



<http://dx.doi.org/10.11646/zootaxa.3717.4.1>

<http://zoobank.org/urn:lsid:zoobank.org:pub:55248289-2E05-4F07-BFC7-99AFED7D4E93>

Redescription of the genus *Opisthonus* L. Koch, 1880 (Araneae: Salticidae)

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Abstract

Of 33 nominal species listed by Platnick (2012), 25 species of the genus *Opisthonus* are redefined and redescribed here. *O. kochi* Żabka, 1991, was redescribed by Prószyński (1983) while *O. delectabilis* Rainbow, 1920, *O. eriognathus* (Thorell, 1881), *O. inconspicuus* (Thorell, 1881), *O. nigrifemur* Strand, 1911 and *O. pallidulus* L. Koch, 1880 are excluded from the genus. *O. clarus* Keyserling, 1883 (the type specimen lost) is considered *nomen dubium* and *O. verisimilis* Peckham & Peckham, 1901 was not studied (types not located).

Key words: Arachnida, *Opisthonus*, taxonomy, redescription, Australia.

Introduction

The genus *Opisthonus* has been described by Koch (1880) for nine species, including *Attus polyphemus* Koch, 1867, the generic type. Further contributions were made by Keyserling (1881, 1882, 1883), Peckham & Peckham (1901), Simon (1903, 1909), Strand (1911), Rainbow (1920), Szombathy (1915), Prószyński (1983), Żabka (1988, 1991) and Richardson & Żabka (2003). Simon (1903) placed the genus into the Triteae group on the basis of general appearance, cheliceral dentition and PME–PLE position. According to recent molecular studies (Hedin & Maddison 2001; Maddison & Hedin 2003; Maddison et al. 2008) *Opisthonus* represents the Australasian Astioida clade with *Rogmocrypta* Simon, 1900 and *Trite* Simon, 1885 being its closest relatives.

Opisthonus is one of the largest salticid genera. The review of several modern collections (Australian Museum, Sydney; Queensland Museum, Brisbane; Australian National Insect Collection, Canberra; Western Australian Museum, Perth) allows to estimate the real number of species as being close to one hundred in Australia alone (Żabka unpubl.).

Due to insufficient documentation of genitalic structures, the majority of described species are poorly known. The intraspecific variation (the phenomenon widely known for most large Australian genera) in colour, genitalia and, especially, in cheliceral dentition, makes identification even more difficult. We hope that the redescrptions given below will make a good starting point for further research of the genus.

Outside Australia (with Tasmania) the genus has been recorded in New Guinea and on adjacent islands and archipelagos such as Great Barrier Reef islands. The particular species live in different kinds of habitats, from open and closed sclerophyll forests to rainforests, being mostly vegetation dwellers. Some species are found in human habitations (Richardson & Żabka 2003).

Material and methods

The material studied here came from the following collections:

Museo Civico di Storia Naturale „Giacomo Doria”, Genova (MCSNG),

Muséum National d’Histoire Naturelle, Paris (MNHN),

Zoologisches Institut und Zoologisches Museum, Universität Hamburg (ZMH),

Zoologisches Museum der Humboldt Universität, Berlin (ZMB).