



Some southern African species of the genus *Rhampsinitus* Simon (Opiliones: Phalangiidae)

WOJCIECH STARĘGA

Institute of Biology, University of Podlasie, Prusa 12, 08-110 Siedlce, Poland; private address for correspondence: Kinowa 24/77, 04-017 Warszawa, Poland. E-mail: wojstar@op.pl

Abstract

Seven species of the genus *Rhampsinitus* Simon, 1879 from southern Africa are described or redescribed, among them *Rhampsinitus flavobrunneus* **sp. nov.** Some general remarks on the genus *Rhampsinitus* are given.

Key words: Republic of South Africa, Zimbabwe, taxonomy, *Rhampsinitus flavobrunneus* **sp. nov.**

Introduction

The family Phalangiidae in South Africa is represented by the genus *Rhampsinitus* Simon, 1879 only. Staręga (1984) mentioned *Guruia africana* (Karsch) from the vicinity of Johannesburg but this is a doubtful record. Several authors also cite this species (under different names) from localities in Mozambique (Karsch 1878, Roewer 1956, Lawrence 1957, Staręga 1984). *Rhampsinitus* is the largest genus of the whole subfamily Phalangiinae, comprising about 45 nominal species. Its range extends from Uganda, Kenya, eastern Zaire and Tanzania (perhaps even Somalia, but *R. somalicus* Caporiacco, 1927 may belong elsewhere) over Mozambique and South Africa to Namibia and Angola. Most species are known from the Republic of South Africa (Staręga 1984). There is, however, a problem with its type species, *R. lalandei* Simon, 1879. It is impossible to identify the species according to the original description (Simon 1879) and nobody else has seen the type material which is now lost (A. Muñoz-Cuevas in litt. 1988). Staręga (1984) synonymized *Acantholophus diversicolor* Karsch, 1880 with *R. lalandei*, but this does not help much, because the description of this species is based on a single female type which is dried up and broken. Therefore one currently has no other morphological character for distinguishing *R. lalandei* than the „crown” on the eye mound which consists of 4+4 long denticles. *R. lalandei* has been described from „Cafrière”, referring roughly to the (coastal) region between Port Elizabeth and East London (or even the Transkei Territory) in Eastern Cape Province, and therefore it could be identical to *R. crassus* Loman, 1898, a species fairly common in this area and having also 4+4 denticles on the eye mound. I see no possibility to resolve this problem, because *R. crassus* is not represented in the material at my disposal and my earlier remarks and figures (Staręga 1984: 57–58, figs 93–97) are not sufficiently distinctive.

Material and methods

The material used in the present paper has been collected by the staff members of the Musée Royal de l’Afrique Centrale in Tervuren (Belgium) and by accompanying persons. It is stored mainly in that museum (MRAC with number). Some specimens are left in my reference collection in Warsaw (RCWS with number).