



A review of the genus *Paratus* Simon (Araneae, Dionycha)

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Abstract

The spider genus *Paratus* Simon, 1898 was known for more than hundred years from a single female from Sri Lanka. A survey of spiders in south China and northern India reveals two new species: *P. sinensis* sp. n. and *P. indicus* sp. n. Both species are described based on males and females. The study of the copulatory organs and somatic morphology led us to conclude that *Paratus* cannot be placed in any described subfamily of Liocranidae, where it was placed originally, or in Corinnidae. Therefore, we describe a new subfamily Paratinae subfam. n. and retain this group within Liocranidae.

Key words: Taxonomy, morphology, palp, epigyne, Yunnan, Uttar Pradesh

Introduction

The spider genus *Paratus* Simon, 1898 was described based on a new species *P. reticulatus* from Sri Lanka, known from the female holotype only (Deeleman-Reinhold, 2001). Simon's (1898) description lacks figures, which could be the main reason why this genus and species remained forgotten for a long time. In addition to an inadequate description, the holotype of *P. reticulatus* was thought to be lost, because the specimen deposited in the Natural History Museum in Paris was labeled by Simon as *Saticula reticulata* (Deeleman-Reinhold, 2001). Recognition of this genus and species became possible when Deeleman-Reinhold (2001) provided a detailed, illustrated redescription of its somatic morphology.

Deeleman-Reinhold placed *Paratus* among “Liocraninae s.l. *incertae sedis*” because this genus lacks a retrocoxal window, which is typical of all European liocranid genera including *Liocranum* (Deeleman-Reinhold, 2001).

An extensive survey of spider fauna from Xishuangbanna rainforest in south Yunnan over a period of one year (June 2006–August 2007) using various collection techniques (fogging, pitfall traps, trunk traps and direct searching), brought abundant and diverse material. Among this material we recognized one undescribed species that undoubtedly belongs to *Paratus*. While comparing Chinese specimens with the habitually similar Indian liocranid specimens, we recognized that Indian specimens earlier identified by the first author as *Ceto* (= *Cetonana*) also belong to *Paratus*. The goal of this paper is the description of two new species based on both sexes and a discussion on the placement of *Paratus*.