

**The genus *Mecopisthes* SIMON in North Africa
(Araneae: Linyphiidae: Erigoninae).
Studies on North African Linyphiidae VII**

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Summary

The authors describe four new Mecopisthes species: M. daiarum (♂♀) sp. n., M. monticola (♂♀) sp. n. and M. paludicola (♂♀) sp. n. from Algeria and M. jacquelinae (♀) sp. n. from Morocco.

Résumé

Les auteurs décrivent quatre espèces nouvelles appartenant au genre Mecopisthes: M. daiarum (♂♀) sp. n., M. monticola (♂♀) sp. n. et M. paludicola (♂♀) sp. n. de l'Algérie et M. jacquelinae (♀) sp. n. du Maroc.

Introduction

In the present paper, we continue our revision of the North African Linyphiidae, Erigoninae. In former papers, we treated the genera *Walckenaeria*, *Oedothorax*, *Typhochrestus* and *Pelecopsis* (BOSMANS, 1985; BOSMANS & ABROUS, 1990, 1992; BOSMANS & DE SMET, 1993); the present contribution concerns the genus *Mecopisthes* SIMON, 1926.

Genus *Mecopisthes* SIMON, 1926

The genus *Mecopisthes*, among the smallest Erigonids, was recently redefined and revised by MILLIDGE (1977).

The diagnostic characters are:

- position of trichobothrium on Metatarsus I about 0.6; metatarsus IV without trichobothrium;

- tibiae with no dorsal spines; some females with 1-1-1 very short spines;
- males with raised cephalothorax and projecting clypeus;
- palpal tibia of males with antero-dorsal and retro-lateral apophysis;
- supratregular apophysis of male palp complicated, made up of several parts, providing diagnostic characters at species level;
- embolic division with long tail-piece and long, spirally coiled embolus;
- epigyne with dorsal plate often partly visible posteriorly, and with two postero-lateral pits ("anchoring holes");
- vulva with oval spermathecae and long, thin-walled entrance ducts.

The taxonomic status of the species is fairly well known, but for several of them the exact distribution remains to be established.

Eight species are actually assigned to the genus, of which one was mentioned in North Africa:

M. silus (O.P.-CAMBRIDGE, 1872) - type species:

Germany: Mittelfranken (L. KOCH, 1878; WIEHLE, 1960). Ost-Preußen: Zehlauhochmoor (SCHENKEL, 1925).

France: from Pas-de-Calais in the north to Corsica in the south (SIMON, 1884, 1926; DENIS, 1971).

Switzerland: Graubünden (WALKMEISTER, 1977; MAURER & HÄNGGI, 1990); Tessin (SCHENKEL, 1929; HÄNGGI, 1990; MAURER & HÄNGGI, 1992).

Austria: Nordtirol: Innsbrück (KRITSCHER, 1955).

Czechoslovakia: (MILLER, 1966).

Italia: Carnia (CAPORACCO, 1927); Pontic Islands (DENIS, 1966).

Hungary: Fiume (CHYZER & KULCZYNSKI, 1894); Budapest (BALOGH, 1935, 1938a); Praepannonicum (KOLOSVARY, 1939).

Poland: PETRUSEWICZ, 1937.

?Tunisia: Gammart (DENIS, 1964b).

M. alter THALER, 1991:

Italy: Alto Adige: type locality (THALER, 1991).

M. crassirostris (SIMON, 1884)

France: Gard: type locality (SIMON, 1884); Bouches-du-Rhône (DENIS, 1951); Pyrénées Orientales (DENIS, 1933; BOSMANS & DE KEER, 1985).

Portugal: Beira litoral (MACHADO, 1941).

M. latinus MILLIDGE, 1977:

Italy: Lazio: type locality (MILLIDGE, 1977); Tuscany (CAPORACCO, 1936, sub *M. silus*, VAN HELSDINGEN, 1982; MILLIDGE, 1977).

Switzerland: Tessin (HÄNGGI, 1990).

M. nicaensis (SIMON, 1884):

France: Alpes Maritimes: type locality (SIMON, 1884).

M. peuceticus CAPORACCO, 1951:

Italy: Apulia: type locality (CAPORACCO, 1951).

M. peusi WUNDERLICH, 1972:

Great Britain: several localities in Lancashire, Merioneth, Anglesey, Dorset, Hampshire, Surrey and Sussex (ROBERTS, 1987).

Ireland: two localities (ROBERTS, 1987).

France: Vendée (DENIS, 1964a, sub *M. silus*).

Germany: Kyffhausergebirge (MORITZ, 1973).

Austria: Niederösterreich (WUNDERLICH, 1972).

Czechoslovakia: Kleine Tatra (MILLER & SVATON, 1978).

M. orientalis TANASEVITCH & FET, 1986

Turkmenistan (TANASEVITCH & FET, 1986).

M. pictonicus DENIS, 1949:

France: Vendée (DENIS, 1949).

The taxonomic status of this species is not clear. DENIS himself (1964a) synonymized it with *silus*, whereas MILLIDGE (1977) considers it a synonym of *peusi*.

Four species formerly considered to belong to *Mecopisthes* were transferred to the new genus *Hypsocephalus* by MILLIDGE (1977): *H. dahli* (LESSERT), *H. paulae* (SIMON), *H. nesiotis* (SIMON) and *H. huberti* (MILLIDGE).

The only species with a large distribution appears to be *Mecopisthes silus*. This was for a long time the only described species and there is no doubt that many previous citations concern other species. Specimens cited by CAPORACCO from Italy for instance appeared to be *M. latinus* (HELSDINGEN, 1982); specimens cited by DENIS (1964a) from France, Vendée appeared to belong to *M. peusi* (2 ♂♂ 2 ♀♀, MNHNP; examined). *M. peusi* thus seems to be the commonest species of the genus.

All other species are known from a very limited number of localities. In North Africa, the genus has been cited once by DENIS (1964b) from a female of *M. silus* from Tunisia. In the absence of males, females are however very difficult to distinguish and this identification is doubtful.

Our material contains four species; they all appear to be new to science and are described below.

The following abbreviations are used in the text:

Fe, Pa, Ti, Mt, Ta: femur, patella, tibia, metatarsus, tarsus.

TbMt: relative position of trichobothrium on metatarsus.

AE, PE, AME, ALE, PME, PLE: anterior, posterior, anterior median, anterior lateral, posterior median and posterior lateral eyes.

BMNH: British Museum of natural History.

CRB: Collection R. BOSMANS

IRSNB: Institut royal des sciences naturelles de Belgique.

MNHNP: Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle de Paris.

Wil.: Wilaya (Algerian province).

Measurements are in mm; for each species, the measurements of the holotype, and minimal and maximal values of all specimens examined are given.

Description of species:

***Mecopisthes daiarum* BOSMANS sp. n.**
(Figs 1-8, 23)

Diagnosis:

Males are readily distinguished by the shape of the anterior projection of the clypeus, and by the relatively short embolus; females by the shape of the dorsal plate and the configuration of the entrance ducts in the vulva.

Etymology:

The species is named after the region of the type locality: the region of the Daïa.

Description: Male holotype:

Length 1.44 (1.20-1.80); cephalothorax 0.70 (0.64-0.72) long, 0.51 (0.50-0.58) wide; sternum 0.38 long, 0.33 wide.

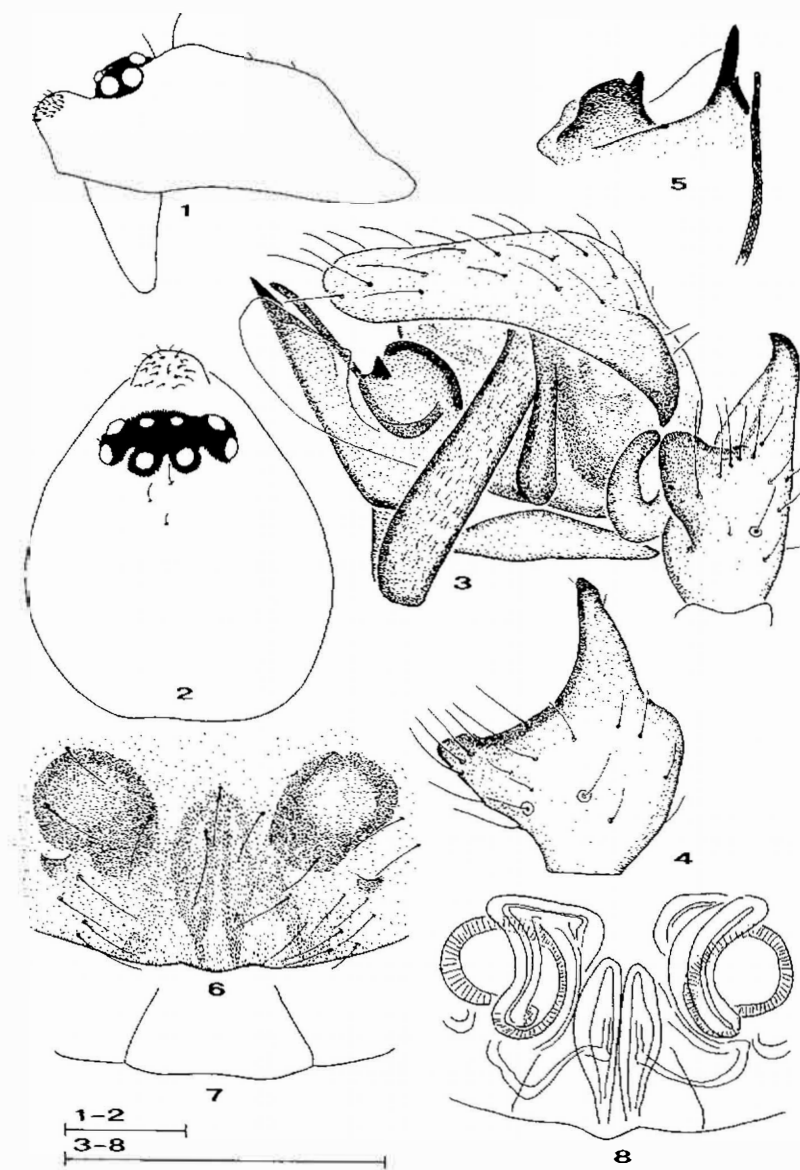
| Legs | Fe | Pa | Ti | Mt | Ta | TbMt |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| I | 0.54 | 0.15 | 0.37 | 0.28 | 0.24 | 0.66 |
| IV | 0.48 | 0.13 | 0.42 | 0.30 | 0.32 | - |

Colour: Cephalothorax yellowish to orange brown, spot in front of fovea, striae and margin greyish, anterior tubercle yellowish; chelicerae and legs yellowish orange, patellae, metatarsi and tarsi whitish grey; sternum brown suffused with grey; abdomen grey to dark grey, with orange brown scutum.

Cephalothorax (Figs 1-2): Elevated, rugose at sides; clypeus distinctly protruding, forming a tubercle, densely clothed with minute hairs; lateral eyes on common tubercles.

PME separated by their diameter, from the PLE by 1.5 x their diameter. Stridulation file scarcely visible.

Palp (Figs 3-5, 23): Tibia with triangular antero-dorsal and retro-lateral apophyses. Cymbium with basal tubercle. Paracymbium slender, terminally rounded. Suprategular apophysis composed of a pointed, nearly straight anterior process, a large membrane and a lateral tooth provided with one denticule. Embolic division with gently curved tail-piece; embolus ribbon-like, describing only one circle, and thus much shorter than in all other species of the genus.



Figs 1-8. *Mecopisthes daiarum* sp. n. 1. Male cephalothorax, lateral view; 2. Idem, dorsal view; 3. Male palp, lateral view; 4. Male palpal tibia, dorsal view; 5. Anterior part of bulb, anterior view; 6. Epigyne, ventral view; 7. Dorsal plate, dorsal view; 8. Vulva, ventral view. Scale lines: 0.2 mm.

Female paratypes:

Length 1.42-2.20; cephalothorax 0.64-0.78 long, 0.52-0.66 wide.

Colour as in the male. PE separated by their diameter.

Tibial spine somewhat shorter than the tibia's diameter, its position on TiI at 0.06.

Epigyne (Fig. 6): Dorsal plate invisible, completely covered by the integument of the epigyne. Elongated, anterior part of entrance ducts and spermathecae visible in transparency. Anchoring holes widely separated from each other and from the epigastric furrow, with postero-mesally directed pit.

Vulva (Figs 7-8): Spermathecae comma-shaped, connected to the copulation pores by complicated entrance ducts; basal part forming two parallel ducts, nearly reaching the epigastric furrow. Dorsal plate trapezoid.

Type material and other material examined:

ALGERIA:

Wil. Laghouat, 20 km S., 740m, 2 ♀♀ (paratypes) in pitfalls *Zizyphus* vegetation in a depression ("daïa"), 3.XI.1989; idem, 2 ♂♂ (paratypes), 3 ♀♀ (paratypes), 30.III.1990; idem, 17 ♂♂ (holotype, paratypes), 4 ♀♀ (paratypes), 14.V.1990 (male holotype 9 ♂♂ 4 ♀♀ paratypes deposited in IRSNB, 2 ♂♂ 3 ♀♀ paratypes deposited in MNHNP, 7 ♂♂ 2 ♀♀ paratypes in CRB); R. BOSMANS leg.

Distribution:

Only known from the type locality on the Hauts Plateaux ("Région des Daïa") near Laghouat.

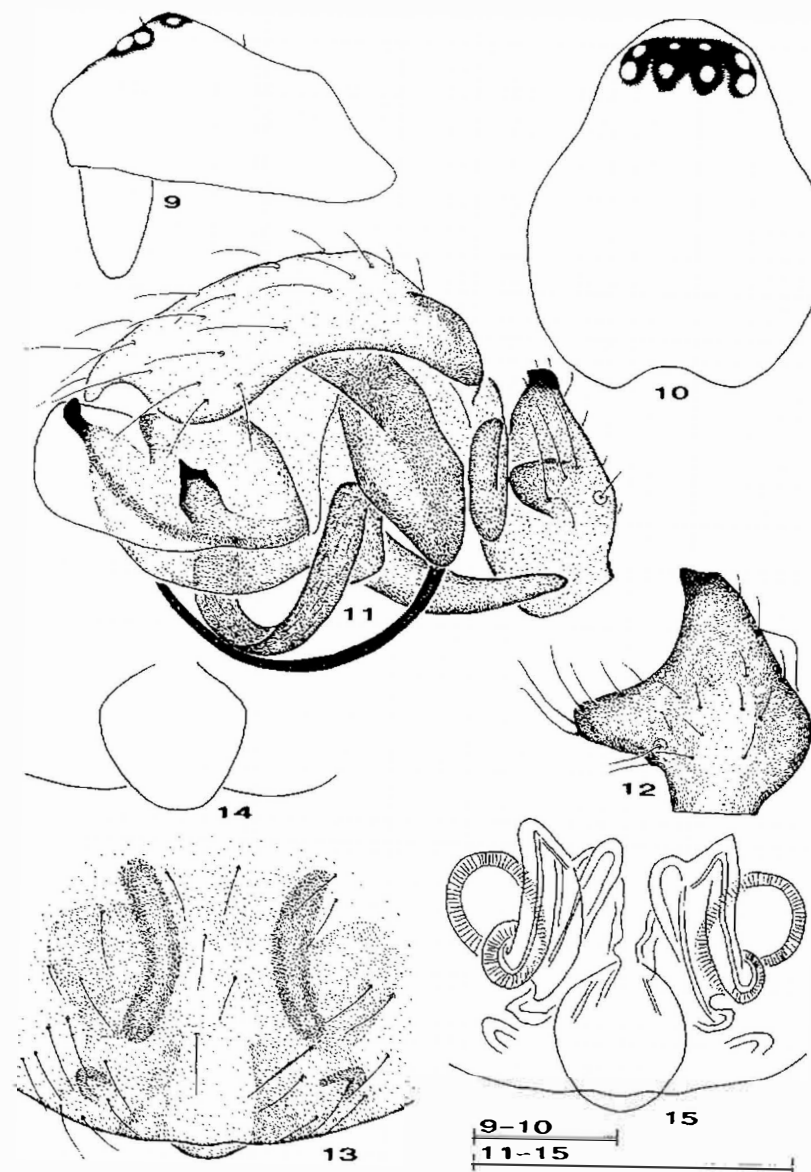
***Mecopisthes monticola* BOSMANS sp. n.**
(Figs 9-15, 24)

Diagnosis:

Males of this species differ from the other North African species by the protruding clypeus without hairs, the shape of the palpal tibia, and by the dentition of the lateral suprategular apophysis; females can be distinguished by the rounded dorsal plate, protruding slightly from under the epigastric furrow, and by the configuration of the entrance ducts. The species is very similar to *M. silus* from Europe, but males of this species have a more prominent cephalic lobe with concave clypeus and females have a rectangular dorsal plate. The genitalia are also very similar to those of *M. peusi* from Europe, but this species lacks an abdominal scutum.

Etymology:

All specimens were captured on mountains, hence the name *monticola*.



Figs 9-15. *Mecopisthes monticola* sp. n. 9. Male cephalothorax, lateral view; 10. Idem, dorsal view; 11. Male palp, lateral view; 12. Male palpal tibia, dorsal view; 13. Epigyne, ventral view; 14. Dorsal plate, dorsal view; 15. Vulva, ventral view. Scale lines: 0.2 mm.

Description: Male holotype:

Length 1.48 (1.24-1.60); cephalothorax 0.66 (0.60-0.72) long, 0.54 (0.48-0.59) wide; sternum 0.40 long, 0.39 wide.

| Legs | Fe | Pa | Ti | Mt | Ta | TbMt |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| I | 0.42 | 0.16 | 0.36 | 0.27 | 0.25 | 0.61 |
| IV | 0.44 | 0.15 | 0.40 | 0.29 | 0.22 | - |

Colour: Cephalothorax reddish to dark brown, spot behind fovea, radiating striae and margin darker, projecting clypeus yellowish brown; chelicerae and legs reddish to orange brown, patellae and tarsi yellowish brown; sternum brown with darker margin; abdomen dark grey to black, covered by a large scutum.

Cephalothorax (Figs 9-10): Elevated, rugose at sides; clypeus projecting forward but not concave and without hairs; dorsal profile line in lateral view only slightly concave. PE separated by slightly more than their diameter.

Chelicerae: Stridulating file scarcely visible.

Palp (Figs 11-12, 24): Tibia with large, blunt antero-dorsal and retro-lateral apophyses, the former slightly curved in postero-lateral direction, and a small antero-lateral lobe. Cymbium with basal tubercle; paracymbium elongated, terminally rounded. Suprategular apophysis composed of a gently curved anterior projection, a large membrane and a lateral tooth provided with 2 smaller denticles. Tail-piece of embolic division strongly elongated, gently curved; embolus whip-like, describing nearly two circles.

Female paratypes:

Length 1.56-1.90; cephalothorax 0.62-0.68 long, 0.54-0.58 wide.

Colour as in the male. PE separated by their diameter.

Legs: TbMtI = 0.63; tibial spine only half as long as the tibia's diameter, its position at 0.10.

Epigyne (Fig. 13): Small part of dorsal plate protruding at the epigastric furrow; two parallel canals and spermathecae visible in transparency. Anchoring holes widely separated, pit directed antero-laterally.

Vulva (Figs 14-15): Spermathecae comma-shaped. Entrance ducts forming some parallel canals, with well-chitinised distal portion and membranous basal portion. Dorsal plate rounded.

Type material and other material examined:

ALGERIA:

Wil. Tizi Ouzou: Djurdjura Massif, Tala Guilef, 2000m, 2 ♂♂ 3 ♀♀ (♂ holotype, 1 ♂ 3 ♀♀ paratypes, IRSNB) in montane grassland 2.V.1985; idem, 1400m, 1 ♂ 5 ♀♀

paratypes (MNHNP), under stones in montane grassland, 23.IV.1984; idem, 1800m, 1 ♂ 2 ♀♀ paratypes (BMNH) under stones in *Cedrus* forest, 30.IV.1984 and 1 ♀ in pitfall, 14.IX.1989 (IRSNB); R. BOSMANS leg.

Wil. Blida: Atlas of Blida, Meurdja, 950m, 2 ♀♀ in pitfall in *Cedrus* plantation, 2.IV.1982. Chrea, 1500m, 1 ♀ under stone in montane grassland, 15.II.1982.

Wil. Bouira: Djurdjura Massif: Tigounatine, 950m, 1 ♂ in pitfall in *Ampelodesma* grassland, 13.I.1988; Tikjda, 1450m, 1 ♀ under stones in *Cedrus* forest, 11.VI.1984 and 1 ♂ 25.IV.1987; Tizi Boussouil, 1700m, 201 ♂♂ 61 ♀♀ in pitfalls in montane grassland, from december 1988-1989. Atlas of Blida, Djebel Tamesguida, 950m, 3 ♂♂ in pitfalls in *Ampelodesma* grassland, 13.I.1986.

Wil. Sétif: Djebel Babor, N. slope, 1800m, 3 ♂♂ in pitfalls in mixed forest, 20.V.1986.

Wil. Tiaret: E. Frenda, 1075m, 1 ♂ in grassland, 26.IV.1984.

Wil. Tizi Ouzou: E. Yakouren, 850m, 3 ♂♂ 4 ♀♀ in *Erica arborea* litter, 4.XII.1986; Taguemount Azouz, 800m, 1 ♂ in pitfall in *Quercus ilex* forest, 20.I.1989; Akfadou forest, lake Agoulmine Aberkane, 1250m, 1 ♀ in *Quercus faginea* litter, 18.V.1985.

Distribution:

Collected in the central part of North Algeria, from Tiaret in the West to Setif in the East.

Ecology:

The species was nearly always collected in grassland, and never below 800m. The largest numbers were taken above 1500m.

In the Djurdjura Massif, adult males were captured in pitfalls from December to May and females from December to April, with a marked activity peak of males in March.

Mecopisthes paludicola BOSMANS sp. n.

(Figs 16-22, 25)

? *Mecopisthes silus* DENIS, 1964b: 381.

Diagnosis:

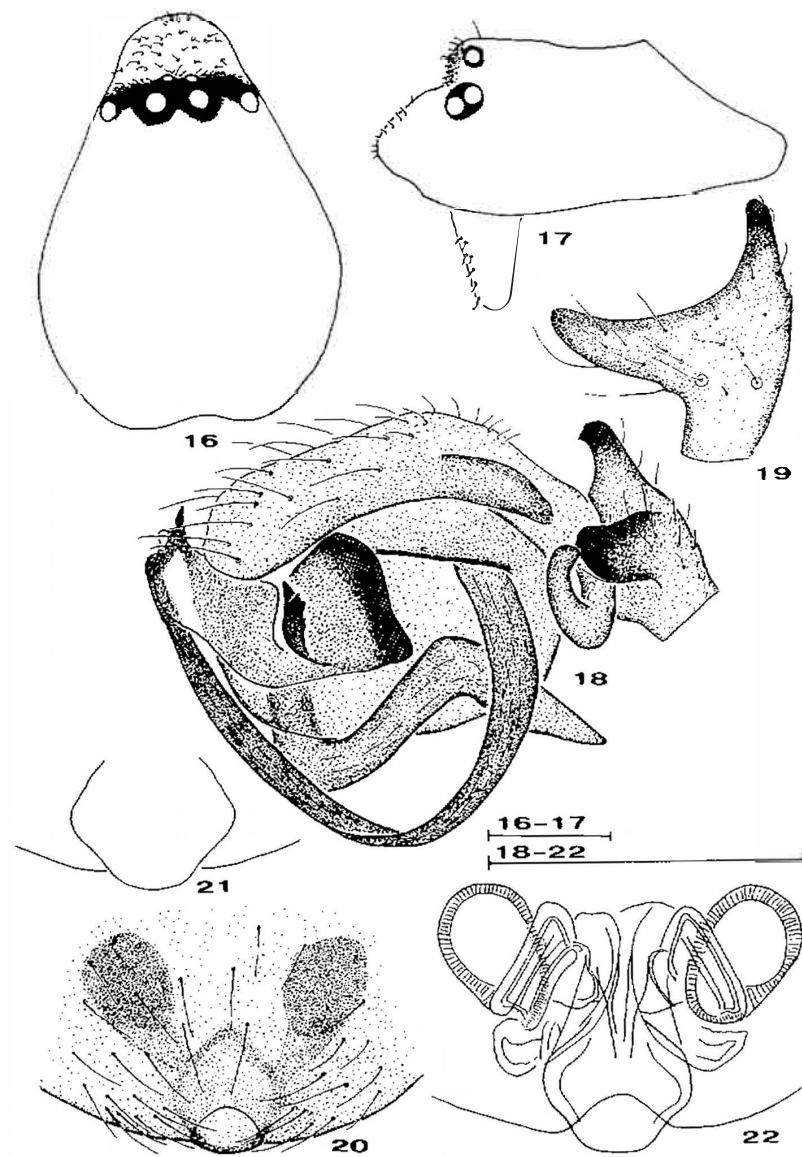
Males differ from other North African species by the more prominent, pubescent clypeus, the longer retro-lateral tibial apophysis and the longer, denticulate meso-lateral process of the suprategular apophysis; females by the dorsal plate, clearly visible in ventral view.

Etymology:

The species was always found in marshy areas, hence the name *paludicola*.

Description: Male holotype:

Length 1.52 (1.36-1.58); cephalothorax 0.76 (0.66-0.80) long, 0.56 (0.49-0.58) wide; sternum 0.42 long, 0.41 wide.



Figs 16-22. *Mecopisthes paludicola* sp. n. 16. Male cephalothorax, dorsal view; 17. Idem, lateral view; 18. Male palp, lateral view; 19. Male palpal tibia, dorsal view; 20. Epigyne, ventral view; 21. Dorsal plate, dorsal view; 22. Vulva, ventral view. Scale lines: 0.2 mm.

| Legs | Fe | Pa | Ti | Mt | Ta | TbMt |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| I | 0.43 | 0.17 | 0.39 | 0.30 | 0.26 | 0.61 |
| IV | 0.48 | 0.16 | 0.44 | 0.27 | 0.24 | - |

Colour: Cephalothorax reddish brown, projection on clypeus yellowish brown, fovea, radiating striae and margin darkened; sternum reddish brown with darker margin; chelicerae and legs orange brown, patellae, metatarsi and tarsi yellowish brown; abdomen dark grey, with four reddish impressed dots and with narrow, purplish brown scutum covering only half the length of the abdomen.

Cephalothorax (Figs 16-17): Elevated, with strongly projecting clypeus forming a large, pubescent tubercle; in lateral view distinctly concave behind the eye region. PME separated by $4/3$ x their diameter, from the PLE by 1.5 x their diameter. Stridulating file scarcely visible.

Palp (Figs 18-19, 25): Tibia with triangular antero-dorsal and retro-lateral apophyses, the latter the strongest. Cymbium with basal tubercle. Paracymbium elongate, terminally rounded. Suprategular apophysis composed of a curved anterior tooth, a large meso-lateral membrane and a slender, terminally incised and denticulate meso-lateral apophysis. Tail-piece of embolic division elongated, gently curved. Embolus whip-like, describing one and a half circles.

Female paratypes:

Length 1.66-2.05; cephalothorax 0.70-0.74 long, 0.56-0.60 wide.

Colour as in the male. PE separated by slightly less than their diameter.

Legs: TbMtI = 0.64. Tibial spine $3/4$ as long as the tibia's diameter.

Epigyne (Fig. 20): Posterior part of dorsal plate visible in ventral view; dorsal plate (in most specimens visible in transparency) lozenge-shaped; no anchoring holes discernable.

Vulva (Figs 21-22): Spermathecae separated by their diameter, connected by oblique ducts to the copulation pores.

Type material and other material examined:

ALGERIA:

Wil. Boumerdes: Reghaia, marsh of the Oued Reghaia, 5m, 196 ♂♂ 50 ♀♀ in pitfalls in Tamarisk bushes, 13.III-13.VI.1988 (holotype ♂, 50 ♂♂ 15 ♀♀ paratypes deposited in IRSNB; 50 ♂♂ 15 ♀♀ paratypes deposited in MNHNP; 50 ♂♂ 10 ♀♀ paratypes deposited in BMNH; 45 ♂♂ 10 ♀♀ paratypes deposited in CRB); R. BOSMANS leg. Zemmouri, 5m, 2 ♀♀ in short dune grassland, 18.IV.1982.

Wil. Blida: Atlas of Blida, Djebel Mouzaia, 1200m, 1 ♀ under stone around lake Mouzaia, 10.IV.1987.

Wil. Bouira: S. Sour el Gozlane, Col de Dirah, 900m, 1 ♀ in herbs along a rivulet, 11.IV.1982.

Wil. M'sila: Aïn-el-Hadjel, reserve of Mergueb, 540 m, 1 ♂ in pitfall in grassland in

steppe near temporary spring, 30.IV.1988.

Wil. Setif: Djebel Babor, 1650m, 1 ♀ under stones in *Cedrus* forest, 19.IV.1982.

Wil. Tissemsilt: Theniet-el-Had, Rond point des cèdres, 1550m, 1 ♀ in montane grassland surrounding a pond, 3.V.1984.

Distribution:

The species occurs mainly in the region of Algiers; other localities are in the Djebel Ouarsenis to the West, in the steppe of Mergueb to the South-East and in the Djebel Babor to the East.

Ecology:

The species is confined to marshes. In pitfalls in the salt marsh of Reghaia, it was extremely common in spring. The pitfalls were not operative throughout a year so that the phenology of the species is only partly known.

***Mecopisthes jacquelinae* BOSMANS sp. n.**

(Figs 26-28)

Diagnosis:

Closely related to *M. monticola* sp. n., from which it differs by the rectangular dorsal plate, which is invisible in ventral view; in *M. monticola*, it is rounded and partly visible.

Etymology:

The species is dedicated to my friend Jacqueline HEURTAULT, who most generously and for a long period procured type material from the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle de Paris.

Description: Female holotype:

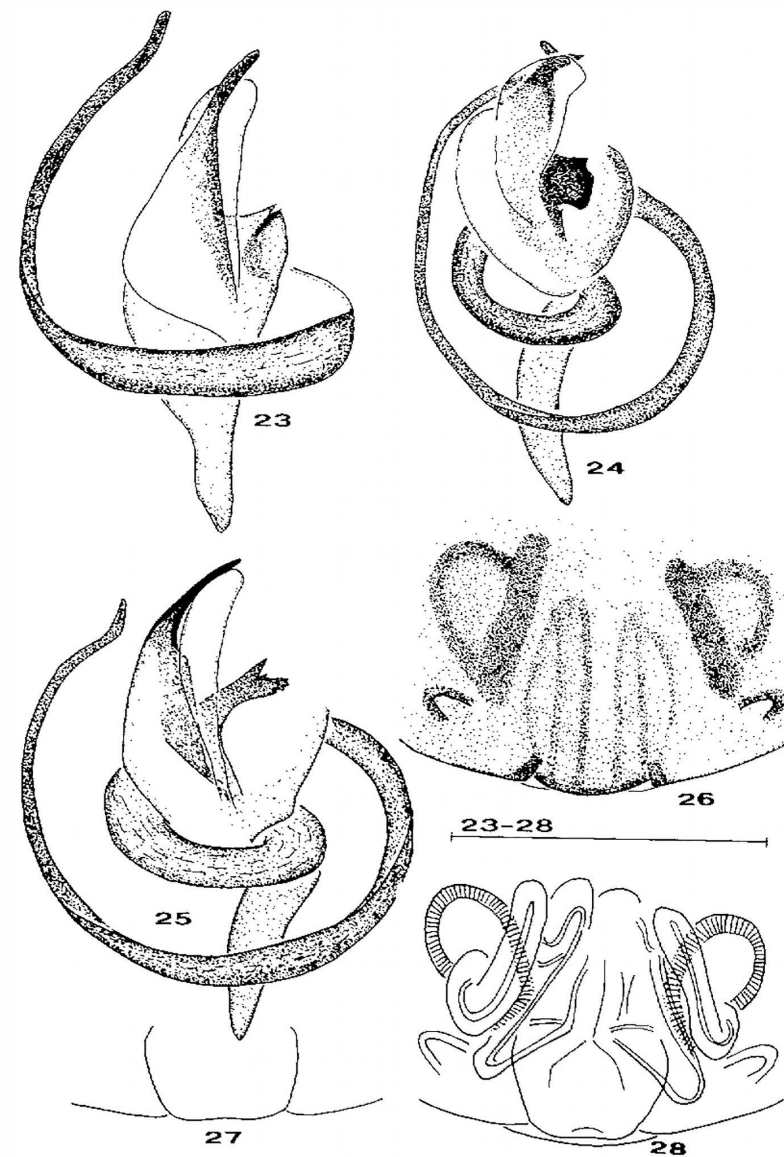
Length 1.90 (1.98); cephalothorax 0.72 (0.70-0.74) long, 0.59 (0.58-0.60) wide; sternum 0.44 long, 0.42 wide.

Colour: Cephalothorax reddish brown, spot before fovea, radiating striae and margin dark brown; chelicerae orange brown; sternum dark brown; legs orange brown, patellae paler; abdomen dark grey, with four reddish impressed dots.

Eyes: PE separated by their diameter.

| Legs | Fe | Pa | Ti | Mt | Ta | TbMt |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| I | 0.49 | 0.18 | 0.41 | 0.31 | 0.27 | 0.62 |
| IV | 0.54 | 0.18 | 0.49 | 0.38 | 0.27 | - |

All tibiae with 1 short dorsal spine, half as long as the tibia's diameter.



Figs 23-25. Embolic division of male palp, ventral view. 23. *Mecopisthes daiarum* sp. n.; 24. *Mecopisthes monticola* sp. n.; 25. *Mecopisthes paludicola* sp. n. Figs 26-28. *Mecopisthes jacquelinae* sp. n. 26. Epigyne, ventral view; 27. Dorsal plate, dorsal view; 28. Vulva, ventral view. Scale line: 0.2 mm.

Epigyne (Fig. 23): Dorsal plate hidden. Anchoring holes close to the epigastric furrow. Spermathecae and longitudinal duct visible in transparency.

Vulva (Figs 24-25): Closely resembling the vulva of *M. monticola* sp. n., differing by the rectangular shape of the dorsal plate.

Type material:

MOROCCO:

S. Taza, Djebel Tazeka, 1850m, holotype ♀ under stone in montane grassland, 22.IV. 1984, R. BOSMANS leg. (IRSNB); 2 paratypes ♀♀ in pitfall in *Cedrus* forest, 8.V.1984, same data (IRSNB, CRB), R. BOSMANS leg.

Distribution:

The species occurs in the Rif Atlas in Morocco.

Key to the *Mecopisthes* species of northern Africa

Males (male of *jacquelinae* sp. n. unknown)

- 1 - Anterior tubercle on clypeus projecting upwards, producing a distinct concavity anterior to the eye region (Fig. 1) *daiarum*
- Anterior tubercle on clypeus projecting forwards, only producing a shallow concavity (Figs 9, 17) 2
- 2 - Anterior tubercle on clypeus large, pubescent (Fig. 17); retrolateral apophysis of palpal tibia stronger than anterolateral one (Fig. 19) *paludicola*
- Anterior tubercle on clypeus small, without hairs (Fig. 9); apophyses of tibia equal (Fig. 12) *monticola*

Females

- 1 - Large part of dorsal plate visible in ventral view (Fig. 20); no distinct anchoring holes *paludicola*
- Dorsal plate partly visible (Fig. 13) or not at all (Figs 6, 26); anchoring holes clearly discernible 2
- 2 - Spermathecae visible in transparency as two rounded, dark spots, to their mesal side accompanied by two longitudinal ducts (Figs 13, 26). 3
- Spermathecae to their mesal side not accompanied by a longitudinal duct (Fig. 6) *daiarum*
- 3 - Posterior part of dorsal plate partly visible in ventral view (Fig. 13); dorsal plate rounded (Fig. 14) *monticola*
- Dorsal plate not visible in ventral view (Fig. 26); dorsal plate rectangular (Fig. 27) *jacquelinae*

Discussion:

In our material from Algeria and Morocco, four species of *Mecopisthes* are present, all new to science.

M. daiarum sp. n. was collected in large numbers but only at one site in the Hauts Plateaux in the "Région des Daïa". These daïa are depressions and temporary flooded in spring and the presence of the species coincides with the flood.

M. monticola sp. n. appears to be a high altitude species occurring in the Atlas Blidéen, the Djurdjura Massif and the Djebel Babor. In suitable habitats more to the West (the Tlemcen mountains) and to the east (Edough massif), the species was not captured. It is very abundant in montane grassland above 1500m, and rare at lower altitudes in grazed, open forests, but never collected below 800m. In the Djurdjura Massif, it is one of the most abundant species, as can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. List of Linyphiid spiders collected in 50 pitfalls in montane grassland at Tizi Boussouil in the Djurdjura Massif, in the period December 1989 to December 1990.

| Species | Total |
|---|-------|
| <i>Lepthyphantes tenuis</i> (BLACKWALL) | 400 |
| <i>Mecopisthes monticola</i> sp. n. | 262 |
| <i>Pelecopsis majus</i> DENIS | 213 |
| <i>Centromerus sinuatus</i> BOSMANS | 123 |
| <i>Pelecopsis oranensis</i> (SIMON) | 85 |
| <i>Centromerus succinus</i> (SIMON) | 74 |
| <i>Lepthyphantes labilis</i> SIMON | 50 |
| <i>Sintula pseudocorniger</i> BOSMANS | 50 |
| <i>Sintula furcifer</i> (SIMON) | 43 |
| <i>Typhochrestus numidicus</i> BOSMANS | 41 |
| <i>Typhochrestus digitatus</i> (O.P. CAMBRIDGE) | 29 |
| <i>Lepthyphantes decolor</i> (WESTRING) | 27 |
| <i>Centromerus desmeti</i> BOSMANS | 25 |
| <i>Walckenaeria languida</i> (SIMON) | 25 |
| <i>Sintula penicilliger</i> (SIMON) | 22 |
| <i>Walckenaeria mariannae</i> BOSMANS | 20 |
| <i>Theonina cornix</i> (SIMON) | 17 |
| <i>Walckenaeria crocata</i> (SIMON) | 12 |
| <i>Pelecopsis digitulus</i> BOSMANS & ABROUS | 9 |
| <i>Meioneta pseudorestris</i> WUNDERLICH | 8 |
| <i>Walckenaeria erythrina</i> (SIMON) | 6 |
| <i>Diplocephalus graecus</i> (O.P. CAMBRIDGE) | 4 |
| <i>Gongylidiellum vivum</i> (O.P. CAMBRIDGE) | 3 |
| <i>Tapinocyba</i> sp. | 2 |
| <i>Lepthyphantes djazairi</i> BOSMANS | 1 |
| <i>Lepthyphantes naili</i> BOSMANS & BOURAGBA | 1 |
| <i>Pelecopsis cedricola</i> BOSMANS & ABROUS | 1 |

A third species, *M. paludicola* sp. n., occurs in marshy areas mainly of low altitude in the region of Algiers. Together with *Gnathonarium dentatum*, the species was extremely common in the salt marsh of Reghaia (Table 2).

Table 2. List of Linyphiid spiders collected in 20 pitfalls in salt marsh in Reghaia in the period 13 March to 13 June 1988.

| Species | Total |
|--|-------|
| <i>Gnathonarium dentatum</i> (WIDER) | 261 |
| <i>Mecopisthes paludicola</i> sp. n. | 246 |
| <i>Oedothorax tingitanus</i> (SIMON) | 113 |
| <i>Bathypantes gracilis</i> (BLACKWALL) | 84 |
| <i>Lepthyphantes labilis</i> SIMON | 31 |
| <i>Lepthyphantes tenuis</i> (BLACKWALL) | 30 |
| <i>Lepthyphantes zonatus</i> SIMON | 21 |
| <i>Microctenonyx alexandrina</i> (O.P.CAMBRIDGE) | 20 |
| <i>Pelecopsis amabilis</i> (SIMON) | 17 |
| <i>Neriere clathrata</i> (SUNDEVALL) | 10 |
| <i>Sintula pseudocorniger</i> BOSMANS | 10 |
| <i>Centromerus cinctus</i> (SIMON) | 6 |
| <i>Araeoncus</i> sp. | 4 |
| <i>Erigone dentipalpis</i> (WIDER) | 4 |
| <i>Gongylidiellum vivum</i> (O.P.CAMBRIDGE) | 5 |
| <i>Delorhipis fronticornis</i> SIMON | 3 |
| <i>Araeoncus humilis</i> (BLACKWALL) | 2 |
| <i>Diplocephalus graecus</i> (O.P.CAMBRIDGE) | 2 |
| <i>Prinerigone vagans</i> (AUDOUIN) | 1 |
| <i>Typhochrestus numidicus</i> BOSMANS | 2 |
| <i>Alioranus pauper</i> (SIMON) | 1 |

A final species, *M. jacquelineae* sp. n. was captured at high altitudes in the Rif Atlas in Morocco. As this site was only visited occasionally, no males of this species were collected.

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Redescription of
***Oplitis paradoxa* (CANESTRINI & BERLESE, 1884),**
and the description of
***Oplitis farrieri*, a new species**
(Mesostigmata: Uropodina: Oplitidae)

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Summary

The female of Oplitis paradoxa (CANESTRINI & BERLESE, 1884) is redescribed from the designated lectotype at the BERLESE Acaroteca. The associated male is also redescribed. A comparison is made with the material published by the original authors. A new species, O. farrieri, is described. The use of the SEM has revealed, among other things, unknown morphological details on the structure of the 'perigenital plate', the vertex, the scabellum and the camerostome. A connective shield, uniting the dorsal and ventral surfaces, is described.

Résumé

La femelle de Oplitis paradoxa (CANESTRINI & BERLESE, 1884) est redécrite sur la base du lectotype choisi dans l'acarotheque de BERLESE. Le mâle associé à la femelle dans la collection est également redécrit. Une comparaison est faite avec les publications originales de ces auteurs. Une espèce nouvelle, O. farrieri, est décrite. L'utilisation du microscope électronique à balayage a révélé, entre autres, des détails morphologiques inédits concernant la structure de la 'plaque périgénitale', du vertex, du scabellum et du camerostome. Une structure réunissant les surfaces dorsale et ventrale est décrite.

Introduction

While preparing a catalogue on the uropodine mites described by BERLESE, it soon became evident that many of the species needed to be restudied