

BOOK REVIEW**SWEDISH ARANEAE, PART 1, FAMILIES ATYPIDAE TO HAHNIIDAE (LINYPHIIDAE EXCLUDED).**by **Sven Almquist**

284 pages, 262 plates of greyscale figures, 199 maps, 24.2 x 20.5 cm. Soft-cover. *Insect Systematics & Evolution*, Supplement no 62, 2005; in English. Available from Scandinavian Entomology, Paronvagen 19, S-224 56 Lund, Sweden; e-mail: Lennart.Cederholm@zool.lu.se; Tel./Fax +46(0) 46-51823; cost 50 US\$ plus postage. Further details at: www.botmus.lu.se/Zoomus/ZooDoc/Publ/Publ.html

International arachnological communities can welcome a substantial new book on Swedish spiders published in the series of supplements to the journal *Insect Systematics & Evolution*. According to Kronstedt [Checklist of spiders (Araneae) in Sweden, version 2001-02-15; online at <http://www2.nrm.se/en/spindlar.html>] the Swedish spider fauna consists of 704 valid species. It can be considered well-studied and even familiar to European readers, largely thanks to the three famous books by Albert Tullgren (1944 and 1946) and Åke Holm (1947), all published in Swedish. The new work is the first part of a three-volume, comprehensive guide to Swedish spiders and will consider approximately 720 species in total (as mentioned on p. 13). This book combines the highest standards of classical arachnological publications with most of the recent nomenclatorial corrections and is devoted to the 18 families from Atypidae to Hahniidae; the order of families follows Merrett and Murphy (2000). The second part of this guide will appear in 2006 and will include the families Dictynidae to Salticidae, plus the references for volumes 1 & 2. The third volume will be devoted to Linyphiidae and is likely to be published in 2007.

The volume reviewed here is divided into three main sections. The first one (pp. 3–12) contains a checklist of Swedish spiders with no comments or any sort of discussion. The entire list numbers 714 species (counted by DL), of which 418 are numbered because they have been, or will be included in volumes 1 & 2. The present volume contains 199 spider species, with each having a reference to the page where it appears in the text, which is quite convenient.

The second section (pp. 13–26) provides a brief account of spider morphology and biology and an illustrated, nicely prepared key to families. Page 25 contains a map and details of Swedish landscapes used in the text to display the distribution of all the treated species in Sweden (199 small text maps altogether). Most of the morphological terms used for taxonomic descriptions are abbreviated and a list of acronyms is given on pages 25–26. However, the introductory section contains no information about collecting and preserving spiders, and it is unclear

whether this information will be included in one of the subsequent volumes or if it has just been neglected.

The third section is the largest (pp. 27–279), giving a detailed taxonomic account of all the species included. Every family is provided with a detailed family ‘Diagnosis’ followed by a ‘Key to genera’; similarly, every genus (and each species group, when necessary) is also diagnosed and accompanied by a ‘Key to the species’. Every species is treated according to the following plan: reference list; brief descriptions of both sexes; distribution (general and within Sweden, with a map); habitat; and available biological data. Habitat and biology sections refer not only to the Swedish data, but also to a lot of papers by European authors. Every species is well illustrated by grey-scale figures of the copulatory organs and general appearance. For some reason, the right palps were illustrated, rather than the left ones, as is the more commonly accepted practice. All the author’s illustrations are original (as noted on p. 24) and most of them appear quite reliable (I tested some of them while I was dealing with a small spider collection from Spike Island, UK). Morphological features (e.g. sclerites of the copulatory organs and somatic structures used for identification) are properly marked on all the figures, which makes the entire identification guide much easier to use for beginners. Reference lists are by no means complete, but all include a reference to the original description of each species. As there are no explanations as to what the author’s intentions were here, I suspect that the reference lists include only those earlier publications that are most useful for species identification. All taxonomic descriptions and keys are written clearly and concisely; in my opinion, credit should be given to Peter Merrett (Dorset, UK) who carefully edited the entire text and figures.

The volume ends with ‘Acknowledgements’ (p. 281) and an index to taxa treated in it (pp. 282–284). This book does not contain a list of references; as explained earlier, these will be published in volume 2.

In conclusion, this volume has made a very good impression on me, and I wish to congratulate the author, Sven Almquist, for such fine work. When the remaining two volumes have been published, the whole set will, beyond doubt constitute a reliable source of taxonomic information, not only on Swedish spiders, but also for Scandinavian and northern European spiders in general. In addition, the volume is good value for money. I highly recommend this book to both amateur and professional arachnologists alike.

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