

On the placement and affiliations of the *Drassodes* species described from sub-Saharan Africa (Aranei: Gnaphosidae)

О таксономическом положении видов рода *Drassodes*, описанных из Африки к югу от Сахары (Aranei: Gnaphosidae)

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КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: Афротропическое царство, пауки гнафозиды, новая комбинация, Палеарктика.

ABSTRACT. The taxonomic status of the members of *Drassodes* Westring, 1851 in sub-Saharan Africa is reviewed. Eighteen species are transferred to *Haplodrassus* Chamberlin, 1922 and one to *Odontodrassus* Jézéquel, 1965, with the following new combinations: *H. bechuanicus* (Tucker, 1923) comb.n., *H. caffrerianus* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n., *H. calceatus* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n., *H. dregei* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n., *O. ereptor* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n., *H. gilvus* (Tullgren, 1910) comb.n., *H. gooldi* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n., *H. helenae* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n., *H. kibonotensis* (Tullgren, 1910) comb.n., *H. lophognathus* (Purcell, 1907), *H. lyratus* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n., *H. lyriger* (Simon, 1909) comb.n., *H. masculus* (Tucker, 1923) comb.n., *H. sesquidentatus* (Purcell, 1908) comb.n., *H. solitarius* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n., *H. splendens* (Tucker, 1923) comb.n., *H. stationis* (Tucker, 1923) comb.n., *H. tessellatus* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n. and *H. tortuosus* (Tucker, 1923) comb.n.. Four species retained in *Drassodes*, *D. braendegaardi* Caporiacco, 1949, *D. falciger* Jézéquel, 1965, *D. imbecillus* (L. Koch, 1875) and *D. sternatus* Strand, 1906, are clearly related to the generotype, whereas two others retained in the genus were poorly described and their affiliations are uncertain; *D. malagassicus* (Butler, 1880) and *D. simplicivulvus* Caporiacco, 1940 are thus considered *species inquirenda*. *Drassodes carinatus* Strand, 1906, described from Ethiopia and currently considered a junior synonym of the Palearctic *H. dalmatensis* (L. Koch, 1866), is the only species with a distribution spanning both biogeographical realms. *Drassodes maillardi* (Vinson, 1863) from the Reunion Island most likely belongs to *Xerophaeus* Purcell, 1907 and could potentially be a senior synonym of *X. oceanicus* Schmidt et Jocqué, 1983, the only other gnaphosid species known from the island.

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РЕЗЮМЕ. Пересмотрен таксономический статус пауков рода *Drassodes* Westring, 1851 описанных в Афротропическом регионе. Восемнадцать видов переведены в род *Haplodrassus* Chamberlin, 1922 и один в *Odontodrassus* Jézéquel, 1965. Установлены следующие новые комбинации: *H. bechuanicus* (Tucker, 1923) comb.n., *H. caffrerianus* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n., *H. calceatus* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n., *H. dregei* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n., *O. ereptor* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n., *H. gilvus* (Tullgren, 1910) comb.n., *H. gooldi* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n., *H. helenae* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n., *H. kibonotensis* (Tullgren, 1910) comb.n., *H. lophognathus* (Purcell, 1907), *H. lyratus* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n., *H. lyriger* (Simon, 1909) comb.n., *H. masculus* (Tucker, 1923) comb.n., *H. sesquidentatus* (Purcell, 1908) comb.n., *H. solitarius* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n., *H. splendens* (Tucker, 1923) comb.n., *H. stationis* (Tucker, 1923) comb.n., *H. tessellatus* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n. и *H. tortuosus* (Tucker, 1923) comb.n.. Четыре вида оставлены в роде *Drassodes*, а именно *D. braendegaardi* Caporiacco, 1949, *D. falciger* Jézéquel, 1965, *D. imbecillus* (L. Koch, 1875) и *D. sternatus* Strand, 1906, поскольку имеют копулятивные органы сходные с таковыми у типового вида. Еще два вида оставлены в роде *Drassodes*, поскольку описания этих видов не позволяют судить об их принадлежности: *D. malagassicus* (Butler, 1880) и *D. simplicivulvus* Caporiacco, 1940 и мы их считаем *species inquirenda*. *Drassodes carinatus* Strand, 1906, описанный из Эфиопии, и считающийся младшим синонимом западно-палеарктического вида *H. dalmatensis* (L. Koch, 1866) — единственный вид рода, который встречается в двух зоогеографических

царствах. *Drassodes maillardi* (Vinson, 1863), описанный с о. Реюньон, вероятно относится к роду *Xerophaeus* Purcell, 1907 и потенциально является старшим синонимом *X. oceanicus* Schmidt et Josqué, 1983, который тоже описан с о. Реюньон.

Introduction

Drassodes Westring, 1851 is the second largest genus in Gnaphosidae with 180 named species (27 considered as *nomina dubia*) and is only surpassed in richness by *Zelotes* Gistel, 1848 (435 species including *nomina dubia*). According to the WSC [2025], the genus is reported from all the zoogeographical realms except Australasia. Only three species have been recorded from the Neotropical realm, all known only from the original descriptions that lack figures and are almost certainly misplaced. *Drassodes* was and still remains a waste basket for light-coloured Gnaphosidae. To date, over 130 species originally placed in *Drassodes* have been transferred to other genera [Bonnet, 1956; WSC, 2025].

So far, 30 species (five of them are considered as *nomina dubia*) placed in *Drassodes* have been recorded in Africa south of the Sahara [WSC, 2025]. Of them, 16 have been documented from South Africa and surveyed by Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.* [2021]. While studying the figures published in this survey, YM recognized that none of them correspond to the generotype, *Drassodes lapidosus* (Walckenaer, 1802), but rather, that the majority of the South African species currently placed in *Drassodes* belong to *Haplodrassus* Chamberlin, 1922. It is worth noting that 23 species that had been described in *Drassodes* Walckenaer, 1805 or *Drassodes* prior to the mid-20th century have been subsequently transferred to *Haplodrassus*. Currently only one *Haplodrassus* species is known in Africa south of Sahara, *H. dalmatensis* (L. Koch, 1866), but this fact is not reflected in WSC [2025]. *Drassodes carinatus* Strand, 1906 was described from Ethiopia and recently synonymized with *H. dalmatensis*, a widespread West Palaearctic species [Chatzopoulou, Chatzaki, 2009].

The aim of this paper is to provide comments on all the *Drassodes* species reported in sub-Saharan Africa and propose new transfers to resolve their taxonomic placement.

Methods

Male and female specimens of *Drassodes ereptor* Purcell, 1907 were examined in 70% ethanol under a Nikon SMZ800 stereomicroscope and digital images were taken using a coupled Nikon DS-L3 camera system. A series of photos of the habitus and copulatory organs were taken and stacked using CombineZM software [Bercovici *et al.*, 2009]. Other photos were obtained using an Olympus Camedia E-520 camera attached to an Olympus SZX16 stereomicroscope in the Zoological Museum of the University of Turku. Digital images of different focal planes were stacked with Helicon Focus 8.1.1.

Taxonomy

REMARKS. All species known from southern Africa have copulatory organs different from these known in *Drassodes*

sensu stricto. Epigynes of some species are not illustrated in detail and all are missing figures of the internal structure (e.g. Purcell [1907]; Tucker [1923]). We are tentatively placing some of species in *Haplodrassus* because their epigynes are somewhat similar to those of the Holarctic species of the genus. However, some of these species could potentially be placed in other genera when their males are discovered and described. Furthermore, numerous southern African *Drassodes* species were described from a single sex only, so could potentially be synonymous, but resolving this issue is beyond the scope of the present study.

Type species:

Drassodes Westring, 1851: *Aranea lapidosa* Walckenaer, 1802 (= *Drassodes lapidosus* (Walckenaer, 1802)).

Haplodrassus Emerton, 1909: *Haplodrassus hiemalis* Emerton, 1909 (considered as junior synonym of *H. stuxbergi* (L. Koch, 1879)).

KEY TO THE GENERA *DRASSODES* AND *HAPLODRASSUS*

1. Males 2
 - Females 3
2. Embolus (*Em*) thin, stick- or thread-like; embolic apophysis absent; subtegulum (*St*) located antero-prolaterally; cymbium with conical tip; RTA spine-like, trunk-like or absent (Fig. 2A, B, E) *Drassodes*
 - Embolus (*Em*) flat; embolic apophysis (*Ea*) present; subtegulum (*St*) located postero-prolaterally; cymbium rounded; RTA flat, often broadest terminally (Fig. 1A–D) *Haplodrassus*
3. Each receptacle (*Re*) subdivided in two parts; anterior part extending beyond fovea; epigyne with distinct rounded shallow lateral pocket (*Lp*) and with kind of septum or median plate (*Mp*); anterior hood absent (Fig. 2C, D, F–H) *Drassodes*
 - Receptacles globular, located posteriorly; lateral pockets deep, forming U-shaped figure; some species with anterior hood or wrinkled region anteriorly from fovea (*Fo*, Fig. 1E–F) *Haplodrassus*

SOUTH AFRICAN SPECIES

Haplodrassus bechuanicus (Tucker, 1923) comb.n.

Drassodes bechuanicus Tucker, 1923: 306, pl. 10, fig. 33 (♀).

Drassodes bechuanicus: Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021: 58, 4 figs. (♀).

COMMENTS. This species is known from four provinces in South Africa, as well as from Botswana and Namibia [Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021, 2023] but only has two taxonomic entries. Judging from the U-shaped epigynal atrium, it does not belong to *Drassodes* but to *Haplodrassus*; therefore, we propose a new combination.

Haplodrassus caffrerianus (Purcell, 1907) comb.n.

Drassodes caffrerianus Purcell, 1907: 308, pl. 13, fig. 10 (♂).

Drassodes caffrerianus: Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021: 59, 1 fig. (♂).

COMMENTS. This species was considered in two publications and is only known from the male, which was collected in the Eastern Cape, South Africa [Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021, 2023]. Judging from the published figure of the palp, showing a broad embolus and the presence of an embolic apophysis, this species undoubtedly belongs to *Haplodrassus* and is hereby transferred to this genus.

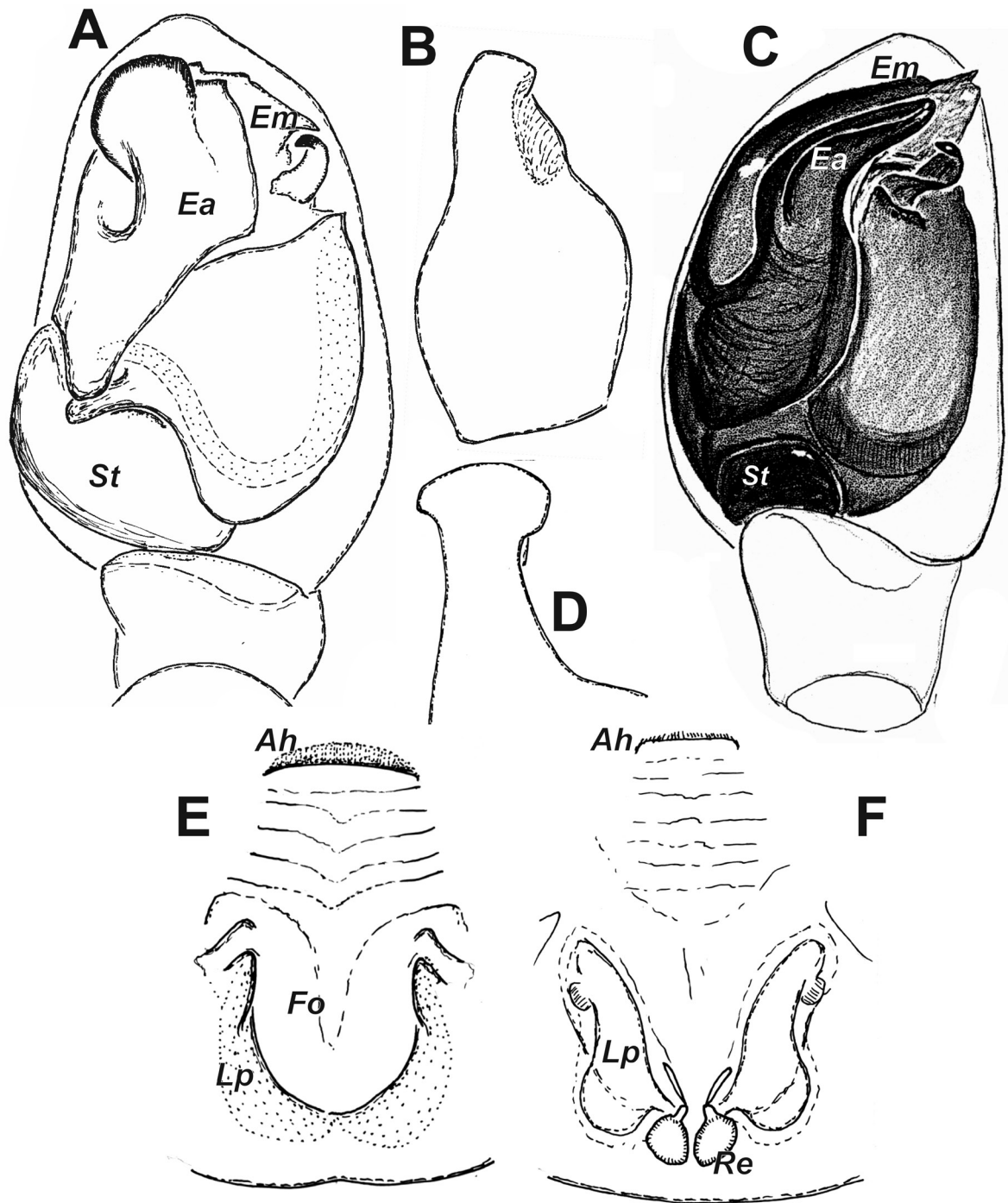


Fig. 1. Copulatory organs in *Haplodrassus stuxbergi*, the type species (A–B, E), *H. signifier* (C–D) and *H. moderatus* (F). A, C — male palp, ventral; B — male palpal tibia, subdorsal; D — tibial apophysis, subdorsal; E–F — epigyne, ventral and dorsal. Abbreviations: *Ah* — anterior hood, *Ea* — embolic apophysis, *Em* — embolus, *Fo* — fovea, *Lp* — lateral pocket, *Re* — receptacle, *St* — subtegulum.

Рис. 1. Копулятивные органы *Haplodrassus stuxbergi* (типовой вид, А–В, Е), *H. signifier* (С–D) и *H. moderatus* (F). А, С — палпа самца, снизу; В — голень пальпы самца, полу-сверху; D — отросток голени, полу-сверху; Е–F — эпигина, снизу и сверху. Сокращения: *Ah* — передний карман, *Ea* — отросток эмболоса, *Em* — эмболос, *Fo* — ямка, *Lp* — боковой карман, *Re* — рецептакула, *St* — субтегулюм.

***Haplodrassus calceatus* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n.**

Drassodes calceatus Purcell, 1907: 309, pl. 13, fig. 11 (♀).

Drassodes calceatus: Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021: 60, 1 fig. (♀).

COMMENTS. This species was considered in two publications and is only known from the female and has thus far only been collected in the Western Cape, South Africa [Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021, 2023]. The illustration of the epigyne indicates that species undoubtedly belongs to *Haplodrassus*, and it is therefore transferred to this genus.

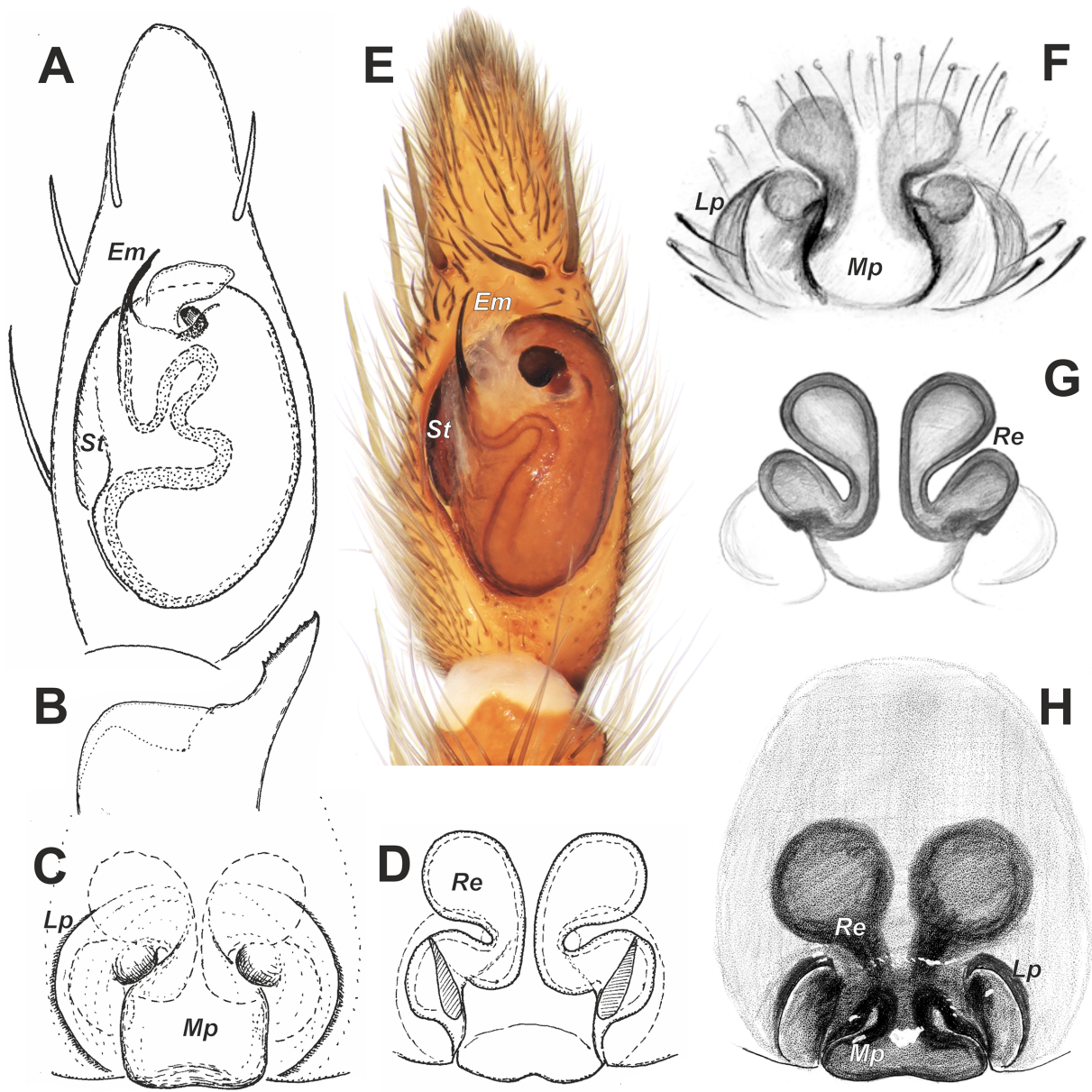


Fig. 2. Copulatory organs of *Drassodes pseudolesserti* (A–B), *D. lesserti* (C–D), *D. chybyndensis* (E), *D. lapidosus*, the type species (F–G) and *D. serratidens* (H). F–G — courtesy of Harald Løvbrekke. Abbreviations: *Em* — embolus, *Lp* — lateral pocket, *Mp* — median plate, *Re* — receptacle, *St* — subtegulum.

Рис. 2. Копулятивные органы *Drassodes pseudolesserti* (A–B), *D. lesserti* (C–D), *D. chybyndensis* (E), *D. lapidosus* (типовой вид, F–G) и *D. serratidens* (H). F–G — с разрешения Harald Løvbrekke. Сокращения: *Em* — эмболиус, *Lp* — боковой карман, *Mp* — медиальная пластинка, *Re* — рецептакула, *St* — субтегулум.

Haplodrassus dregei (Purcell, 1907) comb.n.

Drassodes dregei Purcell, 1907: 310, pl. 13, fig. 15 (♀).

Drassodes dregei: Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021: 61, 1 fig. (♀).

COMMENTS. This species is known from the southern part of the Eastern Cape, South Africa [Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021, 2023]. The illustration of the epigyne in the original description indicates that it has a U-shaped fovea, although the epigyne is asymmetrical in the anterior half, suggesting that it may be partially obscured by a mating plug. Purcell [1907] indicates it “closely resembling *D. lophognathus*” and the species is therefore transferred to *Haplodrassus*.

Odontodrassus ereptor (Purcell, 1907) comb.n.

Fig. 3.

Drassodes ereptor Purcell, 1907: 310, pl. 13, figs 16–17 (♂♀).

Drassodes ereptor: Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021: 62, 7 figs (♂♀).

COMMENTS. As in the aforementioned *Drassodes*, this species has only been treated in two taxonomic publications, although it is widespread across South Africa, occurring in six provinces [Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021, 2023]. The copulatory organs of this species are similar to those in the type species, *O. nigriritibialis* Jézéquel, 1965, and *O. aphanes* (Thorell, 1897), particularly the origins and path of the embolus, pear-shaped tegulum, large subtriangular conductor and

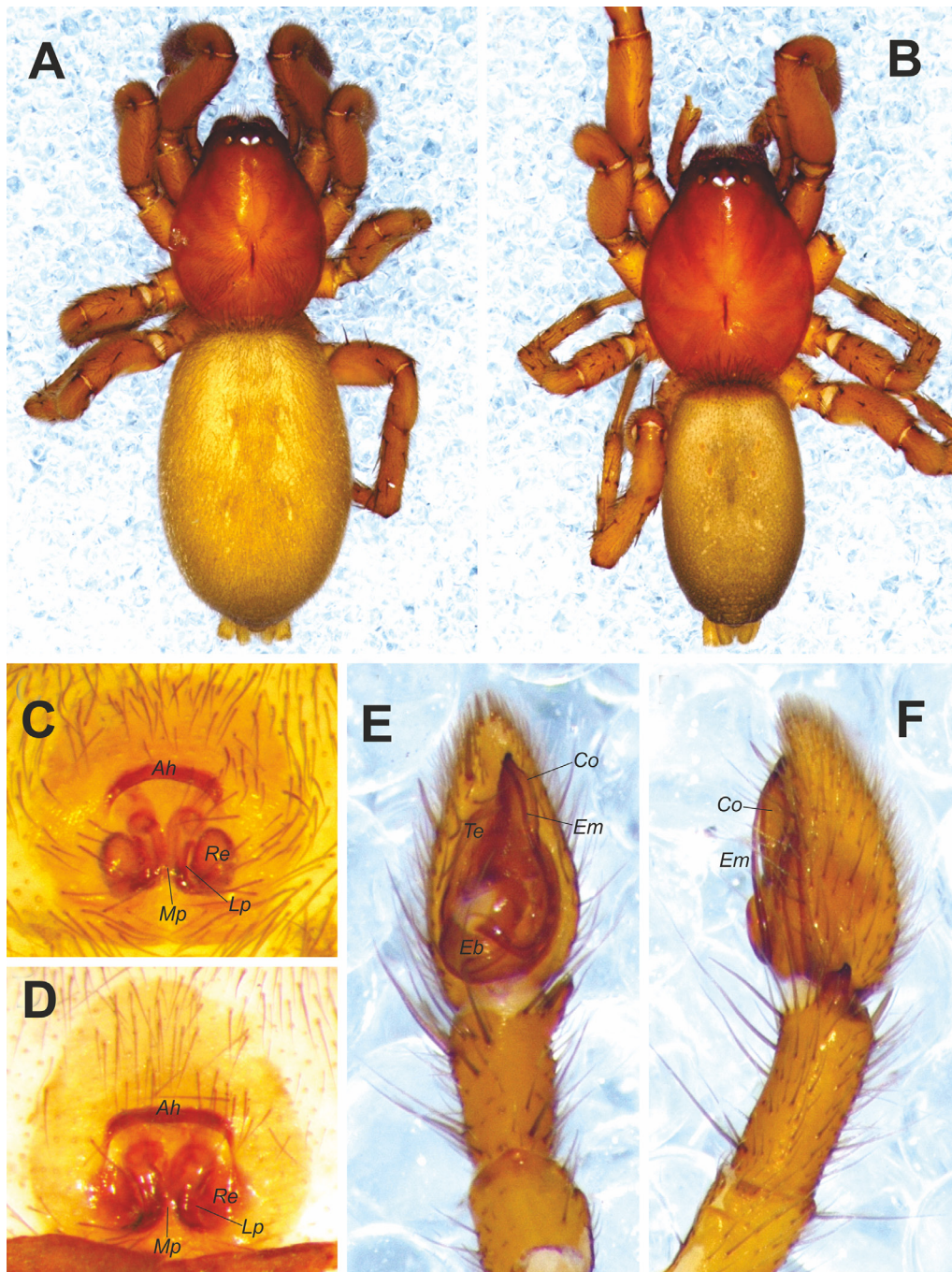


Fig. 3. Habitus and copulatory organs of *Odontodrassus ereptor* from Ndumo Game Reserve (A–C, E, F) and Richtersveld National Park (D). A–B — female and male habitus, dorsal; C–D — epigyne, ventral; E — male palp, ventral; F — male palp, retrolateral. Abbreviations: *Ah* — anterior hood, *Co* — conductor, *Eb* — embolar base, *Em* — embolus, *Lp* — lateral pocket, *Mp* — median plate, *Re* — receptacle, *Te* — tegulum.

Рис. 3. Внешний вид и копулятивные органы *Odontodrassus ereptor* из Ndumo Game Reserve (A–C, E, F) и Richtersveld National Park (D). A–B — внешний вид самки и самца, сверху; C–D — эпигина, снизу; E — пальпа самца, снизу; F — пальпа самца, ретролатерально. Сокращения: *Ah* — передний карман, *Co* — кондуктор, *Eb* — основание эмболюса, *Em* — эмболюс, *Lp* — боковой карман, *Mp* — медиальная пластинка, *Re* — рецептакула, *Te* — тегулом.

the shape of the RTA in males, and the presence of an anterior hood and curved longitudinal atria laterally in the epigyne (cf. Fig. 3 with these in Jézéquel [1965] and Platnick [1981]). It is therefore transferred to this genus.

***Haplodrassus gooldi* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n.**

Drassodes gooldi Purcell, 1907: 309, pl. 13, fig. 12 (♀).

Drassodes gooldi: Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021: 63, 1 fig. (♀).

COMMENTS. Like all other previously mentioned *Drassodes*, it was treated only in two taxonomic papers. It is known from a female and only from the type locality in the Western Cape, South Africa [Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021, 2023]. Judging from figure of the epigyne with a V-shaped atrium, this species undoubtedly belongs to *Haplodrassus* and is therefore transferred to it.

***Haplodrassus helenae* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n.**

Drassodes helenae Purcell, 1907: 309, pl. 13, fig. 14 (♂).

Drassodes helenae: Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021: 64, 5 figs (♂).

COMMENTS. This species was described from the Western Cape in South Africa and is only known from the male. It has been recorded from three other provinces in the western and northeastern parts of the country [Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021, 2023]. Judging from the shape of the palp, it undoubtedly belongs to *Haplodrassus* and therefore transferred there.

***Haplodrassus lophognathus* (Purcell, 1907)**

Drassodes lophognathus Purcell, 1907: 305, pl. 13, figs 4–6 (♂♀).

Drassodes lophognathus: Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021: 65: 65: 9 figs, p. 66: 1 fig. (♂♀).

COMMENTS. This species is known from both sexes and is widely distributed across South Africa, being recorded from seven of the nine provinces [Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021, 2023]. As for the other aforementioned species, it has only been treated in two taxonomic papers. The male palp and epigyne are similar to those in the genotype of *Haplodrassus*, and therefore we transfer this species from *Drassodes*.

***Haplodrassus lyratus* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n.**

Drassodes lyratus Purcell, 1907: 309, pl. 13, fig. 13 (♀).

Drassodes lyratus: Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021: 67, 1 fig. (♀).

COMMENTS. Like all other previously mentioned *Drassodes*, it was only treated in two taxonomic papers. It is only known from the female and from the type locality in the Western Cape, South Africa [Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021, 2023]. Judging from the shape of the epigyne, particularly the U-shaped atrium, it belongs to *Haplodrassus*. We therefore establish a new combination here.

***Haplodrassus masculus* (Tucker, 1923) comb.n.**

Drassodes masculus Tucker, 1923: 306, pl. 9, fig. 34 (♂).

Drassodes masculus: Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021: 68, 1 fig. (♂).

COMMENTS. This species is only known from the male and original illustration. It has been recorded from the Free State and Mpumalanga provinces in South Africa [Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021, 2023]. The presence of an embolic apophysis indicates that it belongs to *Haplodrassus*, and therefore we transfer it from *Drassodes*.

***Haplodrassus sesquidentatus* (Purcell, 1908) comb.n.**

Drassodes sesquidentatus Purcell, 1908: 235, pl. 11, figs 13–14 (♂♀).

Drassodes sesquidentatus: Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021: 69, 6 figs (♂♀).

COMMENTS. This species is known from both sexes and has only been recorded from three localities in the Northern Cape, South Africa [Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021, 2023]. Judging from the shape of the male palp and epigyne, it belongs to *Haplodrassus* and is therefore transferred to this genus.

***Haplodrassus solitarius* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n.**

Drassodes solitarius Purcell, 1907: 308, pl. 13, fig. 9 (♀).

Drassodes solitarius: Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021: 70, 4 figs (♀).

COMMENTS. Like all other previously mentioned *Drassodes*, it was only treated in two taxonomic papers. It is only

known from the female and has been recorded from across South Africa and also in Zimbabwe [Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021, 2023]. Judging from the shape of the epigyne, particularly the posteriorly broadened U-shaped atrium, it belongs to *Haplodrassus* and therefore we establish a new combination for this species.

***Haplodrassus splendens* (Tucker, 1923) comb.n.**

Drassodes splendens Tucker, 1923: 307, pl. 10, fig. 35 (♀).

Drassodes splendens: Murphy, 2007: 58, figs 478–479 (♂♀, misplaced in this genus).

Drassodes splendens: Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021: 71, p. 71: 11 figs, p. 72: 1 fig. (♀).

COMMENTS. It is a widespread South African species of *Drassodes* that was treated in three taxonomic publications. Although only the female has been described, the male was also illustrated by Murphy [2007], who indicated that the species was misplaced in *Drassodes*. It is known from across the whole of South Africa except the Eastern Cape Province and has also been recorded from Namibia, Lesotho, Botswana and Zimbabwe [Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021, 2023]. The exact shape of the epigyne and palp is consistent with a placement in *Haplodrassus*, and therefore the species is transferred to this genus.

***Haplodrassus stationis* (Tucker, 1923) comb.n.**

Drassodes stationis Tucker, 1923: 308, pl. 9, fig. 36 (♂).

Drassodes stationis: Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021: 73, 5 figs (♂♀).

COMMENTS. Like most of the species known from South Africa, it was only treated in two taxonomic publications and is known from all nine South African provinces [Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021, 2023]. The shape of the epigyne and male palp support its placement in *Haplodrassus*, and therefore we propose a transfer to this genus.

***Haplodrassus tessellatus* (Purcell, 1907) comb.n.**

Drassodes tessellatus Purcell, 1907: 307, pl. 13, figs 7–8 (♂♀).

Drassodes tessellatus: Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021: 74, 2 figs (♂♀).

COMMENTS. This species is only known from South Africa and was considered in two taxonomic publications. It has been recorded from the easternmost parts of the Northern Cape, southernmost Free State and northern Eastern Cape [Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021, 2023]. The shape of the epigyne and male palp are typical of *Haplodrassus*, and it is therefore transferred to this genus.

***Haplodrassus tortuosus* (Tucker, 1923) comb.n.**

Drassodes tortuosus Tucker, 1923: 308, pl. 10, fig. 37 (♀).

Drassodes tortuosus: Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021: 75, 1 fig. (♀).

COMMENTS. This species is only known from the female, a single original illustration of the epigyne, and the type locality in KwaZulu-Natal [Dippenaar-Schoeman *et al.*, 2021, 2023]. Judging from the original figure, its epigyne is more similar to *Haplodrassus* and has no similarity to those of *Drassodes*. Therefore, the species is transferred to *Haplodrassus*.

OTHER SUB-SAHARAN SPECIES

***Drassodes braendegaardi* Caporiacco, 1949**

Drassodes braendegaardi Caporiacco, 1949: 427, fig. 64 (♂).

COMMENTS. Described based on the holotype male from Elmenteita (CW Kenya). Judging from the figure of the palp it may belong to *Drassodes*. Caporiacco [1949] compared his new species with *D. subviduatus* Strand, 1906 described from Ethiopia without figures.

***Drassodes falciger* Jézéquel, 1965**

Drassodes falciger Jézéquel, 1965: 294, figs 1–2 (♂♀).

COMMENTS. This species is known from both sexes but has only been treated in the original publication. It was described and is only known from the Ivory Coast. Judging from the figures in the description, it is related to the genotype of *Drassodes*.

***Haplodrassus gilvus* (Tullgren, 1910) comb.n.**

Drassodes gilvus Tullgren, 1910: 104, pl. 1, fig. 14 (♀).

COMMENTS. This species is known from a female described from northern Tanzania and has one taxonomic entry. Judging from the figure of epigyne, particularly the anteriorly narrowed U-shaped atrium, it undoubtedly belongs to *Haplodrassus*, to which it is transferred here.

***Haplodrassus kibonotensis* (Tullgren, 1910) comb.n.**

Drassodes kibonotensis Tullgren, 1910: 103, pl. 1, fig. 13 (♀).

COMMENTS. This species is known from a female described from northern Tanzania and only has a single taxonomic entry. Judging from the figure of the epigyne and description of the abdominal markings, this species likely belongs to *Haplodrassus*, so its transfer is proposed here.

***Drassodes imbecillus* (L. Koch, 1875)**

Drassus imbecillus L. Koch, 1875: 52, pl. 5, fig. 6 (♀).

Drassodes imbecillus: Simon, 1909: 32 (♂).

COMMENTS. This species is only known from Ethiopia and has illustrations of the habitus and epigyne. The figure of epigyne is rather poor, although it is similar to those known in *Drassodes* and therefore we are not transferring this species. It is not clear how Simon [1909] matched the male with the poorly illustrated female. He compared his male with *D. lutescens* (C.L. Koch, 1839).

***Drassodes malagassicus* (Butler, 1880)**

Drassus malagassicus Butler, 1880: 730, pl. 58, figs 3a–c (♂).

COMMENTS. This species is known from a male collected in Madagascar and has a single taxonomic entry. Judging from the figures of the habitus, pattern and male palp, this species does not belong to Gnaphosidae. However, as the species has not been redescribed or illustrated again, details of the morphology necessary to make a definitive decision on its placement are not clear. It is clearly a very large araneomorph, with the body length in the original description given as 17 mm, so it could possibly belong to any of Corinnidae, Ctenidae, Dolomedidae, Pisauridae, Sparassidae or Viridasiidae, although the palpal morphology is inconsistent with these groups. Resolving this issue requires discovery of fresh material from the vicinity of the type locality (Antananarivo) and redescription of the species.

***Haplodrassus lyriger* (Simon, 1909) comb.n.**

Drassodes lyriger Simon, 1909: 33 (♀; N.B.: apparently omitted by Roewer).

COMMENTS. This species is only known from the original publication and lacks any illustrations. We are transferring it to *Haplodrassus* because Simon [1909] mentioned its similarity to *H. signifier* (C.L. Koch, 1839).

***Drassodes simplicivulvus* Caporiacco, 1940**

Drassodes simplicivulva Caporiacco, 1940: 835, fig. 37 (♀).

COMMENTS. This species is only known from the original description. Caporiacco [1940] did not compare this species with any others and the figure of the epigyne does not resemble any *Drassodes* or *Haplodrassus*, nor can it be reliably placed in another genus. As such, we retain it in *Drassodes* until the species can be redescribed.

***Drassodes sternatus* Strand, 1906**

Drassodes sternatus Strand, 1906: 681 (♀).

Drassodes sternatus: Strand, 1908: 17, pl. 2, fig. 3 (♀).

COMMENTS. This species is known from Ethiopia. Judging from the figure of the epigyne, it may belong to *Drassodes*.

SPECIES LISTED AS *NOMINA DUBIA* IN WSC

***Drassodes adisensis* Strand, 1906**

Drassodes adisensis Strand, 1906: 681 (♀).

COMMENTS. This species was described based on a female or juvenile and marked in the text as ♀ (?) from Ethiopia. Comparison with other species as well as illustrations are lacking, and therefore its taxonomic position remains obscure. It was considered a *nomen dubium* by Nentwig *et al.* [2020] because the types were destroyed during World War II.

***Drassodes maillardi* (Vinson, 1863)**

Drassus maillardii Vinson, 1863: 115, pl. 2, fig. 4 (♀).

COMMENTS. This species was described from Reunion Island based on a female or juvenile. The WSC [2025] does not mention two figures (4a and 4b) given by Vinson [1863], which illustrate the mouthparts and eye pattern. The genus affiliation of this species is unclear, and the author did not provide any comparison with other taxa. Considered a *nomen dubium* by Roewer [1955]. Currently, only one other gnaphosid species is known from the island, namely *Xerophaeus oceanicus* Schmidt et Jocqué, 1983 [WSC, 2025], and these two names are potential synonyms.

***Drassodes prosthesimiformis* Strand, 1906**

Drassodes prosthesimiformis Strand, 1906: 608 (♀).

COMMENTS. This species was described based on a female specimen from Ethiopia. A comparison with other species and illustrations are lacking, and therefore its taxonomic position remains obscure. Considered a *nomen dubium* by Nentwig *et al.* [2020] because the types were destroyed during World War II.

***Drassodes subviduatus* Strand, 1906**

Drassodes subviduatus Strand, 1906: 608 (♂♀).

COMMENTS. This species was described based on both sexes from Ethiopia. There is no comparison with other species, nor are there illustrations, but while describing *Drassodes sternatus*, which we consider as belonging to *Drassodes*, he compared *D. sternatus* with *D. subviduatus*. It was considered a *nomen dubium* by Nentwig *et al.* [2020] because the types

were destroyed during World War II, and we maintain this status until fresh material can be sampled and the species redescribed.

Haplodrassus vorax (Strand, 1906) comb.n.

Drassodes vorax Strand, 1906: 609 (♀).

COMMENTS. This species was described based on a female specimen from Ethiopia. Although it is considered a *nomen dubium* by Nentwig *et al.* [2020] because the types were destroyed, we transfer it to *Haplodrassus* as Strand [1906] compared it with *H. minusculus* (L. Koch, 1866) (= *H. dalmatensis* (L. Koch, 1866)).

OVERLOOKED SUB-SAHARAN HAPLODRASSUS

One species described by Strand from Ethiopia, namely *Drassodes carinatus* Strand, 1906, is listed among the synonyms of *Haplodrassus dalmatensis*.

Haplodrassus dalmatensis (L. Koch, 1866)

Drassus dalmatensis L. Koch, 1866: 89, pl. 4, fig. 59 (♀).

Drassodes carinatus Strand, 1906: 609 (♂♀).

Haplodrassus dalmatensis: Chatzopoulou, Chatzaki, 2009: 358 (S of *Drassodes carinatus*).

COMMENTS. Chatzopoulou & Chatzaki [2009] synonymised *D. carinatus*, a species described from Ethiopia with *H. dalmatensis* (L. Koch, 1866), but the occurrence of *H. dalmatensis* in Ethiopia is not reflected in WSC [2025]. The synonymization by Chatzopoulou & Chatzaki [2009] was based on the comparison of Ethiopian specimens kept in Paris, but not on study of the syntypes. It is not clear on which basis these two names were synonymized, considering that six more species of *Drassodes* were described from Ethiopia by Strand [1906] and L. Koch [1875]. Another species, considered as a *nomen dubium*, *Drassodes vorax*, was also compared with *H. dalmatensis* by Strand [1906]. If the synonymy is correct, then *H. dalmatensis* is the only *Haplodrassus* species that occurs in both the Palaearctic and Afrotropical realms.

Discussion

To summarize the taxonomic acts in this study (Table 1), all of the *Drassodes* species found in southern Africa are transferred to *Haplodrassus* (15) or *Odontodrassus* (one). Among the *Drassodes* species not occurring in southern Africa, three are transferred to *Haplodrassus*, four clearly belong to *Drassodes* and three have an uncertain position; one of them may belong to another family. Among the five *Drassodes* species considered as *nomina dubia*, two are transferred to *Haplodrassus*. *Drassodes maillardi* (Vinson, 1863) from Reunion most likely belongs to *Xerophaeus* Purcell, 1907 and could possibly be a senior synonym of *X. oceanicus*, which is the only other gnaphosid species currently known from the island. A comprehensive revision of the Afrotropical is necessary to resolve the potential synonymy of several species that were described from a single sex and to clarify the biogeography of the genus in the region.

Table 1. Summary of the taxonomic status of sub-Saharan species considered in *Drassodes* in WSC [2025] and their current combinations.

Таблица 1. Список афротропических видов рассматриваемых в *Drassodes* в WSC [2025] и их текущий статус.

<i>Drassodes</i> in WSC [2025]	Current status
<i>adisensis</i> Strand, 1906	<i>Drassodes a.</i>
<i>bechuanicus</i> Tucker, 1923	<i>Haplodrassus b.</i>
<i>braendegaardi</i> Caporiacco, 1949	<i>Drassodes b.</i>
<i>caffrerianus</i> Purcell, 1907	<i>Haplodrassus c.</i>
<i>calceatus</i> Purcell, 1907	<i>Haplodrassus c.</i>
<i>dregei</i> Purcell, 1907	<i>Haplodrassus d.</i>
<i>ereptor</i> Purcell, 1907	<i>Odontodrassus e.</i>
<i>falciger</i> Jézéquel, 1965	<i>Drassodes f.</i>
<i>gilvus</i> Tullgren, 1910	<i>Haplodrassus g.</i>
<i>gooldi</i> Purcell, 1907	<i>Haplodrassus g.</i>
<i>helenae</i> Purcell, 1907	<i>Haplodrassus h.</i>
<i>imbecillus</i> (L. Koch, 1875)	<i>Drassodes i.</i>
<i>kibonotensis</i> Tullgren, 1910	<i>Haplodrassus k.</i>
<i>lophognathus</i> Purcell, 1907	<i>Haplodrassus l.</i>
<i>lyratus</i> Purcell, 1907	<i>Haplodrassus l.</i>
<i>lyriger</i> Simon, 1909	<i>Haplodrassus l.</i>
<i>maillardii</i> (Vinson, 1863)	<i>Drassodes m.</i>
<i>malagassicus</i> (Butler, 1880)	<i>Drassodes m.</i>
<i>masculus</i> Tucker, 1923	<i>Haplodrassus m.</i>
<i>prothesimiformis</i> Strand, 1906	<i>Drassodes p.</i>
<i>sesquidentatus</i> Purcell, 1908	<i>Haplodrassus s.</i>
<i>simplicivulva</i> Caporiacco, 1940	<i>Drassodes s.</i>
<i>solitarius</i> Purcell, 1907	<i>Haplodrassus s.</i>
<i>splendens</i> Tucker, 1923	<i>Haplodrassus s.</i>
<i>stationis</i> Tucker, 1923	<i>Haplodrassus s.</i>
<i>sternatus</i> Strand, 1906	<i>Drassodes s.</i>
<i>subviduatus</i> Strand, 1906	<i>Drassodes s.</i>
<i>tesselatus</i> Purcell, 1907	<i>Haplodrassus t.</i>
<i>tortuosus</i> Tucker, 1923	<i>Haplodrassus t.</i>
<i>vorax</i> Strand, 1906	<i>Haplodrassus v.</i>

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