

***Lathys puta* (O.P.-Cambridge, 1863) is a junior synonym of *Argenna subnigra* (O.P.-Cambridge, 1861), not a senior synonym of *Lathys stigmatisata* (Menge, 1869) (Araneae: Dictynidae)**

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**Summary**

Authors who have regarded *Lathys stigmatisata* (Menge, 1869) as a junior synonym of *Lathys puta* (O.P.-Cambridge, 1863) appear to have overlooked the fact that O.P.-Cambridge (1894) stated that on re-examining the type of *puta* he found it to be a female of *Argenna subnigra* (O.P.-Cambridge, 1861). The probable type of *L. puta* has been re-examined, and this synonymy is confirmed. *L. stigmatisata* is therefore the valid name for the species sometimes known as *L. puta*.

*Lathys puta* was originally described as *Ciniflo puta* by O.P.-Cambridge (1863: 8570) from a single female collected at Bloxworth, Dorset in 1861, and redescribed as *Lethia puta* in *The Spiders of Dorset* (O.P.-Cambridge, 1879: 53). Cambridge (1872) stated that this single specimen was identical with specimens of *Lethia stigmatisata* Menge, 1869 received from Thorell, but at the same time he also stated that it was closely allied to *Ciniflo mengei* O.P.-Cambridge, 1872. The synonymy of *L. stigmatisata* with *L. puta* was accepted by Simon (1874: 204), and *L. puta* was listed as occurring in Britain by Simon (1914: 62). Possibly because of this, some more recent authors have continued to regard *L. stigmatisata* as a junior synonym of *L. puta*, e.g. Lehtinen (1967: 243) who stated that the ♀ type preservation of *Ciniflo puta* was unknown, Miller (1971: 72), and Heimer & Nentwig (1991: 380) who erroneously attributed the name *puta* to de Lessert.

However, these authors appear to have overlooked the fact that O.P.-Cambridge (1894: 105), referring to *Lethia subniger* (O.P.-C.) [= *Argenna subnigra*], *L. mengei* (O.P.-C.), *L. albispiraculis* O.P.-C. and *L. puta*, stated that "examination and comparison under a microscope prove that the above are all of one species", and he repeated these synonyms in his *List of British & Irish spiders* (O.P.-Cambridge, 1900: 15). This synonymy of *L. puta* and *Argenna subnigra* (O.P.-Cambridge, 1861) was also referred to by Jackson (1924: 109) when describing *Lathys stigmatisata* (Menge) as new to Britain from material collected in 1922, and by Bristowe (1941: 526) and Locket & Millidge (1951: 67). It is also worth noting that Cambridge (1872), when stating that *L. puta* was identical with specimens of *L. stigmatisata* received from Thorell, also observed that it was closely allied to *Ciniflo mengei*, which subsequently also proved to be a synonym of *Argenna subnigra*.

A female specimen labelled "*Lethia puta*" from the O.P.-Cambridge collection (jar 160 (b), tube xii) among specimens of *Argenna subnigra* has been re-examined and, while it was in very poor condition, it clearly belonged to *A. subnigra*. As there was no label indicating the locality or designating it as a type, there is no proof that it was the type of *puta*, but this seems highly probable as it was the only specimen labelled "*Lethia puta*" among many specimens of *A. subnigra*. Unfortunately, this specimen was lost after I had examined it.

The synonymy of *L. puta* and *A. subnigra* is also supported on ecological grounds. *L. stigmatisata* has only ever been found in Britain in a few localities very close to the sea, in dry heathy or shingle habitats, whereas the type of *L. puta* was taken at Bloxworth which is about 15 km from the sea, and mainly grassland or woodland. This would be a most improbable locality for *L. stigmatisata*, but a likely one for *A. subnigra*; indeed there are several other specimens of *A. subnigra* from Bloxworth in the O.P.-Cambridge collection.

In conclusion, *Lathys stigmatisata* (Menge, 1869) is therefore the valid name for the species sometimes known as *L. puta*, as it is the earliest available name.

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