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Taxonomic notes on some Norwegian linyphiid spiders described by E. Strand (Araneae: Linyphiidae)

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Summary

Five linyphiid species described by E. Strand from Norwegian material have not been found since their original description. Types are lost and probably destroyed. The species are critically reviewed, and based on the original descriptions and comparison with valid species the following synonyms or taxonomic decisions have been established: *Ceratinella oculatissima* Strand, 1901 = *C. wideri* (Thorell, 1871), *Cnephalocotes dentiger* Strand, 1902 = *Silometopus reussi* (Thorell, 1871), *Cnephalocotes ophthalmicus* Strand, 1901 = *Silometopus ambiguus* (O. P.-Cambridge, 1905), *Pseudogonatium fuscomarginatum* Strand, 1901 = *Zornella cultrigera* (L. Koch, 1879), while *Metopobactrus triangulatus* Strand, 1902 is a nomen dubium. The senior synonym *Cnephalocotes ophthalmicus* is suppressed because of lack of usage.

Introduction

Embrik Strand (1876–1953) described a large number of spiders in the early part of the 1900s based on material collected in both northern and southern

Norway. Since then the majority of these species have been synonymised with previously described species (e.g. Tambs-Lyche, 1942; Tullgren, 1942; Holm, 1944); however, five linyphiids remain in the World Spider Catalog (Platnick, 2001). These species, described from north Norway (Strand, 1901) and western parts of south Norway (Strand, 1902), pose taxonomic problems because there are no or only a few old records published since the original descriptions and the validity of the species has not been tested with the methods of modern taxonomy. It is therefore highly likely that they are synonyms of previously described species. These five species are discussed in this paper.

Material and methods

The types of all the following species are lost. A letter to Å. Holm dated 3 November 1942, written by the then curator at the Zoological Museum, Oslo, L. R. Natvig, clearly states that the type material of three species (*Ceratinella oculatissima*, *Cnephalocotes ophthalmicus* and *Pseudogonatium fuscomarginatum*) was not present in the Museum's collection. The whereabouts of the types of the remaining two species (*Cnephalocotes dentiger* and *Metopobactrus triangulatus*) are unknown, but they are not in Oslo. It is possible that all the types were deposited by Strand in Riga, in which case they would have been destroyed during WWII. It is more probable, however, that they were lost before Strand's departure from Norway, as the types of the other species

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he described in the aforementioned papers were still in Oslo in 1942.

The taxonomic decisions reached below are based on either previously published works which have apparently been overlooked or on careful analysis and comparison of the original descriptions with valid species.

Results and discussion

Ceratinella oculatissima Strand, 1901

Ceratinella oculatissima Strand, 1901: 47 (descr. ♂).
Ceratinella oculatissima: Holm, 1945: 40, f. 11a–d (descr. ♂♀).
Ceratinella wideri: Palmgren 1976: 46 (n. syn., ref. Å. Holm).

This species was described from a single male from Skarmodalen in Hattfjelldal municipality, Nordland county. According to Strand (1901) it was examined by Kulczyński, who maintained that it did not belong to any of the other well-known *Ceratinella* species (*brevipes* (Westring, 1851), *brevis* (Wider, 1834) or *scabrosa* (O. P.-Cambridge, 1871)). Strand did not depict the palpal organ but emphasised the somatic differences between *oculatissima* and *scabrosa*, especially the curvature of the clypeus and the position of the eyes. These differences were later illustrated by Holm, who also described the female (Holm, 1945: fig. 11a–d). Holm later regarded *C. oculatissima* as a synonym of *C. wideri* (Thorell, 1871), although this was apparently only published by Palmgren (1976: 46) without further substantiation and does not seem to have gained general acceptance.

Holm's arachnological expertise and the fact that he examined specimens in detail leave little reason to doubt his conclusion. I therefore accept Holm's opinion that *C. oculatissima* Strand, 1901 = *C. wideri* (Thorell, 1871). *Ceratinella wideri* has not been reported from Norway before or since, leaving this as the first and only record.

Cnephalocotes dentiger Strand, 1902

Cnephalocotes dentiger Strand, 1902: 21, f. 3 (descr. ♂).

This species was described from two males found on Vinjenuten mountain, Suldal municipality, Rogaland county. According to Strand it was closely related to *Cnephalocotes curtus* (Simon, 1881) (= *Silometopus curtus*) and *C. ophthalmicus*. This is one of the few species that Strand illustrated and despite the small, low-quality drawings the characteristic shape of the embolus resembles that of a *Silometopus* species. According to Strand the palpal tibia carried a small tooth-like process at the base and a short, curved process at the apex (i.e. a tibial apophysis). The latter conforms to the shape of the tibial apophysis in *S. reussi* (Thorell, 1871), but the former is not as clearly recognised. It could be a simple misinterpretation of the shape of the palpal tibia. The long and curved embolus is also highly characteristic of *Silometopus*. Of the other generally similar genera with such emboli, *Pocadicnemis* can be ruled out on the basis of the tibial apophysis and shape of the cymbium while *Mecopisthes* has not been recorded in Norway and does not fit the description of

the carapace. The illustration and description of the carapace is very close to that of *S. reussi*, however, as is the size and general description. In Norway *S. reussi* has been found on sandy riverbanks and shores as far north as Lofoten. The locality where Strand found *C. dentiger* was presumably at high altitude (Vinjenuten is 1,105 m a.s.l.), but the habitat is not known. The river Suldalslågen runs adjacent to the mountain, however, and it is possible that Strand collected in the vicinity of the river. Given the morphological similarities I consider *Cnephalocotes dentiger* Strand, 1902 to be a junior synonym of *Silometopus reussi* (Thorell, 1871), **n. syn.**

Cnephalocotes ophthalmicus Strand, 1901

Cnephalocotes ophthalmicus Strand, 1901: 41 (descr. ♂).

This species was also based on a single male, from the island of Løkta in Dønna municipality, Nordland county. According to Strand (1901) it was examined by Kulczyński, who indicated that the species was very close to *C. curtus* (= *Silometopus curtus*). Strand admitted that the two species were very closely related but maintained that he had discovered discernible differences. According to his description (again devoid of any drawings) the tibial apophysis ("Pars tibialis" . . . "der Spitze der Zahn") is slightly bent toward the middle when viewed from above. Furthermore, "Der lange haarformige Anhang" (embolus?) is curved toward the apex, not the base. Only one other European *Silometopus* species has a tibial apophysis similar to *S. curtus*, i.e. *S. ambiguus* (O. P.-Cambridge, 1905). The tibial apophysis of the commonest northern species, *S. elegans* (O. P.-Cambridge, 1872), is longer and sharply bent and is unlikely to have been confused with that of *S. curtus*. As mentioned by Strand, *S. curtus* is a southern species not previously recorded from Fennoscandia. On the other hand, *S. ambiguus* is known from western parts of south Norway and the fact that it occurs on Iceland (Agnarsson, 1996) and is a distinctly coastal species (see Locket *et al.*, 1974) makes it highly likely that this was the species Strand found. Size and general description are also in good agreement. I therefore propose the synonymy *Cnephalocotes ophthalmicus* Strand, 1901 = *Silometopus ambiguus* (O. P.-Cambridge, 1905), **n. syn.** The fact that *S. ambiguus* thus becomes a junior synonym creates an additional problem. For the sake of nomenclatorial stability and lack of usage, *S. ophthalmicus* Strand, 1901 is suppressed.

Pseudogonatium fuscomarginatum Strand, 1901

Pseudogonatium fuscomarginatum Strand, 1901: 38 (descr. ♀).
Pseudogonatium fuscomarginatum: Schenkel, 1931: 962, f. 6 (♀).
Zornella cultrigera: Holm, 1944: 128.

Described from a single female from the mountain Nestinden, Tysfjord municipality, Nordland county. Strand erected a new genus for this species. According to Strand (1901) the specimen was also examined by Kulczyński, who had no knowledge of this species. It

was later mentioned by Schenkel (1931) as “*Pseudogonatium fuscomarginatum* Strand a. sp. aff.” Strand’s description of the epigyne was consistent with Schenkel’s specimens. Holm (1944) examined the Schenkel specimens and found them to be conspecific with Strand’s *Gongylidiellum recurvum* Strand, 1902 (= *Zornella cultrigera* L. Koch, 1879). Unfortunately, the description of the epigyne of *P. fuscomarginatum* is not accompanied by a drawing, but the description fits, for instance, Palmgren’s (1976) illustration of *Z. cultrigera*. Compared with Strand’s specimen of *G. recurvum* (= *Z. cultrigera*), *P. fuscomarginatum* is smaller but the somatic characters are very similar, e.g. the carapace, clypeus, sternum, general coloration and eye position. The position of the metatarsal trichobothrium apparently differs, but this is not a reliable character. Furthermore, one of the sites where Strand found *G. recurvum* (Storå, Tysfjord municipality) is just below (in terms of altitude) the type locality of *P. fuscomarginatum*, and the habitat (beneath stones) is also similar. It is therefore highly likely that Strand’s specimen was simply a small female of *Z. cultrigera*, so *Pseudogonatium fuscomarginatum* Strand, 1901 is here considered a junior synonym of *Zornella cultrigera* (L. Koch, 1879). That Strand described two species based on specimens of the same sex belonging to one and the same species is not unlikely. For instance, his *Micaria norvegica* Strand, 1904 turned out to be conspecific with *Micaria aenea* Thorell, 1871 (Tullgren, letter dated 8 November 1940), even though he had previously described *Micaria foveata* Strand, 1900 based on the same species (Tullgren, 1942: 225).

***Metopobactrus triangulatus* Strand, 1902**

M. triangulatus Strand, 1902: 19, f. 1 (descr. ♀).

Only a single female (from Lunde in Suldal municipality, Rogaland county) was available to Strand. A drawing was provided, but this is very small and of poor quality. Despite a lengthy and detailed verbal description it is not possible to determine the identity of this species. No clue is given as to which genus it may belong. The placement in *Metopobactrus* appears

coincidental and is not justified on morphological grounds. The only clue to the identity of this species is the epigyne. According to Strand it resembled that of *Micryphantes rurestris* C. L. Koch, 1836 (= *Meioneta rurestris*) in having a rounded, flattened projection with adjacent grooves. This general description fits many species in the *Agyneta/Meioneta* complex. The carapace reportedly resembled that of *Kulczynskiellum* (i.e. *Oedothorax*) species. With some imagination Strand’s illustration and description of the epigyne could be that of an *Oedothorax* species. The females in that genus are very similar to each other. Since there is insufficient information to decide on a genus, much less a species, *Metopobactrus triangulatus* Strand, 1902 is here regarded as a nomen dubium.

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