



**On the type species of the genus *Aetius* O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1896:
The first description of male with notes on cymbial notch and mating plug
(Araneae: Corinnidae: Castianeirinae)**

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The rare ant mimicking sac spider genus *Aetius* was erected by O. Pickard-Cambridge in 1896 based on an unspecified number of female specimen(s) collected from Sri Lanka. The type species of the genus, *A. decollatus* O. Pickard-Cambridge, 1896, has been redescribed twice based on the holotype (Majumder & Tikader 1991; Deeleman-Reinhold 2001). Reimoser (1934) recorded the genus for the first time from India, who collected a male specimen from Mudumalai Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu State of southern India. This specimen was identified as *A. decollatus*, but it was never formally described and was later recognised to be a penultimate male (Dankittipakul & Singtripop 2013). Deeleman-Reinhold (2001) described the second representative of the genus, *A. nocturnus*, based on a single female specimen from Borneo, 105 years after the establishment of the genus. Dankittipakul & Singtripop (2013) described the male of *A. nocturnus*, thereby revealing the male genitalia of the genus, but the type species was still known only from the female sex.

This paper provides the first description of the hitherto unknown male of *A. decollatus* and redescribes the female based on freshly collected materials from the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary in the Kerala State, which is part of the Western Ghats of India, and the agricultural plains of Pollachi in the Tamil Nadu State of India. The proposed function and significance of the semi-circular cymbial notch of the male palp, which is unique to the males of *Aetius* spp. (Dankittipakul & Singtripop 2013), is discussed. The occurrence of mating plugs in the genus and variations in body pattern are reported. Additionally, the current distribution of *A. decollatus* is mapped.

Fresh material was collected directly by hand. All measurements are in millimetres (mm). Length of palp and leg segments are as follows: total (femur, patella, tibia, metatarsus (except palp), and tarsus). Description and terminology follow Reiskind (1969) and Raven (2015), and spine positions follow the format of Bosselaers & Jocqué (2000). The following morphological indices are also recorded: carapace index = carapace width/carapace length x 100, sternum index = sternum width/sternum length x 100, abdominal index = abdominal width/abdominal length x 100, dorsal sclerite index = dorsal sclerite width/dorsal sclerite length x 100. Drawings were made by the aid of a drawing tube attached to the microscope. The micro photographic images were taken with Olympus EPL-3 digital camera attached to a Magnus MSZ TR stereo microscope; the photographs were stacked using Combine ZP software (www.hadleyweb.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk) to create a final image. The specimens are deposited in a reference collection housed at the Centre for Animal Taxonomy and Ecology, Department of Zoology, Christ College, Irinjalakuda, Kerala (CATE).

Abbreviations used in the text: AER—anterior eye row, ALE—anterior lateral eye, AME—anterior median eye, do—dorsal, MOQ—median ocular quadrangle, OUMNH—Oxford University Museum of Natural History, pl—prolateral, PER—posterior eye row, PLE—posterior lateral eye, PME—posterior median eye, rl—retrolateral, rlv—retrolateral ventral, vt—ventral.

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