

First record of *Pterotricha kovblyuki* Zamani & Marusik, 2018 (Araneae: Gnaphosidae) from Iraq

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Abstract

The species *Pterotricha kovblyuki* Zamani & Marusik, 2018 is recorded in Iraq for the first time. The specimens were collected from desert habitat located southwest of Thi Qar Province, south of Iraq. The species was described from Iran and United Arab Emirates (UAE). Illustrations of the species and a map of the specimens collecting location are provided.

Keywords: Araneae, First record, *Pterotricha kovblyuki*, Iraq, Ziggurat of Ur.

Introduction

There are few studies on spider fauna in Iraq, but in recent years spiders have received the attention of some Iraqi researchers (e.g. Al-Abbad *et al.*, 2019; Najim & Al-Hadlag, 2020; Al-Khazali, 2021).

Gnaphosidae is a family of global distribution that currently includes 2583 species extant in 164 genera (World Spider Catalog, 2021), characterized by its long and cylindrical anterior spinnerets, and enlarged piriform glands spigots (Jocqué & Dippenaar-Schoeman 2006).

Genus *Pterotricha* Kulczyński, 1903 currently includes 44 valid species that are known in the Old World, primarily from the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia, in the deserts and semi-arid habitats (Levy, 1995; World Spider Catalog, 2021). *Pterotricha* (Gnaphosinae) spiders are medium-sized 5-13 mm in body length, anterior

pair of spinnerets in form of rigid, brownish, cylindrical tubes markedly longer than other spinnerets (Levy, 1995).



Fig. 1. Map of collecting location (red circle): Thi Qar Province, southwest of Al-Nasiriyah city, Ziggurat of Ur.

Material and Methods

The samples were taken from Thi Qar Province, southern Iraq (Fig. 1), at a site near the archaeological Ziggurat of Ur, which is a desert area (Fig. 2). Specimens were preserved in 70% ethanol, photographed with a Nikon Z50 on a Krüss stereomicroscope, then digital images were prepared using image stacking software (Zerene stacker). The measurements were given for the segments of the legs (femur, patella, tibia, metatarsus, tarsus). All measurements are given in millimetres. The map was created using an online web page (<http://www.simplemappr.net/>).

Taxonomy

Family **Gnaphosidae** Banks, 1892
Genus ***Pterotricha*** Kulczyński, 1903

Pterotricha kovblyuki Zamani & Marusik, 2018 (Figs. 3-4)

Pterotricha kovblyuki Zamani & Marusik, in Zamani *et al.* 2018: 21, f. 2a-g (♂).

Material Examined. 2♂♂, Ziggurat of Ur, Thi Qar Province, south of Iraq, 30°58'10.0"N, 46°06'53.0"E, May 2021.

Diagnosis. The conductor has a thinner tip and the tegular apophysis is longer than the width and has a spine like tip as in the tibial apophysis [Figs. 2f, 3f in Zamani (2018) and Figs. 2c, e-g in Zamani *et al.* (2018)].



Fig. 2. The habitat of *Pterotricha kovblyuki*, Ziggurat of Ur.

Description of Male. Habitus as in Fig. (3). Total length 7.5. Carapace 3 long, 2.5 wide. Opisthosoma 4.0 long. Carapace, labium, sternum, and maxillae are light brown. Carapace dorsal surface striped with the shape of "Y". Eyes are arranged in two rows, median eyes are oval in shape and lateral eyes are very close to median eyes. Abdomen light grey with distinct pale mark and two pairs of dots on sides. Legs have clear spines, with the following measurements: I 13.55 (3.5, 1.25, 2.9, 3.5, 2.4), II 12.8 (3.0, 1.0, 2.8, 3.5, 2.5), III 13.9 (3.25, 1.25, 2.8, 4.0, 2.6), IV 16.9 (4.0, 1.5, 3.5, 5.0, 2.9). Tarsi of legs with pseudosegmentations.



Fig. 3. *Pterotricha kovblyuki* Zamani & Marusik, 2018 ♂. Habitus, dorsal view.



Fig. 4. *Pterotricha kovblyuki* Zamani & Marusik, 2018 ♂. Palp, ventral view. (*Co* = conductor, *Em* = embolus, *Te a* = tegular apophysis, *Ti a* = tibial apophysis).

Palp as in Fig. (4), patella and tibia are equal in length. Tibial apophysis (*Ti a*) with a spine like tip. Tegular apophysis (*Te a*) longer than wide with tip rounded. The embolus (*Em*) has a very thin tip, slightly bent towards the tip of the conductor (*Co*). Female. Unknown.

Distribution. *Pterotricha kovblyuki* Zamani & Marusik, 2018 was previously known only from Iran and two regions in the United Arab Emirates. It is recorded in the current study from southern Iraq.

Discussion

The fauna of spiders in Iraq is still not sufficiently studied. Levy (1995) confirmed that the species of genus *Pterotricha* are distributed in the Middle East and North Africa. In Iraq, only two species of this genus were previously recorded: *P. arzhantsevi* Fomichev, Marusik & Koponen, 2018 by Fomichev *et al.* (2018) and *P. esyunini* Zamani, 2018 by Al-Yacoub *et al.* (2021).

In the current study, a third record of this genus is reported and the first record of *P. kovblyuki* in Iraq. It was previously diagnosed only in Iran (Zamani *et al.*, 2018) and United Arab Emirates (UAE) by Zamani (2018). Females are unknown for this species.

It is probable that many species of this genus will be diagnosed in Iraq which contains many desert and semi-arid habitats.

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