



Not from “Down Under”: new synonymies and combinations for orb-weaving spiders (Araneae: Araneidae) erroneously reported from Australia

VOLKER W. FRAMENAU^{1,2,5}, NIKOLAJ SCHARFF³ & HERBERT W. LEVI⁴

¹Department of Terrestrial Zoology, Western Australian Museum, Locked Bag 49, Welshpool DC, Western Australia, 6986, Australia. E-mail: volker.rahmenau@museum.wa.gov.au

²School of Animal Biology, University of Western Australia, Crawley, Western Australia 6009, Australia

³Natural History Museum of Denmark, Zoological Museum, University of Copenhagen, Universitetsparken 15, 2100 Copenhagen, Denmark. E-mail: nscharff@snm.ku.dk

⁴Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA. E-mail: levi@fas.harvard.edu

⁵Corresponding author

Abstract

The examination of type material of presumed Australian orb-weaving spiders as part of a revision of the Araneidae of this country revealed that a number of species are not from Australia. The Natural History Museum, Vienna (Austria) holds the type material of three species of orb-weaving spiders that were originally described from Australia, however all of the species are undoubtedly of American, most likely southern Brazilian, origin and it is unlikely that they were collected in Australia. We propose the following synonymies and generic transfers: *Acacesia tenella* (L. Koch, 1871) **comb. nov.** (= *Acacesia cornigera* Petrunkevitch, 1925 new synonymy); *Alpaida navicula* (L. Koch, 1871) **comb. nov.** (= *Alpaida roemeri* (Strand, 1908) new synonymy); and *Eustala mucronatella* (Roewer, 1942) **comb. nov.** In addition, *Novearanea queribunda* (Keyserling, 1887) **comb. nov.** (= *Araneus quaesitus* (Keyserling, 1887) new synonymy; = *Novaranea laevigata* (Urquhart, 1891) new synonymy) is a New Zealand orb-weaving spider based on the labels that were found with the type specimens housed at the Natural History Museum, London (England). In the original description no locality data was given for *N. queribunda* and “Australien” was erroneously listed for *A. quaesitus*.

Key words: New Holland, Neuholland, Brazil, Nearctic, New Zealand, new combination

Introduction

Colonialism by the Netherlands from the 17th into the 20th century resulted in many localities world-wide bearing names of Dutch origin. New Holland (initially “Nova Hollandia”) is a historic name for Australia given by the seafarer Abel Tasman who named it after the Dutch province of Holland (Sharp 1968). But between 1624 and 1664 parts of northeastern Brazil (Rio Grande do Norte to Bahia states) were also referred to as “Nova Holanda” and localities in Acre and Rondônia and many hotels and lodgings in northeastern Brazil are still named Nova Holanda (with various spellings). Today there is also a municipality, Vila Holanda, in São Paulo and a favela, Nova Holanda, in Rio de Janeiro (E. Buckup personal communication). There is also a village in Santa Catarina, southern Brazil, with the name Nova Hollandia (A.A. Lise personal communication) and there are at present six New Holland post offices in the United States.

Consequently, historic specimens simply labeled “New Holland” (“Neuholland” in German) are difficult to correctly associate to a locality without geographic reference. Two of three species of orb-weaving spiders, of which the type material is lodged at the Natural History Museum in Vienna, were included in historic accounts of the Australian fauna based on their collection labels reading “Neuholland”, *Araneus tenellus* (L. Koch, 1871) and *Araneus mucronatellus* (Roewer, 1942) (originally described as *Epeira mucronata* L. Koch, 1871) (L. Koch 1871). A third species, *Araneus navicula* (L. Koch, 1871), was also thought to be from