

## The long-lasting story of the wrong naming of *Silometopus ambiguus* as *S. curtus* (Araneae: Linyphiidae)

Theo Blick

doi: 10.5431/aramit4707

**Abstract.** *Silometopus ambiguus* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1905) is a species occurring in coastal habitats from north-eastern to western Europe. *S. curtus* (Simon, 1881), occurring in southern France and north-eastern Spain, was for a long time mixed up with *S. ambiguus*, even though corrections have been published very early and several times. This contribution summarizes publications on this topic, discusses doubtful records of both species and proposes corrections for the World Spider Catalog; and thus tries to avoid repetitions of the mistake in the future.

**Keywords:** coastal habitats, spider, taxonomy

**Zusammenfassung.** Die lange Geschichte der Fehlbenennung von *Silometopus ambiguus* als *S. curtus* (Araneae: Linyphiidae). *Silometopus ambiguus* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1905) kommt in Küstenlebensräumen von Nordost- bis nach Westeuropa vor. *S. curtus* (Simon, 1881), die aus Südfrankreich und Nordost-Spanien bekannt ist, wurde über viele Jahrzehnte mit *S. ambiguus* verwechselt, obwohl Berichtigungen frühzeitig und mehrfach publiziert wurden. Dieser Beitrag stellt die Publikationen zum Thema zusammen, diskutiert fragliche Nachweise beider Arten und schlägt Korrekturen für den World Spider Catalog vor. Weitere Wiederholungen dieses Fehlers sollen so in Zukunft verhindert werden.

*Silometopus curtus* (Simon, 1881) was described by Simon (1881: p. 253, sub *Erigone curta*) based on males from France and Spain. Shortly after he transferred the species to *Cnephalocotes* and figured it (the male palpus) for the first time (Simon 1884: 704). Later, i.e. posthumously, he transferred the species to the new genus *Silometopus* Simon, 1926 and designated it as its type species (Simon 1926: 353). The female epigyne was first figured by Denis (1950: 66, Figs 5-9, sub *S. nitidithorax* (Simon, 1914); corrected by Denis 1963: 396) and the vulva by Locket (1964: 267, Fig. 3D). Denis (1963: 395, Figs 2-3) and Locket (1964: 266, Figs 2A-B) re-figured the tibial apophysis of the male palpus.

*Silometopus curtus* is known only from southern France (Bouches-du-Rhône: les Martigues; Camargue: several sites) and north-eastern Spain (Catalonia: Arbúcies) (Simon 1881: 253, 1884: 704, 1926: 487; Denis 1950: 66, sub *S. nitidithorax*).

Furthermore Simon mentioned a slightly different and larger male from Egypt (Alexandria) (Simon

1884: 704, 1926: 487) which he considered merely to be a variety of *S. curtus*. This seems to be very doubtful and should be re-examined.

*Silometopus ambiguus* (O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1905) was described by Pickard-Cambridge (1905: 67, pl. A, Figs 16-19) from Scotland (Isle of Bute) after a male he had formerly published as *S. curtus* (Pickard-Cambridge 1894: 112, Fig. 4, sub *Cnephalocotes*). Locket & Millidge (1953: 251) figured both, *S. ambiguus* and *S. curtus*, but Locket et al. (1974: 88) corrected this noting that all figures from 1953 belong to *S. ambiguus*. Denis (1963) and Locket (1964) clarified that *S. curtus* is a Mediterranean species and *S. ambiguus* occurs in coastal habitats in northern and western Europe. Since this time in Great Britain and Ireland the correct name, *S. ambiguus*, has been used exclusively. Brændegård (1958) and Wiehle (1960, 1961) erroneously used the name *S. curtus* for records in Iceland and Germany. Also Casemir (1970: Germany) and Palmgren (1976: Finland) used the name *S. curtus*, even though they should have known, or even cited, the papers by Denis (1963) and Locket (1964). Both names can be found even in the spider literature from the last two decades, e.g., *S. curtus*: Koponen & Fritzen (2013), Blick et al. (2004), Helsdingen (1999, 2013); *S. ambiguus*: Agnarsson (1996), Scharff & Gudik-Sørensen (2011), Platen et

Theo BLICK, Callistus – Gemeinschaft für Zoologische & Ökologische Untersuchungen, Heidloh 8, 95503 Hummeltal, Germany, e-mail: blick@callistus.de

Senckenberg Gesellschaft für Naturforschung, Terrestrische Zoologie, Projekt Hessische Naturwaldreservate, Senckenberganlage 25, 60325 Frankfurt am Main, Germany, e-mail: theo.blick@senckenberg.de



**Fig. 1:** Map of the records of *Silometopus ambiguus* in northern Germany (Staudt 2014)

**Abb. 1:** Karte der Nachweise von *Silometopus ambiguus* in Norddeutschland (Staudt 2014)

★ = record after 1999/Nachweis nach 1999

al. (1995), Tanasevitch & Koponen (2007), Bosmans (2009).

*Silometopus ambiguus* is the valid name of the species occurring on or near the coast from north-eastern European Russia (the north-easternmost records are from Vorkuta and south of the Yamal Peninsula, both north of the Urals, Tanasevitch & Koponen 2007: 320, Tanasevitch 2008: 129), Finland, Norway, Iceland, Great Britain, Ireland, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium and France (the southernmost record is from the Atlantic coast of Vendée; Le Peru 2007: 184).

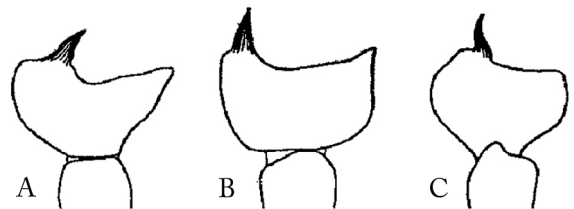
The records from Germany (Fig. 1) show:

That the species is known from the North Sea coast as well as from the Baltic Sea coast. The records from the Baltic Sea lead to the assumption, that records of *S. ambiguus* can be expected also in Poland, Sweden and the three Baltic states, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia; it is already known from Finland (sub *S. curtus*: Palmgren 1976, Koponen & Fritzén 2013).

There are single records not directly on the coast. This fact is supported by single records from Great Britain up to 280 m a.s.l. (BAS 2014) and single inland records from Iceland (Agnarsson 1996: 89-90).

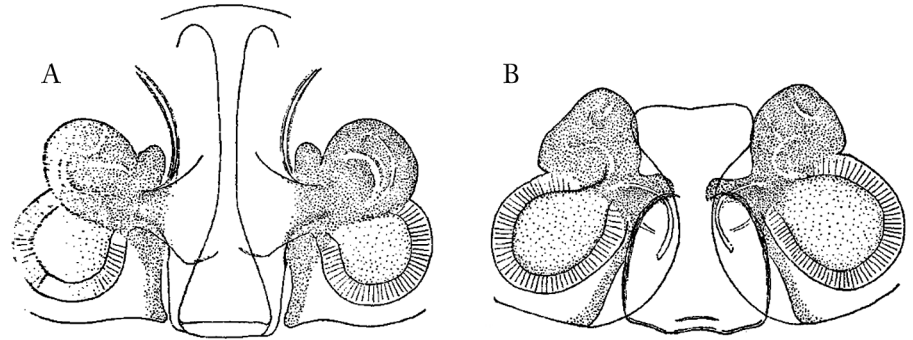
There are scarce recent spider data from the German coast.

**Distinguishing the species.** The most important contribution towards distinguishing the two species was made 50 years ago by Locket (1964). He comparatively figured the tibial apophysis of both species and provided the vulvae for the first time (Figs 2-3). Furthermore he noted (Locket 1964: 266): “Simon himself appears to have confused the two species, a tube from his collection labelled “*Silom. curtus*. Gallia” contained two males of the Mediterranean form and one of the other.” For other figures see Platnick (2014).



**Fig. 2:** A. *Silometopus curtus* male tibial apophysis (dorsally). B. ditto (from a little inside). C. *S. ambiguus* male tibial apophysis (ditto) (after Locket 1964: p. 66, Figs 2A-C).

**Abb. 2:** A. *Silometopus curtus* männliche Tibialapophyse (dorsal). B. dito (ein wenig von innen). C. *S. ambiguus* männliche Tibialapophyse (dito) (after Locket 1964: p. 66, Figs 2A-C).



**Fig. 3/Abb. 3:** A. *Silometopus ambiguus* vulva. B. *S. curtus* vulva (after Locket 1964: p. 67, Figs. 3C-D).

**Records to be checked.** There are published records of *S. ambiguus* from Spain (Majadas & Urones 2002, Moreno 2005, Cardoso & Moreno 2010: two from Central Spain, Ávila and Salamanca, one near the Mediterranean coast from Tarragona, Catalonia). These records should be checked thoroughly as well as the records of *S. ambiguus* from Albania (Deltshev et al. 2011) and of *S. curtus* from Hungary (Samu & Szinetár 1999: listed as “possibly uncertain record“, origin: Loksa 1991), Malta (Kritscher 1996) and Egypt (see above) (compare the maps in Nentwig et al. 2014, created on the basis of Helsdingen 2013).

**Catalogue.** The following citations in the World Spider Catalog (Platnick 2014) are still attached to *S. curtus*, but in fact belong to *S. ambiguus*:

- *Cnephalocotes curtus* O. Pickard-Cambridge 1894: 112, f. 4. (misidentified per Pickard-Cambridge 1905: 67)
- *S. curtus* Locket & Millidge 1953: 251, f. 153A, H (mf). (misidentified per Locket et al. 1974: 88)
- *S. curtus* Brændegård 1958: 47, f. 38-39 (mf). (misidentified, see above)
- *S. curtus* Wiehle 1960: 278, f. 506-509 (mf). (misidentified per Locket et al. 1974: 88)
- *S. curtus* Wiehle 1961: 180, f. 17 (f). (misidentified per Locket et al. 1974: 88)
- *S. curtus* Casemir 1970: 210, f. 4.1-2, pl. I, f. 3 (mf). (misidentified, see above)
- *S. curtus* Palmgren 1976: 98, f. 20.15-16 (mf). (misidentified, see above)

#### Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Dietrich Mossakowski (Bremen), Aloysius Staudt (Schmelz), Jörg Pageler (Oldenburg) and Martin Lemke (Lübeck) (see <http://forum.spinnen-forum.de//>

[index.php?topic=16344.0](http://index.php?topic=16344.0)), who re-drew my attention to this case, to Jason Dunlop (Berlin) for checking the language and to Andrei Tanasevitch and Ambros Hänggi for helpful comments.

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