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Scientific note

Assessing solifuge biodiversity in Tunisia: new data on *Biton velox* Simon, 1885 and first report of the enigmatic genus *Tarabulida* Roewer, 1933

(Arachnida, Solifugae, Daesiidae)

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In Tunisia, 2 genera and 4 species of daesiids (Solifugae: Daesiidae Kraepelin, 1899) are known, mainly by single old references (Roewer 1933). Following the rediscovery of *Biton velox* Simon, 1885 at Lampedusa Island (Guariento et al. 2018) and using the same sampling techniques (except habitat-based transects), we led an expedition to neighbouring Tunisia to collect data on this species and other daesiids in the region. In addition, we examined the arachnological collection of the Tunisian Association for Wildlife (ATVS). For *Biton velox*, we report three new localities that consistently extend the known distribution in Tunisia: Meknassy (34°37'46.2"N 9°43'48.8"E, 29.IX.2018, 1♀ coll. L. A. Guariento), Haïdra (35°33'36.6"N 8°27'25.0"E, 25.V.2017, 1♂ coll. Ben Aba) and Bir Soltane (33°16'01.9"N 9°42'03.0"E, 12.I.2019, 1♀ coll. ATVS). The three specimens fully correspond to the diagnosis given by Guariento et al. (2018). Even in this case, leg IV presents three tarsomeres with 2.2/2/0 ventrolateral spiniform setae, a trait peculiar to the sub-Saharan genus *Eberlanzia* Roewer, 1941 confirming the need of a genus-level revision within Daesiidae. Nevertheless, *Biton velox* appears to be a well-characterized species. The distributional range varies from the rocky coasts to the Atlas steppes and Sahara margins of Tunisia up to 850 m a.s.l. The species is nocturnal and occurs on stony ground with sparse shrubs and almost absent grass vegetation, where it digs small burrows under pebbles.

In addition, we report a new daesiid genus for Tunisian fauna: *Tarabulida* Roewer, 1933. A single female was collected in Jebil National Park (33°04'06.3"N 9°04'40.8"E, 3.X.2019, coll. L.A. Guariento) under stones, on an isolated rocky formation in the sand desert. This enigmatic genus was only known from Libya, on few females described by Roewer (1933), and from Kenya (Reddick et al. 2010). The specimen examined interestingly matches the diagnosis of *Tarabulida mugambii* Reddick et al. 2010 with the only exception of colouration (Fig. 1). Given the geographical distance with Kenya, the different colour pattern and the lack of males for a flagellar morphology comparison, we determined it as *Tarabulida* sp. waiting for the discovery of other specimens.

Fig. 1. *Tarabulida* sp. found in Jebil National Park.

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