

SHORT COMMUNICATION

A NEW *MASTOPHORA* FROM ARGENTINA AND THE MALE OF *MASTOPHORA VAQUERA* (ARANEAE, ARANEIDAE)

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ABSTRACT. A new species of the genus *Mastophora* is described from Argentina. The male of *M. vaquera* is described from Cuba.

Keywords: Taxonomy, new species, *Mastophora*

After a new revision is published, curators checking their collections often find new species belonging to the newly revised genus. Because my interest is in revisions and in adequately illustrating previously poorly described species, rather than in describing new species, I leave these to others. But the specimen of *Mastophora* Holmberg 1876, recently found from Argentina is exceptional in appearance, and I feel it should be described along with the male of *M. vaquera* Gertsch 1955, not previously known.

Mastophora adults live in trees, attached to a silken substrate, on branches or leaves sometimes on berries or leaf buds mimicking bird droppings. They have unusual predatory methods. The adults are nocturnal, and give off odors that attract specific male moths, which are caught by swinging a viscid globule on a silken thread toward the prey that has been attracted by the scent. While moths often escape from orb webs by shedding scales, the globule attaches to the moth. The animals are very difficult to find, often being located only by finding egg sacs attached to branches. Minute males are rarely found and usually have to be raised from egg sacs (Levi 2003).

The methods used are the same as those used in Levi (2003). Abbreviations: AMNH, American Museum of Natural History, New York, U.S.A.; MACN, Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales, Buenos Aires, Argentina; MNHNC, Museo Nacional de Historia Naturales, San Antonio de los Baños, Havana, Cuba; MCZ, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

TAXONOMY

Family Araneidae Simon 1895
Genus *Mastophora* Holmberg 1876
Mastophora comica new species
Figs. 1–7

Material examined.—Female holotype from Punta Indio, 35°16'S, 57°14'W, Buenos Aires Prov-

ince, Argentina, 17 November 1991, M. Ramírez (MACN).

Etymology.—The specific name is an adjective referring to the clown-like appearance of the spider.

Diagnosis.—The shape, coloration (Figs. 2, 3) and the triangular plate between the slits of the posterior face of the epigynum (Fig. 6) are diagnostic and separate *M. comica* from all other species.

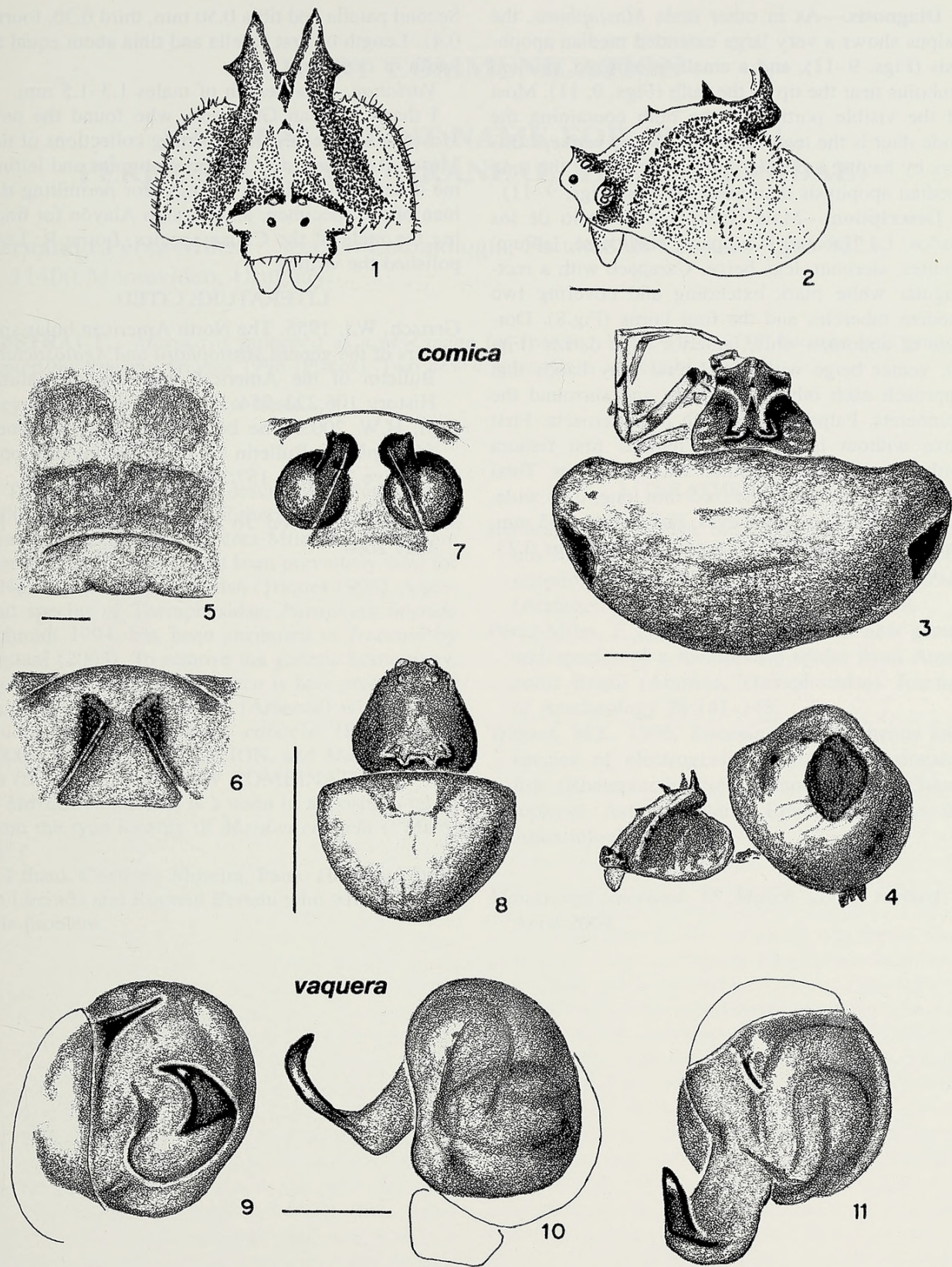
Description.—*Female holotype:* Carapace light to dark brown with three white stripes (Figs. 1–3). Chelicerae yellowish with brown mottling. Labium, endites, sternum dark brown. First coxae brown, others yellowish; legs yellowish first, second and fourth femora with proximal black ring and distal gray band; tibiae with an anterior diagonal black stripe (Fig. 3). Dorsum of abdomen with a black oval on each side and indistinct, gray patches on three anterior swellings, and some black spots (Figs. 3, 4); venter yellowish (Fig. 4). Abdomen wider than long (holotype in poor condition). Total length 7.5 mm. Carapace 3.1 mm long, 3.0 wide, 1.7 wide at constriction behind cephalic region. First femur 3.6 mm, patella and tibia 4.4, metatarsus 3.2, tarsus 0.8. Second patella and tibia 3.1 mm, third 1.7, fourth 2.7.

Remarks.—The male is unknown, and no other specimens apart from the holotype have been found.

Mastophora vaquera Gertsch 1955
Figs. 8–11

Mastophora vaquera Gertsch, 1955: 240, figs. 15–18 (female holotype from Torriente, Matanzas, Cuba, in AMNH, examined); Levi, 2003: 342, figs. 142–152, 452; map 2G.

Specimens examined.—CUBA: San Antonio de los Baños, La Habana, from edge of citrus plantation, Sept. 1984, imm. ♀, adult ♂, R. Regalado (MCZ and MNHNC).



Figures 1-7.—*Mastophora comica* new species, female: 1, 2. Carapace and chelicerae: 1. Frontal; 2. Lateral; 3, 4. Carapace and abdomen: 3. Dorsal, with left legs; 4. Lateral, with chelicera; 5-7. Epigynum: 5. Ventral; 6. Posterior; 7. Posterior cleared; 8-11. *M. vaquera* Levi, male: 8. Dorsal; 9-11. Left palpus: 9. Mesal; 10. Ectal; 11. Apical. Scale bars = genitalia 0.1 mm, all others 1 mm.

Diagnosis.—As in other male *Mastophora*, the palpus shows a very large extended median apophysis (Figs. 9–11), and a small sclerotized, pointed embolus near the tip of the bulb (Figs. 9, 11). Most of the visible portion of the bulb containing the wide duct is the tegulum. *Mastophora vaquera* differs by having a heavier curl at the end of the long median apophysis than other species (Figs. 9–11).

Description.—Male (from San Antonio de los Baños, La Habana): Carapace, chelicerae, labium, endites, sternum, legs beige. Carapace with a rectangular white mark extending and covering two median tubercles and the four horns (Fig. 8). Dorsum of abdomen white, anterior edge darker (Fig. 8); venter beige with two lateral gray bands that approach each other posteriorly and surround the spinnerets. Palpal patella with no macroseta. First coxa without hook. Unlike female, first femora without tubercles. Abdomen without humps. Total length 1.5 mm. Carapace 0.65 mm long, 0.61 wide, 0.41 wide behind lateral eyes. First femur 0.55 mm, patella and tibia 0.65, metatarsus 0.36, tarsus 0.23.

Second patella and tibia 0.50 mm, third 0.30, fourth 0.41. Length of first patella and tibia about equal to width of carapace.

Variation: Total length of males 1.3–1.5 mm.

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