

Description of a new species of the genus *Hottentotta* Birula, 1908 (Scorpiones: Buthidae) from Iraq

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Abstract. A new species of scorpion, *Hottentotta mesopotamicus* sp. n. (Buthidae), is described. The type material was collected in the area of Zakhu in the northern region of Iraq. The new species is partly associated with other large species of the genus such as *Hottentotta saulcyi* (Simon, 1880).

Kurzfassung. Aus dem Irak wird eine neue Skorpionart beschrieben: *Hottentotta mesopotamicus* sp. n. (Buthidae). Das Typus-Material wurde im Gebiet von Zakhu im Nord-Irak gesammelt. Die neue Art ist teilweise eng verwandt mit anderen großen Arten derselben Gattung und steht *Hottentotta saulcyi* (Simon, 1880) besonders nahe.

Key words. Scorpion, new species, *Hottentotta mesopotamicus* sp. n., Iraq, Middle East.

Introduction

The work of VACHON on the taxonomy of North African scorpions with its focus on the family Buthidae, which started in the 1940s, led to a subdivision into about 10 genera of what was until then the genus *Buthus* Leach. One of these genera proposed by VACHON (1949) was *Buthotus*. This comprised the majority of species in the old subgenus *Hottentotta* Birula, 1908 (VACHON & STOCKMANN 1968). However, KRAEPELIN (1891) was the first to distinguish a *hottentotta* species-group within the genus *Buthus*. Most of the species within it were allied to *Buthus hottentotta* (Fabricius). Subsequently, BIRULA (1908) created the subgenus *Hottentotta*, but without explaining his motive. VACHON (1949) disregarded both *Hottentotta* Birula and *Dasyscorpio* Pallary, and established a new name, *Buthotus*. *Hottentotta* is, however, a valid senior synonym for *Buthotus* and was re-established by FRANCKE (1985). Other valid subgenera in addition to the nominotypical *Hottentotta* are *Balfourianus* which was described by VACHON (1979) to include the species *Hottentotta socotrensis* (Pocock), which is endemic to the Island of Socotra, and *Deccanobuthus*, described by LOURENÇO (2000) for the species *Hottentotta (Deccanobuthus) geffardi* from India.

The precise composition of the genus *Hottentotta* remains undecided. VACHON & STOCKMANN (1968) and VACHON & KINZELBACH (1987) suggested that the African, Saharo-Sindian and Indian lineages might be different. In fact, several species thought to belong to the Indian lineage are currently placed in the genus *Mesobuthus* Vachon, 1950 but, according to FET & LOWE (2000), their status remains uncertain.

Some of the large-sized species of *Hottentotta* of the Middle East were first described from Iraq or have been confirmed from there subsequently. *Hottentotta saulcyi* (Simon, 1880) was described from Mosul in the north of the country, whilst *H. scaber* (Ehrenberg, 1828) and *H. schach* (Birula, 1905) have also been recorded from Iraq (VACHON 1966, FET