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First record of *Etienneus africanus* (Arachnida, Thelyphonida) in Mali and Burkina Faso

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Abstract: *Etienneus africanus* (Hentschel, 1899), the only known Thelyphonida occurring in Africa, was previously known only from the western tip of the African continent. New records from Burkina Faso and Mali suggest that this species might occur along the wet areas along the Sahelian region.
Key words: Thelyphonida, *Mastigoproctus*, vinegaroon, whip scorpion, biodiversity, Mali, Burkina Faso.

Primer registro de *Etienneus africanus* (Arachnida, Thelyphonidae) en Malí y Burkina Faso
Resumen: *Etienneus africanus* (Hentschel, 1899), el único Thelyphonida presente en África, era conocido previamente sólo del extremo occidental del continente africano. Nuevos registros de Burkina Faso y Malí sugieren que esta especie podría estar presente a lo largo de las zonas húmedas de la región saheliana.
Palabras clave: Thelyphonida, *Mastigoproctus*, vinagrillo, escorpión látigo, biodiversidad, Malí, Burkina Faso.

The arachnid order Thelyphonida is comprised of 106 described species and 5 subspecies, in 18 genera (8 of which are monotypic) in a single family (Haupt 1996, 2004; Harvey 2002, 2003, 2007; Viquez & Armas, 2005, 2006, 2007; Armas & Viquez, 2007; Giupponi & Vasconcelos, 2008). Most of them occur in South-Eastern Asia, or in South-America. Their size range varies from about 20 mm for the South-American genus *Tellyphonellus* to more than 57 mm for the genus *Mastigoproctus* (Punzo, 2006). On the African continent, only *Etienneus africanus* (Hentschel, 1899) is known. It was thought for a long time that this species might have been introduced through commercial shipping with South-East Asia and belonged to the Asian genus *Hypoctonus*, and settled in Africa since then (Cooke & Shadab, 1973), however Heurtault (1984) demonstrated that this species was native from Africa and created the mono-specific genus *Etienneus* to transfer this species. Huff & Prendini (2009) confirmed the taxonomic position of the species, and suggested that it might be a Gondwana relict, recording it from Senegal, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Guinea. That geographical distribution might suggest that this species preffers semi-moist areas along the Sahelian region.

In 2013, we collected two specimens of Thelyphonida in south-western Burkina Faso, in Banfora region. The area belongs to the West Sudanian Savannah (Olson *et al.,* 2001). However the collection location was a very moist environment near water streams. Furthermore, another specimen, collected in South Mali, was given to us by T. Gadbugi and turned out to be also this species. All specimens fit exactly into the precise redescription given by Huff & Prendini (2009). In particular, the median longitudinal suture (which is autapomorphic for the genus) was clearly visible on our specimens, as were the ommatoids. The specimens did not show any significant difference with the description given by these authors, especially in overall length, number and location of trichobothria and spurs. Overall size of our specimens was comprised between 33 and 36 mm. All these characters lead us to conclude that our specimens indeed belong to *Etienneus africanus*.

These new records are located about 640 kilometers south-east to the easternmost known point for this species (Fig. 1). Several oral records (Gadbugi T., com. pers.) suggest that this species might also occur in northern Ghana, and in Togo, meaning that the species has a wider distribution area in the West Sudan Savannah ecoregion along the frontier with the Sahel region.

MATERIAL EXAMINED: 2♀♀: **Burkina Faso**, Banfora region, "Lamonodougou", VI/2013. 1♀in Coll. Maquart P.O., 1♀ in Coll. Girod C.; 1♂: **Mali**: Bougouni, VI/2014. Gadbugi T. Leg. Coll: Maquart P.O.

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Fig. 1. Known repartition of *Etienneus africanus* in West-Africa after Huff & Prendini, 2009 (●). New localities (O). Map realised with *http://www.simplemappr.net*

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