bishop is stated to be a synonym of *E. aletris* (syn. nov.).

Introduction

During a survey of invertebrates on several sand dune and machair sites round the coast of Scotland, a male of a species of *Erigone*, hitherto unrecorded in Britain, was taken in a pitfall trap on dune meadow near Gullane, East Lothian (Grid ref. NT 492849) between 18 and 26 June 1976. Further trapping in June of the following year did not yield any more specimens. However, in 1978, a further 7 males and 2 females were trapped between 4 July and 15 Septem-

ber. The species has been identified as *E. aletris* Crosby & Bishop, previously recorded from coastal habitats in North America.

Erigone aletris Crosby & Bishop (Figs. 1-7)

Erigone aletris C. R. Crosby & S. C. Bishop, 1928, p. 9.

Description

The description of both sexes is based on the British material. *Total length*: ♀ 2.1-2.2 mm, ♂ 1.7-2.1 mm. *Carapace*: *Length*: ♀ 0.9 mm, ♂ 0.9-1.0 mm. Red-brown with dark fovea and striae. Cephalic region with a longitudinal row of strong hairs. ♂ with strong teeth round the margin. ♀ with small warty teeth. *Eyes*: Posterior medians about 1.25 diams apart. *Chelicerae* (Fig. 1): ♂: The number and size of teeth in the outer longitudinal rows seem to be rather variable, but the distal teeth alongside the fang groove are constant. ♀: The pattern of teeth is the same but they are much reduced in size, also the inner longitudinal row is missing. *Abdomen*: Dark grey. *Sternum*: Dark brown. *Legs*: Brown to yellow-brown. TmI 0.35-0.45. TmIV absent. Tibial spines 2221. *Male palp* (Figs. 2-5): With a large pit on the dorsal margin of the tibia bounded by a notched ridge characteristic of the "psychrophila"-group. A