

Two new genera of small, six-eyed pholcid spiders from West Africa, and first record of *Spermophorides* for mainland Africa (Araneae: Pholcidae)

BERNHARD A. HUBER

Alexander Koenig Zoological Research Museum, Adenauerallee 160, 53113 Bonn, Germany. E-mail: b.huber.zfnk@uni-bonn.de

Abstract

Two new genera of West African pholcid spiders are described: *Nyikoa* n. gen., with the widely distributed *N. limbe* n. sp. (Ghana, Cameroon, Congo DR) as the single known species, and *Anansus* n. gen., with three species described herein (*A. aowin* n. sp. from Ivory Coast, *A. ewe* n. sp. from Ghana, *A. debakkeri* n. sp. from Congo DR) and a further species from Cameroon that remains undescribed. Both genera belong to the subfamily Pholcinae, and cladistic analysis of morphological characters further suggests that both represent early offshoots in pholcine spider diversification. A further species described herein (*Spermophorides africana* n. sp.) is the first African representative of this genus that is otherwise mainly known for its conspicuous radiation on the Canary Islands. Male and female genital characters, leg measurements, as well as ultrastructural data support the inclusion of this Tanzanian species in *Spermophorides*.

Key words: Pholcidae, West Africa, taxonomy, cladistic analysis, relict, *Nyikoa*, *Anansus*, *Spermophorides*

Introduction

Recent studies on African pholcids have shown that in several regions the family is highly diverse at the level of species: the genera *Zatavua* and *Paramicromerys* are represented by numerous species on Madagascar (Huber 2003a), the genus *Buitinga* is specious in Eastern Africa (Huber 2003b), and *Quamtana* is species-rich in South Africa (Huber 2003c). One high-biodiversity area that has conspicuously remained out of focus is tropical Western Africa, where many dozens of species present in collections remain undescribed, mostly representatives of the genera *Pholcus* and *Smeringopina* (B. A. Huber, unpublished data). At the level of genera, on the other hand, African pholcid diversity seems to be fairly well known, and it is remarkable that with 13 described autochthonous genera this diversity is well below that of the New World (46) or even South America alone (33). Nevertheless, a few genera remain to be described (and some more probably remain to be discovered), and these may prove to be especially interesting as some of them may represent early offshoots of pholcid diversification. The present study focuses primarily on two such genera from Western Africa, one represented only by the type species, the second by four species, three of which are described below. The fact that over the last six years I have seen more than 2000 vials with pholcids from all over Africa suggests that the low number of known species in these two genera is not just an artifact of poor sampling. Interestingly, the cladistic analysis indeed suggests that both genera represent early branches in the subfamily Pholcinae and thus possibly represent relict taxa.

The second focus of this paper is on a representative of *Spermophorides*, a genus that has gone through a conspicuous radiation on the Canary Islands (23 described species) and is also known from southwestern Europe and some Mediterranean islands (the assignment of *S. lascars* Saaristo from the Seychelles needs to be reconsidered). The presence of the genus in Africa was thus to be expected, but among the hundreds of vials