



## On the identity of *Ischyropsalis dentipalpis* Canestrini, 1872 and description of *Ischyropsalis lithoclasica* sp. n. (Opiliones: Ischyropsalididae)

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### Abstract

*Ischyropsalis dentipalpis* Canestrini, 1872 is re-defined, and a neotype from the type locality in the Aosta Valley, Italy, is assigned. *I. helvetica* Roewer, 1916 (sensu Martens 1978) is shown to be conspecific and therefore is synonymised with *I. dentipalpis*. A population from Bergamo Province, Italy, formerly assigned to *I. dentipalpis* (sensu Martens 1978), is here regarded as a different species and described under the name *Ischyropsalis lithoclasica* sp. n. Discrimination of males is possible by genital characters and by the shape of the cheliceral and pedipalpal apophyses. Females are distinguished by peculiarities of cheliceral spination. The distribution of *I. lithoclasica* n. sp. is allopatric to that of *I. dentipalpis*.

**Key words:** *Ischyropsalis helvetica*, new species, taxonomy, neotype, synonymy, Aosta Valley, Bergamo, Italy, Switzerland

### Introduction

Since the synopsis by Martens (1978), Opiliones in Central Europe are quite well known. Especially the genus *Ischyropsalis* C.L. Koch, 1839 was thoroughly investigated by Martens (1969a). He defined biospecies status within the genus and identified reliable genital characters, as well as somatic ones based on a peculiar ethological trait in *Ischyropsalis*, a gustatory courtship during which, prior to copulation, a secretion is offered to the female (Martens 1969b). In most *Ischyropsalis* species this secretion is produced in a massive gland situated in the distal part of the proximal male cheliceral article (Martens & Schawaller 1977). The size of the secretion field on this cheliceral article and a species-specific inflation or hump in the glandular part of the cheliceral area provide characters to reliably define species. However, especially in the southern Alps, taxonomic questions remained unsolved due to the lack of adequate material. One of these is addressed here. This specific problem refers to *Ischyropsalis dentipalpis* Canestrini, 1872 and *I. helvetica* Roewer, 1916. The definition of these taxa differed in Martens 1969a and 1978, according to material available at the time.

After the original description of *I. dentipalpis* from Gressoney, Italy, by Canestrini (1872), Dresco (1959) was the first to revise the species, but apparently he, as well as Martens (1969a), never saw the type. Stored in the Museo Civico di Storia Naturale di Genova, Italy, the type material of *I. dentipalpis* was destroyed during a huge flood in 1970, which affected much of this famous collection (G. Gardini pers. comm.). For a long time no topotypic material of *I. dentipalpis* was available. Dresco (1959) identified specimens from Frasco (Switzerland, Canton of Ticino [Tessin]) as belonging to *I. dentipalpis*. Males of this population possess the characteristic apophysis on the pedipalpal patella (Canestrini 1872) to which the species name refers. When Martens (1969a) examined the female holotype of *Ischyropsalis helvetica* from the Canton of Ticino, he found it to be conspecific with the *I. dentipalpis* female provided by Dresco and hence placed *helvetica* in synonymy with *dentipalpis*.

Later, *Ischyropsalis* specimens from the Italian Bergamo Province became available to Martens. Although they exhibited a pedipalpal apophysis similar to the one in *I. dentipalpis*, they obviously differed from