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On the identity of *Thespis disparilis* Westwood, 1889 (Mantodea: Mantidae: Mantinae)

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Thespis disparilis was described by Westwood (1889) from a male and a female specimen collected from Swan River in Australia. Swan River was the colony that eventually became Perth, the capital city of the state of Western Australia. Westwood's description was brief, in Latin and no illustrations were provided. The type specimens are deposited in The Hope Entomological collections, University Museum, Oxford, England.

The first comprehensive catalogue listing the described species of mantids published subsequent to Westwood's description, that of Kirby (1904), overlooked this species. Later cataloguers, probably following Kirby, also omitted this species (Giglio-Tos 1927; Tindale 1923, 1924; Beier 1935). The first catalogue to list *T. disparilis* was that of Balderson (1984). Balderson presumably had not examined the type specimens and listed the species under the subfamily Thespiinae (within Mantidae). However, he commented that it was doubtful this subfamily occurred in Australia due to lack of any subsequent records. Subsequent authors (Balderson *et al.* 1998; Ehrmann 2002; Otte & Spearman 2005) also listed *T. disparilis*.

Recent morphological (Yager & Svenson 2008) and genetic evidence (Svenson & Whiting 2009) suggests that the majority of taxa, including *Thespis*, currently contained in the family Thespidae are part of a distinct Neotropical clade which diverged relatively early in the evolution of the Mantodea. This clade was dubbed "the earless mantises" by Svenson & Whiting due to the lack of auditory apparatus. Other diagnostic characters of the Thespidae are apterous females and distinct pubescence of the body and wings in males (J. Rivera, pers. comm.).

The Australian genus *Rhodomantis* Giglio-Tos, 1917 was recently revised by Milledge (2014) resulting in the description of several new species. After this manuscript was accepted for publication, images of the type specimens of *Thespis disparilis* Westwood were sent to the author by Reinhard Ehrmann, who believed they may in fact be *Rhodomantis*. Upon examination of these images (Fig. 1), Milledge agreed that these specimens did indeed belong in *Rhodomantis*. Genetic evidence (Svenson & Whiting 2009) suggests that *Rhodomantis* is not closely related to the Thespidae. Morphological evidence is congruent with this, as males of *Rhodomantis* are not particularly hirsute (Milledge 2014) and males of several species of *Rhodomantis* examined for this study (*helenae*, *kimberley*, *queenslandica* and *pulchella*) all had well-developed mantis ears of the 'DK' type as described by Yager & Svenson (2008).

As can be seen in the photographs, the type specimens of *Thespis disparilis* are damaged. The male (Fig. 1a), hereby designated as the lectotype (ICZN 1999, Art. 74), has the hind legs and the tip of the abdomen missing. The female (Fig. 1b), hereby designated as a paralectotype, has the head and all but one of the legs missing but the 'digging' hooks on the tip of the ovipositor, found in many *Rhodomantis* species, are clearly visible. The missing tip of the male's abdomen, and the consequent lack of genitalia, makes certain identification of the species problematic within the current state of knowledge of the genus *Rhodomantis*, as most species are distinguished by the morphology of the male genitalia (Milledge 2014). However, if we assume that the collection locality is correct, then there is a high probability it is the same species as *Rhodomantis pulchella* (Tepper, 1904), since this is the only species of *Rhodomantis* recorded from south Western Australia (Milledge 2014).

In conclusion, we transfer *Thespis disparilis* to *Rhodomantis* and recognize *Rhodomantis disparilis* (Westwood, 1889) **n. comb.** as the valid name for this species, with *Rhodomantis pulchella* (Tepper, 1904) as its new synonym.

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