

François TEYSSIE

TARANTULAS OF THE WORLD

Theraphosidae

Foreword: Pierre ESCOUBAS



different genera, a 'provisional' identification key to subfamilies and notable genera, a useful list of references to the main identification keys for each genus, and a summary list of species diversity for each genus.

Following this there is a colour section where approximately 300 different species are illustrated by a colour photograph and an associated distribution map. This section is arranged by geographical regions as follows: North America (including Mexico), Central America and the Caribbean, South America, Africa (including Madagascar), Asia and the Middle East, and Australia and Oceania. For each species, the authorship and date are provided, along with brief notes under the headings: Description, Lifestyle, Habitat, and Distribution. This section also includes a 'Library of spermathecae', which includes illustrations for almost 300 species. These consist of an image and the species name only, with no description or reference as to the origin of the image. The book concludes with a checklist of species per country, a short glossary, an index, a bibliography (including some primary scientific literature) and the photo credits.

The physical production of the book is not bad. The colour plates section is printed on good quality paper and all the photographs are clear and well reproduced. However, the paper used for the remaining pages is rather thin and there are minor typos and consistency issues here and there. Given this, the production in China and the fact that it is aimed at a general audience, some may consider it a little over-priced.

Nonetheless, in terms of content and its worldwide coverage, my opinion is that it is certainly a cut above other similar works that I am familiar with. It contains a wealth of information for the complete novice and will also be of general interest to those who are more specialised or who actually research this particular family, if only for the large number of splendid photographs and the easy-to-reference distribution maps. This new contribution to the arachnological literature certainly deserves a place on the bookshelf of any tarantula enthusiast, but is also a valuable introduction to the diversity of this family that will be of interest to the general arachnophile.

David Penney
University of Manchester

What's in it For Me?

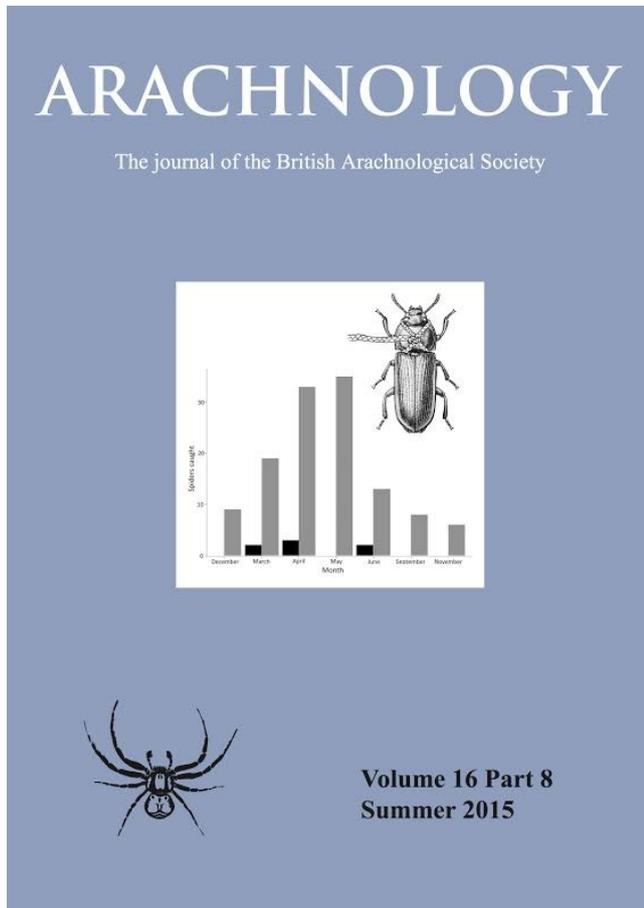
by Paul Selden (Editor, *Arachnology*)

Alongside this Newsletter is the latest issue of *Arachnology*. Some members tend to ignore our scientific journal because they believe it to be beyond their comprehension or, indeed, their interest. Either or both of these may be correct, but I urge everyone to dip into the journal where a great deal of information will be found, much of which may be of interest or enlightenment. Here is a précis of what is included in the current issue.

This summer issue contains a number of articles about spider behaviour. One, by Paulo Ghislandi and colleagues, involves the practice of some male spiders of giving a so-called nuptial gift to females prior to mating. The reasons for this are varied, and could include: keeping the female quiet (and hence less of a threat) during mating, usurping other suitors, or merely nourishing the female to ensure her better survival. These gifts can include parts (or even the whole) of the male's body, secretions or, in the case of this article, wrapped prey items. The paper by Gilbert Barrantes and co-workers is also about mating, but is more concerned with the mechanics of the process than the niceties!

Ever wondered how a wolf spider burrows? It turns out that there are differences not only between species but also among the sexes and life stages within a species. On page 276, Gabriel De Simone and his colleagues discuss their observations on burrowing in female and juvenile *Allocosa*, comparing it with their earlier observations on the males. Talking of burrowing, how do you extract fossorial spiders from their burrows without damaging them? A fascinating new method called beetling is described by Vikki Smith and her collaborators, which uses live beetles tethered to string as a lure to extract idiopids in New Zealand (see the cover picture). No doubt this method could work with British spiders as well.

Enthusiasts of big, hairy spiders will be interested in Richard Gallon and Ingo Wendt's discussion of the taxonomy of West African *Phoneysusa*. Finally, we move from the tropics to the Arctic for Rainer Breitling and Phillip Buckland's paper on spiders in Lapland. In spite of the far higher latitude of their study sites (68°N), many of the spiders listed in their article will be familiar to British



arachnologists. Do enjoy this summer issue of *Arachnology*, and please consider sending your scientific contributions to our journal.

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BOOK REVIEW: Spider Families of the World and their Spinnerets by John A. Murphy and Michael J. Roberts

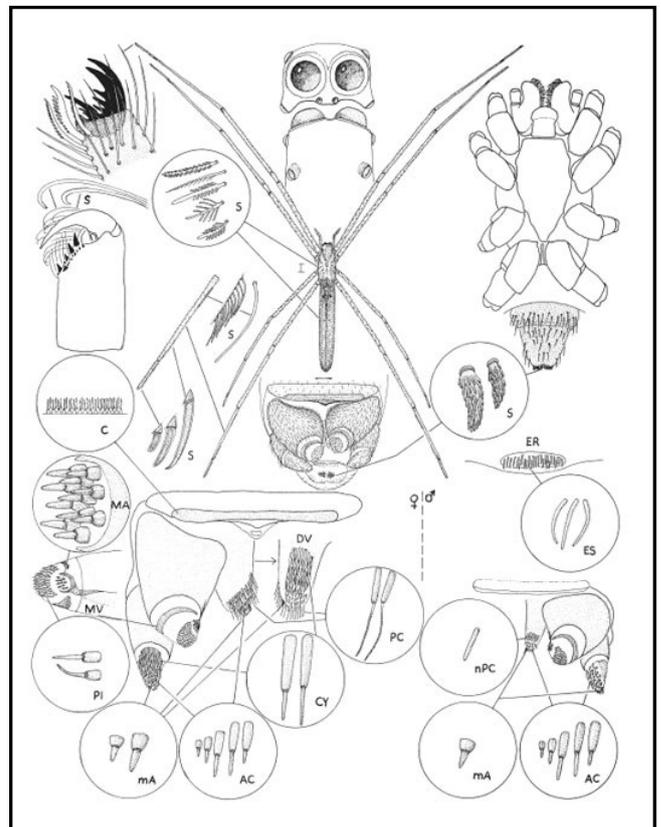
Two volumes: volume 1: pp. i–xii + 1–189 (Figs. 1–7); volume 2: pp. xiii–xvi + 191–553 (Plates 1–327, Figs. 8–56), hardback, A4. British Arachnological Society, 2015; cost £75.00 plus p+p (available from www.britishspiders.org.uk). ISBN 978-0-9500093-7-7.

Wow! This is a book that is certainly going to cause some consternation and plenty of discussion among spider taxonomists and systematists for many years to come and you will need to have a copy of it to understand what all the fuss is about. The main stance of the authors is: given it is spinnerets that typify spiders (i.e. all spiders have them and no other organisms do), it is these structures we should be investigating more closely in order to resolve the phylogeny of the order. Indeed, this does not seem an unreasonable proposal. As a result, the authors have proposed many changes to the currently accepted scheme (and have not pulled their punches in their assessments of previous ideas), including the erection of new families and genus transfers. Just to give a flavour here are the family changes: Borboropactidae (revalidated), Cambridgeidae (new family), Cicuriniidae (new family), Cryptothelidae

(revalidated), Cybaeidae (revalidated), Drymusidae (synonymised with Scytodidae), Loxoscelidae (revalidated and considered far removed from Sicariidae), Matachiidae (new family), Megadictynidae (revalidated), Neolanidae (synonymised with Amaurobiidae), Nephilidae (synonymised with Araneidae), Periegopidae (synonymised with Scytodidae), Pimoidae (synonymised with Linyphiidae), Senoculidae (probably synonymous with Pisauridae) and Zorocratidae (revalidated). A total of 115 spider families are ordered among the following five major groups: Mesothelae; Mygalomorphae; Araneomorphae: Paleocribellate, Araneomorphae: Cribellatae, Araneomorphae: Colulate. They also propose that Caponiidae should be placed in its own, new sub-order.

However, given that most of the proposed changes are based on general observations without any additional (rigorous) investigation it remains to be seen how many of them will be ‘generally’ accepted. Indeed, in a rather unusual stance, the editor disassociates himself from the hypotheses presented, but for reasons easily appreciated. Some of the proposed changes will no doubt be upheld as a result of future studies, others may not be. There is a wealth of ideas here for future PhD research projects and some of these are highlighted throughout the text. In this review I will not be commenting on these proposed changes as, given the comments above that would be rather premature. Nonetheless, I do look forward to seeing how they withstand the rigorous scrutiny of the arachnological community in due course.

The work consists of two A4 volumes. Part 1 contains the text and Part 2 consists of 327 plates of line drawings. Part 1 consists of the normal preamble, including a foreword by Rowley Snazell and eight chapters followed by a list of references and an index. The headings are as



Example plate from *Spider Families of the World and their Spinnerets*.