

***Pterotricha esyunini* Zamani, 2018 (Araneae: Gnaphosidae),  
a new record for Iraqi spiders**

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### **Abstract**

The spider specimens in the present study were collected from desert habitat located northwest of Thi Qar Province, south of Iraq. A new record has been made for *Pterotricha esyunini* Zamani, 2018 which has only been described from the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Illustrations of the species and a map of the specimen collecting location are provided.

**Keywords:** Araneae, Gnaphosidae, *Pterotricha esyunini*, new record, Thi Qar, Iraq.

### **Introduction**

Studies on Iraqi spiders are few compared to some neighbouring countries. But recently, a number of research papers on spiders have been published in different Provinces of this country (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2012; Al-Hadlag & Najim, 2015; Zamani & El-Hennawy, 2016; Seyyar *et al.*, 2016; Demir *et al.*, 2017; Al-Khazali & Hussein, 2019; Al-Khazali, 2020; Al-Khazali & Fomichev, 2021). Fomichev *et al.* (2018) published new data on spider fauna in Iraq, in which they recorded only 33 species.

Family Gnaphosidae Banks, 1892 is among the richest families of species of spiders in the Middle East, and the genus *Pterotricha* Kulczyński, 1903 is abundant but it is little known in Europe, where *Gnaphosa* Latreille, 1804 is abundant in the northern hemisphere (Levy, 1995). Gnaphosidae currently includes 2583 species belonging to 163

genera and there are 44 species of *Pterotricha* (Jocqué & Dippenaar-Schoeman, 2006, World Spider Catalog, 2021).

This family is characterized by its large parallel and cylindrical anterior spinnerets, greatly enlarged piriform glands spigots that have a flattened base and shaft, and a slit-like opening (Jocqué & Dippenaar-Schoeman, 2006). *Pterotricha* spiders are medium-sized gnaphosinae, 5-13 mm in body length (Levy, 1995).

## Material and Methods

Sampling was carried out from 1 to 28 February 2021 at the desert habitat, Thi Qar Province, south of Iraq (Fig. 1). Samples were surveyed from the habitat shown in Fig. (2). The specimens were preserved in 70% ethanol, and were photographed using a Nikon Z50 camera on a Krüss stereomicroscope, and then Digital images were prepared using image stacking software (Zerene stacker). Measurements are given for the segments of the legs (femur, patella, tibia, metatarsus, tarsus), and all measurements are in millimetres.

The map was created using an online web page (<http://www.simplemappr.net/>).



Fig. 1. Map of collecting location (red circle): Thi Qar Province, northwest of Al-Nasiriyah city, Al-Kata'a region.

## Taxonomy

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

*Pterotricha esyunini* Zamani, 2018 (Figs. 3-4)

*Pterotricha esyunini*: Zamani, 2018: 153-155, figs. 1c, 2b, 3b (♂).

Material Examined. 5♂♂, Al-Kata'a region, Thi Qar Province, south of IRAQ, 31°18'47"N, 45°54'12"E, 9 m a.s.l, 1-28 February 2021.

Description of Male. Habitus, dorsally and ventrally as in Fig. (3). Total length 9.5. Carapace 4.9 long, 4.5 wide. Opisthosoma 4.6 long. Leg measurements: I: 18.1 (5.5, 1.5, 3.4, 4.5, 3.2), II: 18.1 (4.8, 1.9, 3.5, 4.9, 3.0), III: 19.5 (5.3, 1.5, 3.5, 5.9, 3.3), IV: 21.0 (6.0, 1.5, 4.5, 6.0, 3.0).



Fig. 2. Collecting location, Al-Kata'a region.

There are no distinct patterns on the body, most of the areas are light brown, including carapace, labium, sternum, maxillae as well as the legs with clear spines, while the colour of fangs is dark brown. Chelicerae with a triangular serrated keel retrolaterally. The eyes are arranged in two rows and posterior median eyes are oval.

Abdomen is darker in colour than carapace with clear setae. Tarsi of legs with pseudo-segmentations. Palp as in Fig. (4). Tibia with a long, needle-shaped spur (Macroseta) located on the dorsal side, apophysis of tibia in the retrolateral view of the male palp is of a distinctive shape, extending horizontally and pointing upwards with a tooth-like terminal end.

Female. Unknown.

Distribution. *Pterotricha esyunini* was previously known only from four regions in the United Arab Emirates, and it is recorded in the current study from southern Iraq.

## Discussion

No species of the genus *Pterotricha* was previously recorded in Iraq except the species *Pterotricha arzhansevi* Fomichev, Marusik & Koponen, 2018, which is endemic in Iraq (World Spider Catalog, 2021). In the current study, a second record of this genus is reported in Iraq by the first record of *P. esyunini*, which was previously known only in the United Arab Emirates by Zamani (2018). Females of this species are still unknown.

It is possible that future studies on *Pterotricha* may reveal the presence of other species of it because the environment of Iraq has many desert habitats, especially in southern Iraq, where the study on spiders is lacking, as Levy (1995) confirmed the presence of species of this genus in abundance in the Middle East and North Africa.

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Fig. 3. Habitus of *Pterotricha esyunini* Zamani, 2018 ♂. A. dorsal view. B. ventral view.



Fig. 4. Palp of *Pterotricha esyunini* Zamani, 2018 ♂. A. retrolateral view. B. ventral view.

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