



On the new Afrotropical genus *Suffrica* with discovery of an abdominal gland and a dual femoral organ (Araneae, Zodariidae)

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Abstract

A new genus, *Suffrica*, is described from Tanzania and Kenya. It contains three new species occurring in the Eastern Arc Mountains and the adjacent Mkomazi Game Reserve: *S. exotica*, *S. chawia* and *S. gus*. They are characterized by a remarkable combination of features which has not been documented in spiders so far: a pair of femoral organs on each leg, a gland on the dorsal side of the abdomen in both sexes and a dorsal abdominal groove in males. A dual femoral organ appears to occur in species of the genus *Suffasia* Jocqué, 1991 and *Asceua* Thorell, 1887. The discovery of a new African genus close to *Suffasia* is remarkable since the latter genus is known only from Asia.

Key words: *Asceua*, Eastern Arc, relic distribution, spider glands, *Suffasia*

Introduction

The genus *Suffasia* Jocqué, 1991 has a critical position in the Zodariidae because it is morphologically intermediate between the classic subfamilies Zodariinae and Storeninae (Jocqué 1991, 1992). It contains the main diagnostic characters of both subfamilies: the preening brushes with chisel-shaped setae typical for the Storeninae and the femoral organs characteristic for the Zodariinae. For that reason the two subfamilies were united into the Zodariinae (Jocqué 1992). Apart from the unusual combination of the characters mentioned, *Suffasia* is further recognized by the presence of one or a double tooth on the promargin of the chelicerae; most other representatives of the subfamily Zodariinae lack such teeth. It is also the only genus in the Zodariidae in which species have been described with an abdominal modification in the male (e.g. *S. tumegaster* presents a ventral boss, Jocqué 1992).

The genus was considered endemic to Asia (hence its name) and currently contains seven species from India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. However, many new species await description (Dankittipakul, pers. comm.) and it is likely that the genus, with its present definition, will reach the high species diversity of genera like *Mallinella* Strand, 1916 and *Asceua* Thorell, 1887.

Samples from East Africa yielded three remarkable new spider species. These spiders resemble *Suffasia* in having a similar femoral organ and comparable habitus and eye disposition, but differ in having a dorsal abdominal gland in both sexes and the abdomen with a dorsal groove in males. This combination of features is unique among zodariids and prompted the description of a new genus. The discovery of a new African genus apparently closely related to *Suffasia* comes as a great surprise, as the Zodariidae of the African continent have been inventoried in some detail. Possibly an even greater revelation was the dual femoral organ we found during the description of the three *Suffrica* species. It was subsequently observed in *Suffasia*, *Asceua* and some undescribed species from Madagascar (pers. obs.) but not in any other zodariids.

Material and methods

Specimens were observed, drawn and measured with a WILD M 10 stereomicroscope. Details of the female