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A critical review of genus *Araeoncus* SIMON in Bulgaria, with description of a new species (*Araeoncus clivifrons* sp. n.) (Arachnida, Araneae, Erigonidae)

With 17 Figures

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DRENSKY (1936) reported 3 species (*Araeoncus crassiceps* WESTRING, *A. humilis* BLACKWALL, *A. prospiciens* THORELL) of the genus *Araeoncus* in Bulgaria. DELTSHEV (1980) reported a species (*Araeoncus anguineus* L. KOCH) new for the Bulgarian spider fauna. Later (DELTSHEV, 1985) the species *Araeoncus crassiceps* and *A. humilis* were rejected from the list of Pirin mountain spiders.

As a result of the present investigations included here are: the description of a new species (*Araeoncus clivifrons* sp. n.), new data concerning the distribution of *A. humilis*, the rejection of its locality (DRENSKY, 1915) near Sofia ("*Araeoncus humilis*" = *Diplocephalus graecus* O.P. CAMBRIDGE) and new pictures showing the intraspecific variability, the locality of *A. crassiceps* near Bačkovovo (DRENSKY, 1913) is deleted too ("*Araeoncus crassiceps*" = *Araeoncus* sp.), and the name is omitted from the list of Bulgarian fauna. The species *A. prospiciens* is discussed too, defined as a dubious species for Bulgaria.

Araeoncus anguineus (L. KOCH)

Araeoncus anguineus: DELTSHEV, 1980, p. 89; DELTSHEV, 1985, p. 359.

The species is known from high altitude habitats of Witoša and Pirin mountains (DELTSHEV, 1980, 1985).

New locality Strandža mountain, vill. Mladežko (380 m a. s. l.), 1 ♀, 14. VII. 1976. Amongst loose stones in limestone area. The establishing of the species in lowland region (380 m a. s. l.) indicate that it is not a strictly a high-altitude element as it considered WIEHLE (1960).

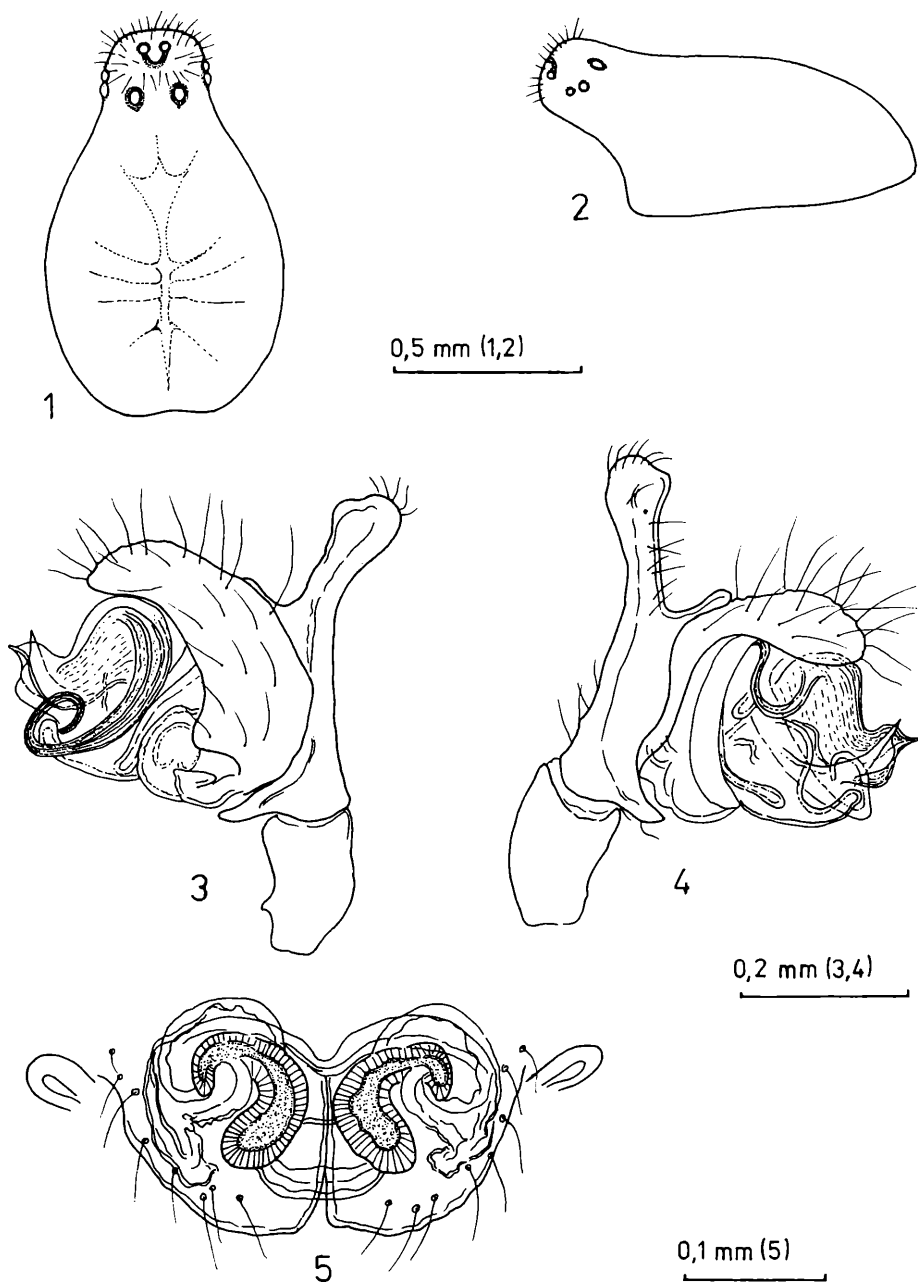
Araeoncus clivifrons sp. n.

Diagnosis The new species is close to *Araeoncus discedens* SIMON and *A. altissimus* SIMON and it is diagnosed by differences in male palps and different shape and position of receptaculum seminis by the female.

Derivatio nominis Latine, clivus and frons.

Male/female (measurements in mm) Total length — 2.10/2.12. Cephalothorax, length — 1.00/0.73, width — 0.64/0.45. Abdomen, length — 1.09/1.46. Leg I Femur — 0.60/0.64, Patella — 0.18/0.22. Tibia — 0.54/0.51, Metatarsus — 0.42/0.42, Tarsus — 0.32/0.32. Cephalothorax, brown to dark brown, with blackish striae and fovea. Male cephalothorax, whole head raised very protuberant anteriorly with steepy forehead (figs. 1, 2). Eyes (female), posterior row distant ca 1–1.5 diameter. Abdomen, grey to black. Sternum, dark-brown suffused with black. Legs yellow-brown to brown. Tibial spines by male absent, hairs short and stout.

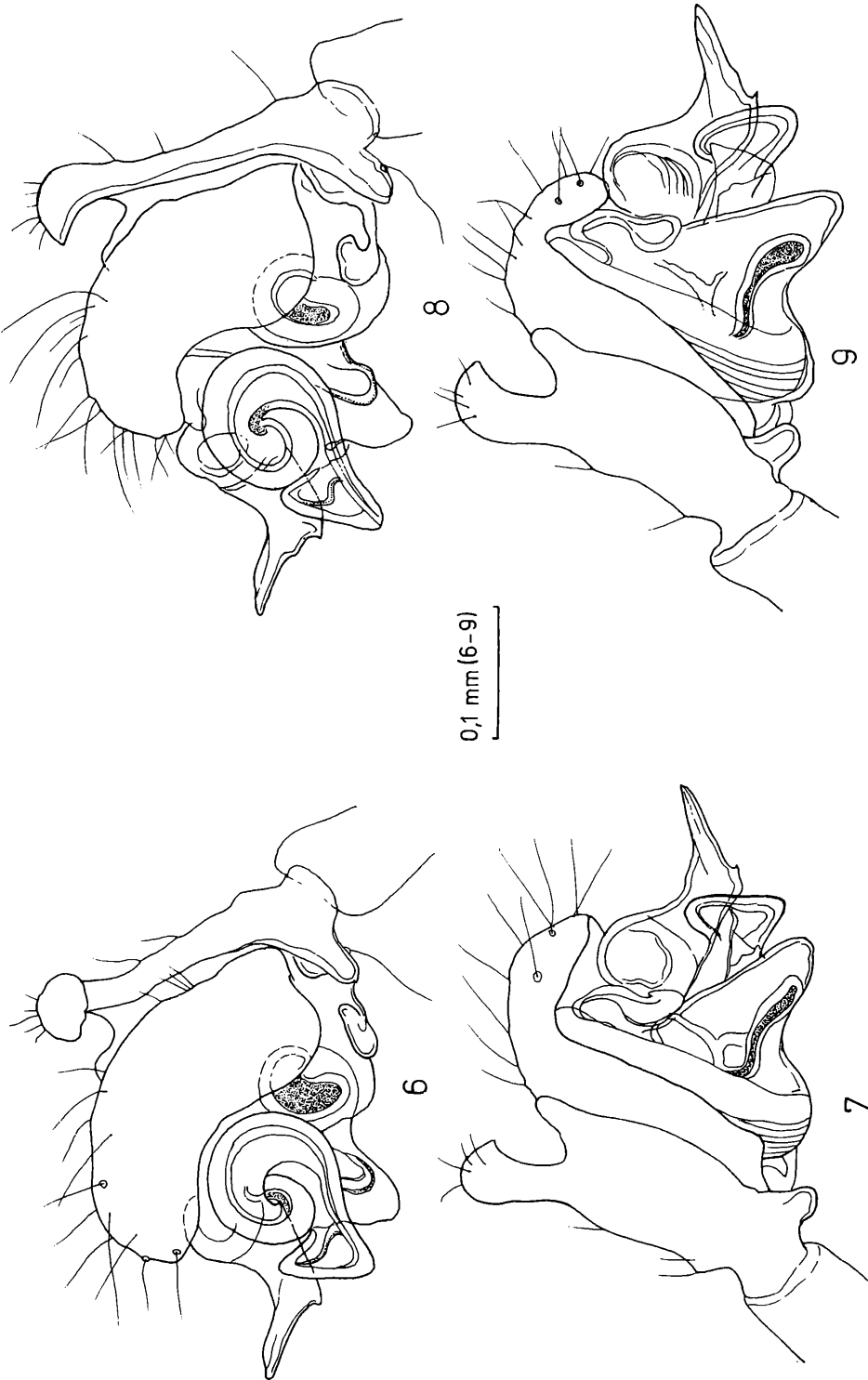
Male palpus (fig. 3, 4) Palpal tibia characteristic built with two apophyses. Embolus long, twisted as a spiral on the end. Endapophyses short but sharp.



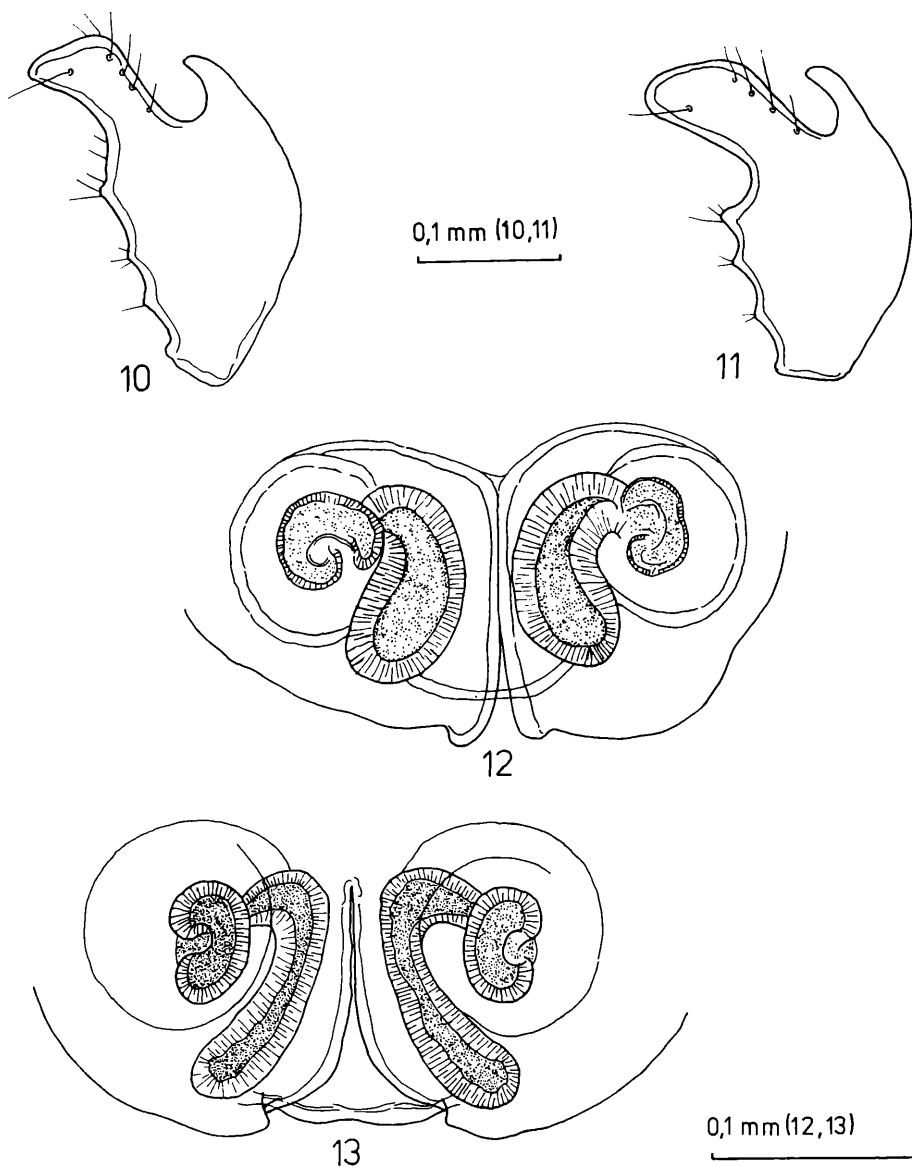
Figs. 1–5: *Araeoncus clivifrons* sp. n. 1–2 – carapace; 3 – male palp, internal view; 4 – male palp, external view; 5 – vulva. Scale – 0.2 mm, figs. 3, 4; scale – 0.1 mm, fig. 5; scale – 0.5 mm, figs. 1, 2.

Vulva is presented on fig. 5.

Discussion *Araeoncus clivifrons* sp. n. belongs to the group of *A. discedens*, *A. altissimus*. The male cephalothorax is close to this of *A. discedens*, but embolus and palpal tibia



Figs. 6–9: *Araeonus humilis* (BLACK.). 6–7 – male palp (Pirin mnt., Bulgaria); 8–9 – male palp (lowland, Bulgaria). Scale – 0.1 mm, figs. 6–9.

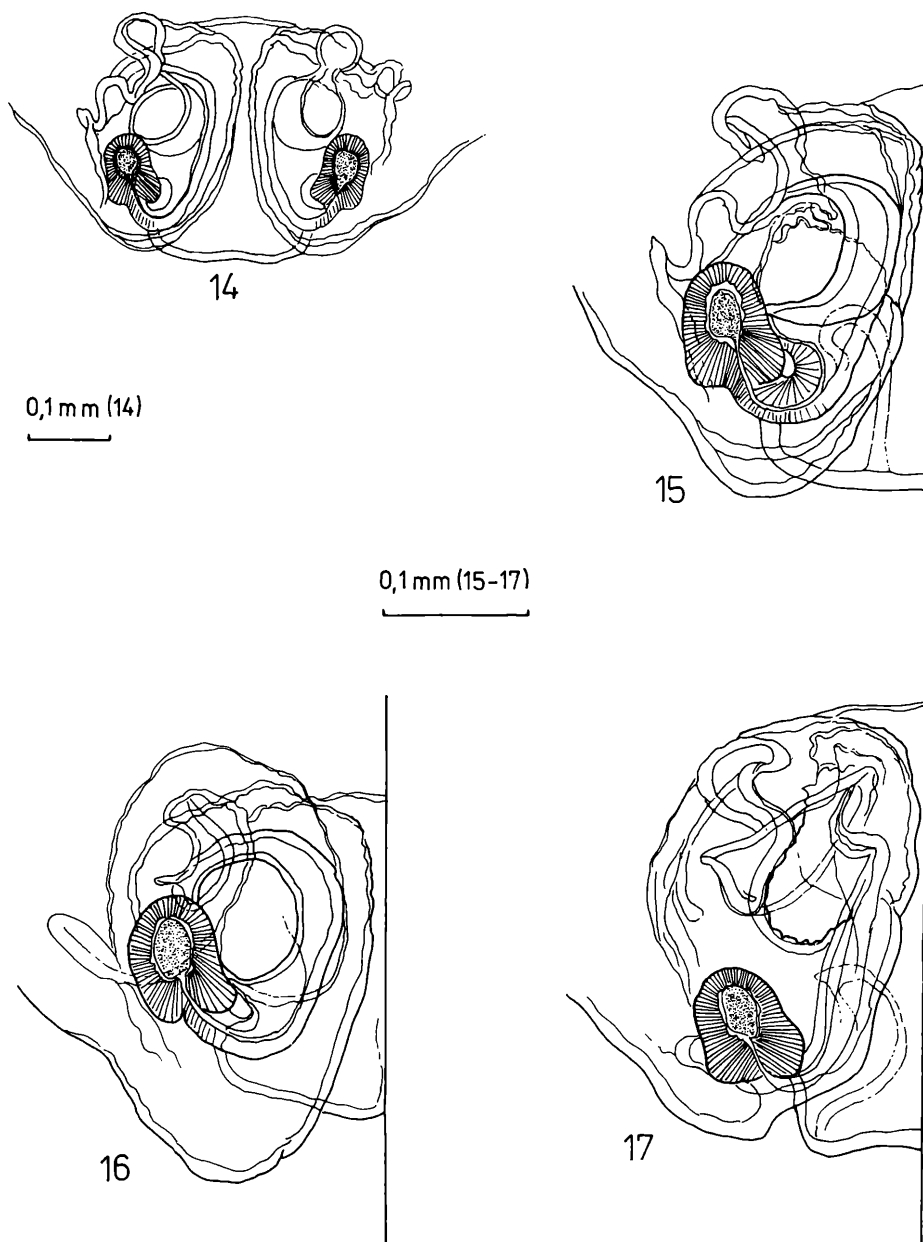


Figs. 10–13: *Araeoncus humilis* (BLACK.). 10 – palpal tibia (Pirin mnt., Bulgaria); 11 – palpal tibia (lowland, Bulgaria); 12 – vulva (Pirin mnt., Bulgaria); 13 – vulva (lowland, Bulgaria). Scales – 0.1 mm, figs. 10–11, figs. 12, 13.

are different. Palpal tibia is similar to these by *A. altissimus* and *A. anguineus*. The regarded species have long and twisted embolus but this of *A. clivifrons* sp. n. is the most twisted.

Occurrence In grass amongst loose stones in swampy areas in zone above 2000 m a. s. l..

Material and locality Pirin mountain, Tevno ezero (2500 m a. s. l.), 1 ♂, holotype, 1 ♂, 1 ♀, paratypes, 8. VII. 1978; Pirin mountain, Prevala (2400 m a. s. l.), 1 ♂ (paratype),



Figs. 14–17 *Araeoncus* sp. 14–15 – vulva (from above); 16–17 – vulva, different positions. Scales – 0.1 mm, figs. 15–17

20. VII. 1981; Rila mountain, cott. Grancar (2200 m a. s. l.), 1 ♂ (paratype), 16. VIII. 1972 (leg. P. BERON). The holotype and paratypes are kept in the collection of Institute of Zoology, Sofia.

***Araeoncus humilis* (BLACKWALL)**

Araeoncus humilis: DELCHEV & KAJAK, 1974, p. 704.

New locality Pirin mountain, Tevno ezero (2500 m a. s. l.), 1 ♂, 2 ♀, 19. VII. 1978; Pirin mountain, Prevala (2400 m a. s. l.), 1 ♂, 11. X. 1978. Under stones on damp places.

Araeoncus humilis is widespread in the forests of Europa (WHIELE, 1960). The localities in Bulgaria are the highest (2500 m a. s. l.), and we realized a taxonomic comparison on materials of high altitude and lowland populations in Bulgaria. The study shows some resemblance, mainly between the females (figs. 6, 7). We consider that the differences (figs. 6–13) are due to the geographic isolation on high altitude habitats.

***Araeoncus prospiciens* (THORELL)**

Araeoncus prospiciens: DRENSKY, 1936, p. 102.

The only data on the species are given by DRENSKY (1936) in his "Katalog der echten Spinnen (Araneae) der Balkanhalbinsel". The collection of DRENSKY was revised but material of *Araeoncus prospiciens* was not established there. As its existence in Bulgaria is not confirmed, the species is considered as dubious.

***Araeoncus* sp.**

Araeoncus crassiceps: DRENSKY, 1913, p. 56 (non WESTRING, 1862).

A single female collected near village (Bačkovо, district of Plovdiv (DRENSKY, 1913). The species belongs to the group of *Araeoncus anguineus* by the construction of the vulva. But the shape and the position of the ductus (very twisted) are very different (figs. 14–17).

In conclusion, the genus *Araeoncus* is represented in Bulgaria with 4 species positively identified. Three species (*A. anguineus*, *A. clivifrons* sp. n., *A. humilis*) are distributed in the high altitude zones of the mountains (Pirin, Rila, Vitoša) but only *A. clivifrons* sp. n. can be regarded as a real high altitude element. It is not found below the upper border of the forest. The distribution of *Araeoncus* sp. has not been completely elucidated yet, because it is known only from a single locality in the lowland.

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