

New species records of *Peucetia* (Oxyopidae) from Uganda, with comments on the taxonomy of some African species

D. Penney

Department of Earth Sciences,
University of Manchester,
Manchester, M13 9PL

Summary

Peucetia transvaalica Simon and *P. gerhardi* Van Niekerk & Dippenaar-Schoeman (Oxyopidae) are recorded from Uganda for the first time, doubling the known number of *Peucetia* species for that country. Males previously identified as *P. transvaalica* cannot be unequivocally attributed to that species because they have never been collected with females, and they may be the currently unknown males of *P. gerhardi*. A larger series of specimens collected together or breeding experiments are required to resolve this problem.

Introduction

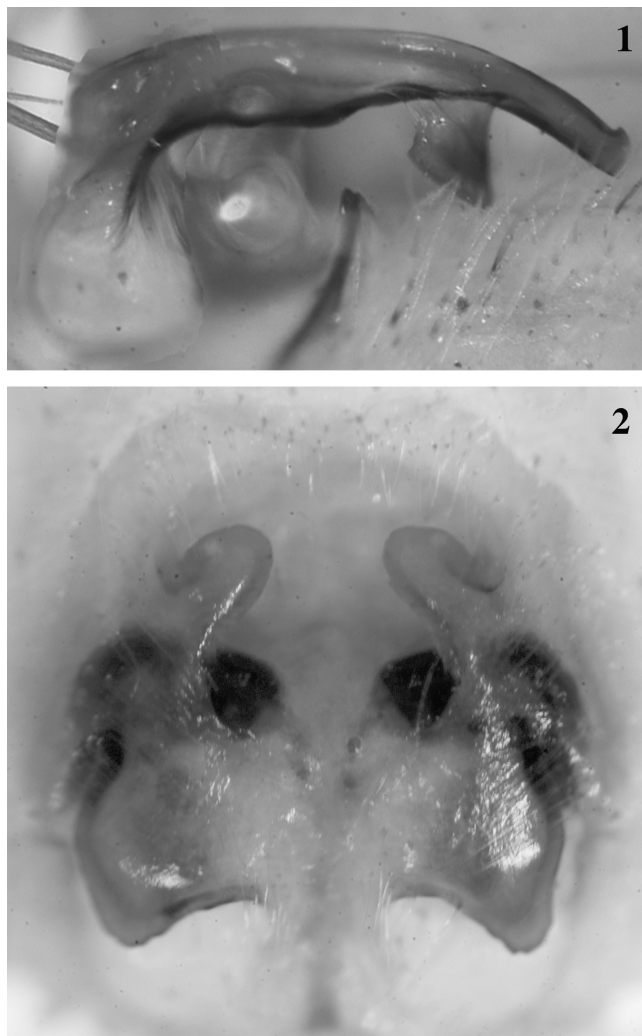
The spider genus *Peucetia*, also known as green lynx spiders, includes 42 species (Platnick, 2004) of medium-sized and widely distributed spiders, the majority of which occur in the tropical regions (Santos & Brescovit, 2003). Van Niekerk & Dippenaar-Schoeman (1994), in an excellent revision of *Peucetia* species of the Afrotropical region, recognised fifteen species. Only two of these species, *P. longipes* Pocock and *P. striata* Karsch, were recorded from Uganda. The revision of Van Niekerk & Dippenaar-Schoeman (1994) lists only one female of the former species from Uganda, but the origin of the record of the latter species is unclear. Although *P. striata* is mentioned for Uganda in the “Distribution” section, there is no record of it under “Material examined”.

One mature male and one mature female which were collected together from Pakwach, north-western Uganda, during November 1994, keyed out as *P. transvaalica* Simon (the male paracymbium lacks a hook-like projection; Fig. 1) and *P. gerhardi* Van Niekerk & Dippenaar-Schoeman, respectively. These specimens are housed in the Royal Museum for Central Africa (MRAC), Tervuren, Belgium (repository numbers: male 214316, female 214317). The possible taxonomic relationships of these two species are discussed here.

Taxonomic notes and discussion

Peucetia gerhardi has a very distinctive epigyne (Fig. 2) and was described for the first time in the revision by Van Niekerk & Dippenaar-Schoeman (1994). It was known previously only from females from Zaire, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast and Sudan; the male is unknown. *Peucetia transvaalica* was originally described by Simon (1896) from a female only, from South Africa (Transvaal). Lessert (1936) described and figured a male and female collected by Pierre Lesne from different localities (Vila Pery and Chiramba respectively) in Mozambique, which he identified as *P. lucasi* (Vinson, 1863) var. However, Van Niekerk & Dippenaar-Schoeman (1994) considered these to be misidentifica-

tions of *P. transvaalica* because, as they stated in their revision, the descriptions and illustrations of Lessert compared well with the type specimen of *P. transvaalica*. This suggests that Van Niekerk & Dippenaar-Schoeman (1994) did not examine these specimens, but specimen labels in the Muséum d’Histoire Naturelle, Geneva (MHNG) suggest that Van Niekerk did see them. Among the material of *P. transvaalica* listed as studied by Van Niekerk & Dippenaar-Schoeman (1994), only one male and one female were apparently collected together by Pierre Lesne from Vila Pery in Mozambique, but no collection date was given for these particular specimens, which were stated as being held in MHNG. The collections of MHNG have no specimens listed as *P. transvaalica* but have one male and one female in the same tube, identified as *P. lucasi*. These specimens are from Vila Pery but there is no indication of collector or date, only that they are ex coll. Lessert and that they were identified as *P. lucasi* (Vinson) var. by Lessert, and subsequently in 1990 as *P. transvaalica* by Van Niekerk. Therefore, these specimens must be those collected from two different localities in Mozambique by Pierre Lesne and described by Lessert (1936). They must also be the



Figs. 1–2: Genitalia of the newly recorded *Peucetia* from Uganda. **1** Lateral view of paracymbium of left male palp (MRAC 214316); **2** Epigyne of female (MRAC 214317). Both photographs $\times 50$.

male and female listed as having been collected together, in the material examined by Van Niekerk & Dippenaar-Schoeman (1994). Furthermore, Van Niekerk & Dippenaar-Schoeman (1994) list only one immature female from MHNG under *P. lucasi*. Thus, there are no records in the literature of a male and female *P. transvaalica* collected on the same date from the same locality. The type specimen of *P. transvaalica* is a female, and according to Platnick (2004), no male had been described before the revision of Van Niekerk & Dippenaar-Schoeman (1994). However, as the male and female described by Lessert were collected from different localities, it is unclear how the male of Lessert can be reliably determined as being conspecific with the female.

The females identified by Van Niekerk & Dippenaar-Schoeman (1994) as *P. gerhardi* and *P. transvaalica* are clearly different and represent separate species, and the new female from Uganda clearly belongs to the former species. However, as the specimens from Uganda were collected together they may be conspecific, and it may well be that the males identified as *P. transvaalica* by Van Niekerk & Dippenaar-Schoeman (1994) are actually males of *P. gerhardi*. There are some pattern differences between the male and female from Uganda, but these may not be of species diagnostic value. There is also the possibility that I have misidentified the male and that it is somehow different from the male of *P. transvaalica* (and that it may represent the previously undescribed male of *P. gerhardi*) but I doubt that this is the case, given the excellent figures and key provided by Van Niekerk & Dippenaar-Schoeman (1994). The paracymbium as figured here differs from the drawing of Van

Niekerk & Dippenaar-Schoeman (1994: fig. 6j) in that the tip appears truncated, rather than pointed. However, this is a lateral view, and when the palp is viewed ventrally the tip does appear to be pointed. This is an interesting taxonomic problem that can only be resolved with larger series of *Peucetia* specimens that have been collected together, or through breeding experiments.

Acknowledgements

I thank Ansie Dippenaar-Schoeman (ARC-Plant Protection Research Institute, Pretoria) and Adalberto Santos (Instituto Butantan, Brazil) for discussion, Volker Mahner and Peter Schwendinger (MHNG) for collection information and Rudy Jocqué (MRAC) for accessioning the specimens and providing repository numbers. I acknowledge a Leverhulme Trust grant.

References

- LESSERT, R. de 1936: Araignées de l'Afrique orientale portugaise, recueillies par MM. P. Lesne et H. B. Cott. *Revue suisse Zool.* **43**: 207–306.
- PLATNICK, N. I. 2004: *The world spider catalog, version 4.5*. <<http://research.amnh.org/entomology/spiders/catalog81-87/index.html>>
- SANTOS, A. J. & BRESCOVIT, A. D. 2003: A revision of the Neotropical species of the lynx spider genus *Peucetia* Thorell 1869 (Araneae: Oxyopidae). *Insect Syst. Evol.* **34**: 95–116.
- SIMON, E. 1896: Arachnides recueillis par M. Arnold Penther dans l'Afrique australe. *Bull. Soc. zool. Fr.* **21**: 220–223.
- VAN NIEKERK, P. & DIPPENAAR-SCHOEMAN, A. S. 1994: A revision of the Afrotropical species of *Peucetia* (Araneae: Oxyopidae). *Entomology Mem. Dep. Agric. Repub. S. Afr.* **89**: 1–50.