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Faunitaxys

Revue de Faunistique, Taxonomie et Systématique morphologique et moléculaire

Volume 10
Numéro 45

Septembre 2022

ISSN : 2269 - 6016
Dépôt légal : Septembre 2022

Faunitaxys

Revue de Faunistique, Taxonomie et Systématique morphologique et moléculaire

ZooBank : http://zoobank.org/79A36B2E-F645-4F9A-AE2B-ED32CE6771CC

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Imprimée sur les presses de SPEED COPIE, 6, rue Tréfilerie, F- 42100 Saint-Etienne

Imprimé le 17 septembre 2022

Faunitaxys, **10**(**45**), 2022 : 1 – 7.
https://doi.org/10.57800/faunitaxys-10(45)

A new species of *Opisthacanthus* Peters, 1861 from the dry savannah formations of southern Madagascar (Scorpiones: Hormuridae)

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Keywords:

Scorpiones;
Hormuridae;
Opisthacanthus;
Monodopisthacanthus ;
taxonomy;
new species;
description;
morphology;
dry savannah formations;
Madagascar.

Abstract. – A new species of *Opisthacanthus* Peters, 1861, subgenus *Monodopisthacanthus* Lourenço, 2001, is described on the basis of six specimens collected in the dry savannah formations of Beraketa, Androy region, in the south of Madagascar. The new species is mainly characterized by a moderate size with a total length of 45-47 mm, a general coloration brownish with some dark variegated zones on the body and metasoma, two vestigial carinae on sternite VII, a genital operculum with an almost oval shape in female, without any incision as its base, leg tarsi with two lateral rows of spines and trichobothrium **em$_2$** distal to **em$_1$** on patella. The new taxon described here raises the number of known species for the genus *Opisthacanthus* (*Monodopisthacanthus*) in Madagascar to 14, and the total number of currently recognized species for the genus to 36.

Ythier E., 2022. – A new species of *Opisthacanthus* Peters, 1861 from the dry savannah formations of southern Madagascar (Scorpiones: Hormuridae). *Faunitaxys*, 10(45): 1 – 7.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.57800/faunitaxys-10(45)

ZooBank: http://zoobank.org/DE1F19E5-BC31-4D97-84A3-42F4815DAC23

Received: 05/09/2022 – *Revised*: 15/09/2022 – *Accepted*: 16/09/2022

Introduction

In the monograph devoted to the scorpions of Madagascar proposed by Lourenço (1996), the genus *Opisthacanthus* Peters, 1861, subgenus *Monodopisthacanthus* Lourenço, 2001 in Madagascar, was originally represented by only two species in the country, *O. madagascariensis* Kraepelin, 1894 and *O. punctulatus* Pocock, 1896, the latter having been synonymized later with *O. madagascariensis* by Lourenço & Goodman (2006). Since then, the Malagasy fauna of this genus has been the subject of several important studies including descriptions of 12 new species (Lourenço, 2001; Lourenço & Goodman, 2006, 2008; Lourenço, 2014a, b; Lourenço et al., 2016, 2018; Lourenço & Wilmé, 2019). Recent discovery in the collections of the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle de Lyon, France, of material of the genus *Opisthacanthus*, subgenus *Monodopisthacanthus* collected in the 1960s in Madagascar has resulted in the description of one more new species. The studied specimens were collected in Beraketa, Androy region, in the south of Madagascar, located in an arid plain covered by dry savannah formations. By its general morphology, the new species seems to be associated with *O. lucienneae* Lourenço & Goodman, 2006 which is known from dry forests and spiny bush of the extreme south and south-east of Madagascar, but both species can be distinguished by a number of characters. The new species is also compared with the two other known species inhabiting dry to semi-dry formations in the south-west of Madagascar, *O. madagascariensis* Kraepelin, 1894 and *O. maculatus* Lourenço & Goodman, 2006. This new taxon represents the 14th described species among the currently recognized species for the genus *Opisthacanthus* (*Monodopisthacanthus*) in Madagascar. Maps of the known geographic distribution of the Malagasy species of *Opisthacanthus* are included in this paper.

Methods

Illustrations and measurements were made using a Motic SMS-1716 stereo-microscope with an ocular micrometer, together with a digital camera Tucsen HD Lite, a Canon EOS 7D camera and a Wacom Intuos drawing tablet. Maps were made using maps-for-free.com and Adobe Photoshop software. Measurements follow Stahnke (1970) and are given in mm. Trichobothrial notations follow Vachon (1974) and morphological terminology mostly follows Hjelle (1990). Type material studied herein is deposited in the MHNL (Musée d'Histoire Naturelle de Lyon (Musée des Confluences), CCEC, Lyon, France).

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Composition of the genus *Opisthacanthus* Peters, 1861, subgenus *Monodopisthacanthus* Lourenço, 2001 in Madagascar (in order of description)

- *O. madagascariensis* Kraepelin, 1894
- *O. darainensis* Lourenço & Goodman, 2006
- *O. lucienneae* Lourenço & Goodman, 2006
- *O. maculatus* Lourenço & Goodman, 2006
- *O. piceus* Lourenço & Goodman, 2006
- *O. milloti* Lourenço & Goodman, 2008
- *O. pauliani* Lourenço & Goodman, 2008
- *O. ambanja* Lourenço, 2014
- *O. andohahela* Lourenço, 2014
- *O. antsiranana* Lourenço, 2014
- *O. lavasoa* Lourenço Wilmé & Waeber, 2016
- *O. titanus* Lourenço Wilmé & Waeber, 2018
- *O. faillei* Lourenço & Wilmé, 2019
- *O. lourencoi* **sp**. **n**.

Taxonomic treatment

Family **Hormuridae** Laurie, 1896

Genus ***Opisthacanthus*** Peters, 1861

Subgenus ***Monodopisthacanthus*** Lourenço, 2001

***Opisthacanthus (Monodopisthacanthus) lourencoi* sp. n.**

(Fig. 1-10, Tab. I)

ZooBank : http://zoobank.org/87AE7069-56FC-49F5-9E4F-3AFB379D2BDC

Holotype, ♀, Madagascar, Beraketa, 21/VII/1964 (J. Poulard), deposited in the MHNL (47000909).

Paratypes (5 ex.):

- **1** ♀, **1** pre-adult ♀, **1** pre-adult ♂, Madagascar, Beraketa, 21/VII/1964 (J. Poulard), deposited in the MHNL (47000910, 47000911 and 47000914, respectively).

- **1** pre-adult ♀, **1** juvenile ♀, Madagascar, Beraketa, VIII/1962 (L. Lumaret & J.-P. Lumaret), deposited in the MHNL (47036299 and 47036298, respectively).

Etymology. – The specific name honours my colleague and mentor Dr. Wilson R. Lourenço, for his important contribution to the study of scorpions of the genus *Opisthacanthus*, as well as of the scorpion fauna of Madagascar.

Diagnosis. – Scorpion of medium size with a total length of 45-47 mm for the females. Pre-adult male has a total length of 32 mm so adult male probably reaches similar size as female. General coloration brownish with some dark variegated zones on the carapace, tergites and metasomal segments. Pectines with 7-7 teeth in both sexes. Female genital operculum with an almost oval shape, without any incision as its base. Trichobothrial pattern of type C, orthobothriotaxy; trichobothrium $\mathbf{em_2}$ distal to $\mathbf{em_1}$ on patella.

Description (based on female holotype. Measurements in Table I).

Coloration. – Basically brownish with some dark variegated zones on the carapace, tergites and metasomal segments. Carapace reddish brown with dark variegated spots; median and lateral eyes surrounded with dark pigment. Tergites reddish brown with vestigial dark variegated spots. Metasomal segments yellowish brown with dark variegated spots; vesicle yellowish; aculeus dark reddish. Chelicerae yellowish with diffuse blackish variegated spots on the whole surface; fingers yellowish with the base marked with blackish spots, teeth reddish. Pedipalps reddish brown with carinae dark brown to blackish. Venter and sternites reddish yellow. Legs yellowish brown.

Morphology. – *Prosoma*: carapace almost smooth with some minute granulations on lateral sides; the whole surface minutely punctuated; furrows shallow. Anterior margin with a strong concavity almost reaching the level of the third lateral eye.

Fig. 1-2. *Opisthacanthus lourencoi* **sp. n.**, ♀, holotype, habitus (dried specimen).
1. Dorsal aspect. **2**. Ventral aspect.

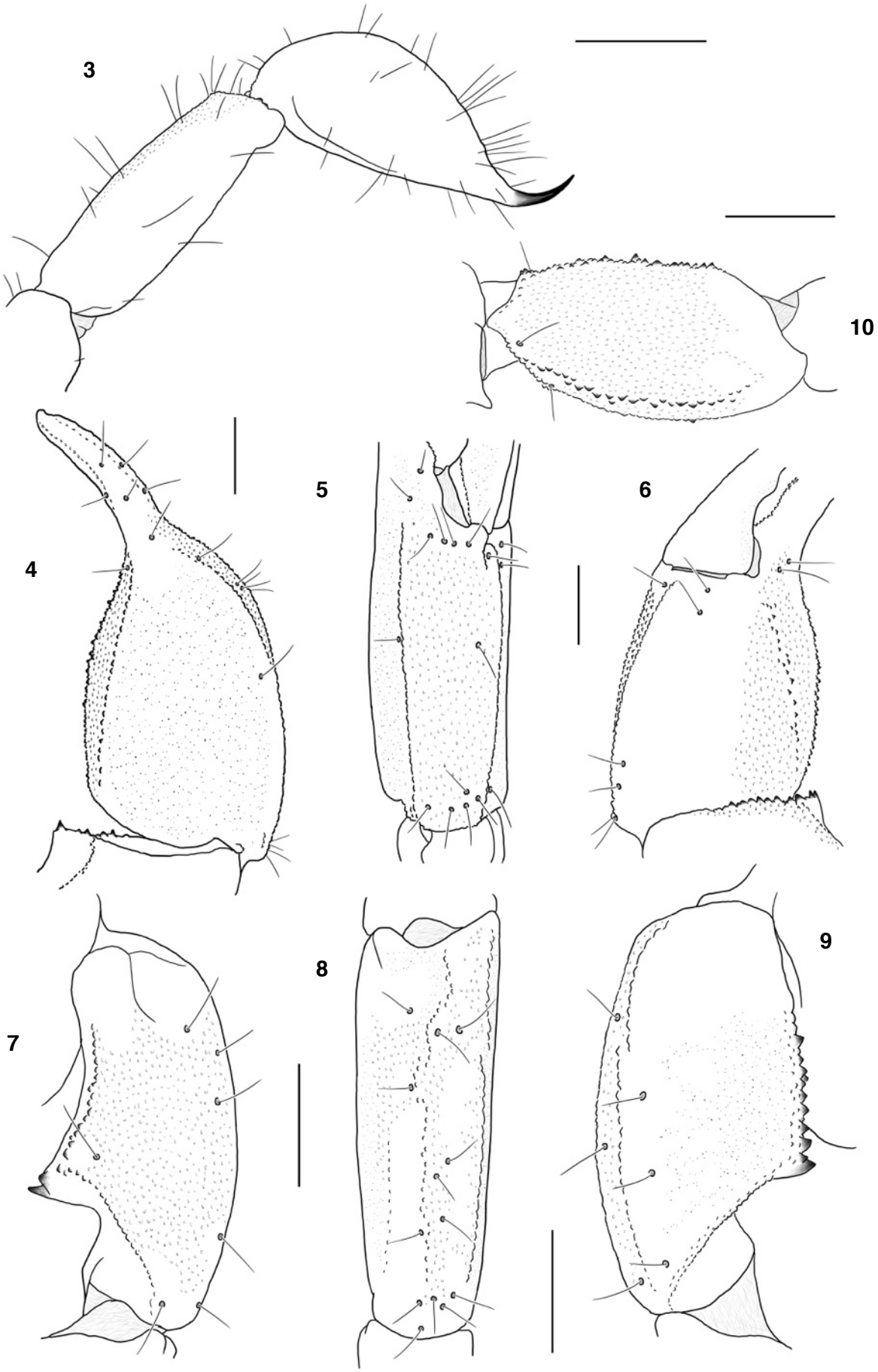

Fig. **3 - 10**. *Opisthacanthus lourencoi* **sp**. **n**., ♀ holotype (Scale bars = 2 mm).

3. Metasomal segment V and telson, lateral aspect. **4-10**. Trichobothrial pattern. **4-6**. Chela. **4**. dorsal. **5**. external. **6**. ventral. **7-9**. Patella. **7**. dorsal. **8**. external. **9**. ventral. **10**. Femur, dorsal.

Median ocular tubercle flattened and almost in the centre of the carapace; median eyes moderate, separated by half of one ocular diameter; three pairs of large lateral eyes. Sternum pentagonal, wider than long. Genital operculum with an almost oval shape, without any incision as its base. Tergites with only a vestigial median carina, smooth except some minute granulation on VII; lateral surface of tergites minutely punctuated. Pectinal tooth count 7-7 in female holotype. Sternites smooth and shiny, with elongated spiracles; VII with two vestigial carinae and minute punctuations on lateral sides. *Metasomal* segments I to V longer than wide, with some minute but intense granulations. All carinae weakly marked on segments I-IV; segment V rounded with some spinoid granules on the ventral surface. All segments with moderate to strong chetotaxy. Telson with a pear-like shape; smooth and covered with strong chetotaxy; aculeus moderately curved. *Pedipalps*: femur with dorsal internal, dorsal external, ventral internal and ventral external carinae strong, tuberculate; dorsal and ventral faces with thin granulation; internal and external faces moderately granulated. Patella with dorsal internal, ventral internal, ventral external and external carinae strong; other carinae less marked; dorsal, internal and external faces moderately granulated; ventral face with minute granulation and punctuation. Chela with dorsal marginal, external secondary, ventral internal and ventral median carinae strong; other carinae less marked; dorsal, internal and external faces strongly granulated; ventral face with minute granulation and punctuation. Fingers with two primary rows of denticles fused at the base. Chelicerae typical of Scorpionoidea (Vachon, 1963); teeth sharp. Trichobothriotaxy of type C; orthobothriotaxic (Vachon, 1974); trichobothrium em_2 distal to em_1 on patella. Legs: tarsi with two lateral rows of spines, surrounded by a few long setae; spurs weak to moderate. Measurements in Table I.

Relationships. – By its general morphology, *Opisthacanthus lourencoi* **sp**. **n**. shows several characters which associate it to *O. lucienneae*, a species known from dry forests and spiny bush of the extreme south and south-east of Madagascar.

The new species can however be distinguished from *O. lucienneae* notably by the following main features:

- **(i)** an overall darker coloration, reddish brown to yellowish brown (reddish yellow to yellowish in *O. lucienneae*);
- **(ii)** concavity on anterior margin of carapace deeper;
- **(iii)** two vestigial carinae on sternite VII (acarinate in *O. lucienneae*);
- **(iv)** genital operculum with an almost oval shape (slightly heart-like shaped in *O. lucienneae*);
- **(v)** femur, patella and chela more granulated;
- **(vi)** a slightly bigger overall size and some different morphometric ratios, notably a more rounded vesicle and larger chela manus (see Tab. 1);
- **(vii)** on patella, trichobothrium **em_2** distal to **em_1** (at same level in *O. lucienneae*).

O. lourencoi **sp**. **n**. can also be distinguished from the two other species inhabiting dry to semi-dry formations in the south-west of Madagascar, namely *O. madagascariensis* and *O. maculatus*, notably by the following main features:

- **(i)** an overall size smaller than *O. madagascariensis* and bigger than *O. maculatus* and some different morphometric ratios, notably a more rounded vesicle and larger chela manus (see Tab. 1);
- **(ii)** two vestigial carinae on sternite VII (acarinate in both species);
- **(iii)** genital operculum with an almost oval shape, without any incision as its base (heart-like shaped plate with a small incision at its base in both species);
- **(iv)** leg tarsi with two lateral rows of spines (three rows of spines in both species).

Distribution and ecology. – *Opisthacanthus lourencoi* **sp**. **n**. is only known from its type locality, Beraketa, in the Androy region, in the south of Madagascar (Fig. 11-12). It is located at the foot of the western part of the Ivakoany Massif, in a wide arid plain covered by dry savannah formations (Fig. 13) interspersed with sisal (*Agave sisalana*) fields. The climate is hot semi-arid (type "BSh" according to Köppen-Geiger classification) with mean temperature going from 23°C (March) to 28°C (July) and mean precipitation going from 6 mm (May) to 234 mm (January).

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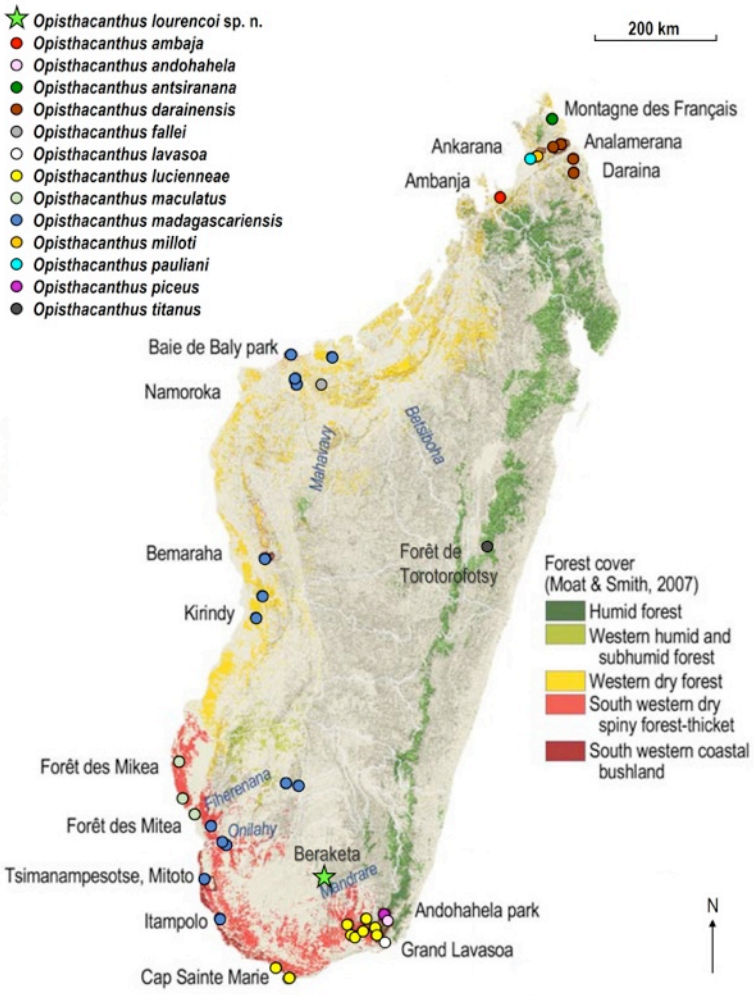

Fig. **11**. Vegetation map of Madagascar, showing the known distribution of *Opisthacanthus* species and the type locality of *Opisthacanthus lourencoi* **sp**. **n**. in Beraketa (modified from Lourenço *et al*., 2016).

Fig. **12**. Relief map of Madagascar, showing the known distribution of *Opisthacanthus* species and the type locality of *Opisthacanthus lourencoi* **sp**. **n**. in Beraketa.

Fig. **13**. Dry savannah formation in Androy region, where the type locality (Beraketa) of *Opisthacanthus lourencoi* **sp**. **n**. is located (photo © CIRAD).

Table I. Morphometric values (mm) of adult females of *Opisthacanthus lourencoi* **sp**. **n**., *O. lucienneae*, *O. maculatus* and *O. madagascariensis*.

	O. lourencoi **sp**. **n**.	*O. lucienneae*	*O. maculatus*	*O. madagascariensis*
	♀ holotype	♀ paratype	♀ paratype	♀
Total length (including telson)	47.4	42.9	35.7	68.5
Carapace:				
- Length	7.6	7.5	6.6	11.9
- Anterior width	4.8	4.8	4.1	7.5
- Posterior width	7.1	7.2	6.6	12.0
Metasomal segment I:				
- Length	2.1	2.3	2.2	3.8
- Width	1.7	1.9	1.6	2.8
Metasomal segment V:				
- Length	4.2	4.7	4.0	6.8
- Width	1.3	1.4	1.2	1.9
- Depth	1.4	1.5	1.3	2.2
Telson length:	5.2	5.9	4.4	6.9
Vesicle:				
- Width	1.7	1.7	1.2	2.1
- Depth	1.9	2.0	1.4	2.5
Pedipalp:				
- Femur length	6.0	6.6	5.6	11.9
- Femur width	2.9	2.9	2.6	5.2
- Patella length	6.7	6.8	5.8	11.0
- Patella width	3.4	2.7	2.6	4.9
- Chela length	12.5	13.2	10.8	22.1
- Chela width	5.4	5.1	4.1	7.5
- Chela depth	3.0	3.2	2.9	6.5
- Movable finger length	6.6	6.9	4.8	11.2
Morphometric ratios:				
- Metasomal segment I length/width	1.24	1.21	1.38	1.36
- Metasomal segment V length/width	3.23	3.36	3.33	3.58
- Metasomal segment V length/depth	3.00	3.13	3.08	3.09
- Telson length/width	3.06	3.47	3.67	3.29
- Telson length/depth	2.73	2.95	3.14	2.76
- Chela length/width	2.31	2.59	2.63	2.95
- Chela length/depth	4.17	4.13	3.72	3.40
- Chela length / Movable finger length	1.89	1.91	2.25	1.97

Résumé

Ythier E., 2022. – Une nouvelle espèce d'*Opisthacanthus* Peters, 1861 des savanes sèches du sud de Madagascar (Scorpiones: Hormuridae). *Faunitaxys*, 10(45) : 1 – 7.

Une nouvelle espèce appartenant au genre *Opisthacanthus* Peters, 1861, sous-genre *Monodopisthacanthus* Lourenço, 2001, est décrite sur la base de six spécimens collectés dans les savanes sèches de Beraketa, région de l'Androy, dans le sud de Madagascar. La nouvelle espèce est principalement caractérisée par sa taille moyenne avec une longueur totale de 45-47 mm, une coloration générale brunâtre avec quelques tâches plus foncées sur le corps et le metasoma, deux carènes vestigiales sur le sternite VII, un opercule génital femelle de forme presque ovale, sans incision à sa base, les tarses des pattes avec deux rangées d'épines et la trichobothrie **em$_2$** distale par rapport à **em$_1$** sur la patella. Ce nouveau taxon représente la 14ème espèce d'*Opisthacanthus* (*Monodopisthacanthus*) décrite à Madagascar, et porte à 36 le nombre total d'espèces d'*Opisthacanthus* actuellement reconnues.

Mots-clés. – Scorpiones, Hormuridae, *Opisthacanthus*, *Monodopisthacanthus*, taxonomie, nouvelle espèce, description, morphologie, savanes sèches, Madagascar.

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Illustration de la couverture :

Segment V du metasoma et telson d'*Opisthacanthus lourencoi* **sp**. **n**.

Crédits photos:

Eric Ythier : Fig. 1-10, 11 (modified from Lourenço *et al*., 2016), 12 & couverture.

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https://madagascar.cirad.fr/actualites/lancement-du-programme-afafi-sud-appui-au-financement-de-l-agriculture-et-aux-filieres-inclusives

Publié par l'Association Française de Cartographie de la Faune et de la Flore (AFCFF)