

# Arachnological *samizdat*

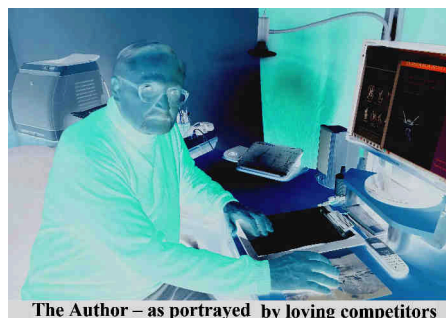
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## How I became a non-entity in Salticidae taxonomy



The Author – as portrayed by loving competitors

**ABSTRACT. The cause of the end of my scientific career appears to be publication:**

Kropf, C., Blick, T., Brescovit, A. D., Chatzaki, M., Dupérré, N., Gloor, D., Haddad, C. R., Harvey, M. S., Jäger, P., Marusik, Y. M., Ono, H., Rheims, C. A. & Nentwig, W. (2019). How not to delimit taxa: a critique on a recently proposed "pragmatic classification" of jumping spiders (Arthropoda: Arachnida: Araneae: Salticidae). *Zootaxa* 4545(3): 444-446. Published: 18 Jan. 2019 (Accepted for publication by G. Ruiz on : 5 Dec. 2018).

**It begins from a sort of laudation:**

"... Prószyński has an enormous reputation\* in this field [the taxonomy of salticid spiders...]",  
but the sting was hidden near the end - [papers of Prószyński]

"...should be ignored by the community" because "...brings nothing but chaos in salticid systematics"  
and "...this is nothing but scientific malpractice"].

.....Kropf [Nentwig] et al., (2019: 444-446).

\*/NOTE. "I made heavy use of Prószyński's (2015) [Internet Salticidae Database 1995-2016] compilation of drawings, and to a lesser extent Metzner's (2015). Not only does Prószyński's compilation bring together in one place most of the illustrations in the literature, but it also includes many illustrations of Prószyński's that are not otherwise published, [actually all were published - see Atlases 1984c and 1987 and are available in the Internet - J.P.] including of type specimens. This resource had an important influence at every stage of this project, for every tribe and subtribe, even where not directly cited below. Without it, the current classification would have taken far longer to achieve."

.....Maddison, W. P. (2015). A phylogenetic classification of jumping spiders (Araneae: Salticidae). *Journal of Arachnology* 43(3): 233.

The text of the above article by Kropf [Nentwig?] et al. 2019 is interesting as an example of pseudo-scientific analysis, while real purpose is gangster-like personal revenge for an imaginary insult, by *ad hoc* organized correspondence kangaroo court - impressively looking with signatures of the representatives of the "whole world" - actually single WSC correspondents/employees from South Africa, Australia, Far East Asia and North America, Europe was represented by five German speaking members/employees of the WSC editorial team and one Russian from the end of Siberia. Prominent specialists of Salticidae were noticeably absent, in spite of pressure exerted on them to join. But reception of that publication by peoples not introduced - was presumably devastating.

All that happens while general trend of research in taxonomy of Salticidae, during last 20 years, seems to be substitution (or at least complementation) of morphological characters by sequencing of DNA. Success of that depends from correctness of equation of "morphological" species with those defined by DNA (that is identity of "DNA species" with original type specimen and type species), Mistake in that translation will leave arachnologists with maze of erroneous species names, making communication impossible and nullifying the trend. Therefore checking morphological identification of species submitted to the DNA sequencing procedure is of highest importance in phylogeny research. I was instrumental in the previous stage of actualization of meaning of species and genera by revising, or describing myself, as new, 854 unrecognizable species, including over 500 types and type species, documented by 3108 diagnostic plates of my original drawings (according to the WSC data) during 1960-2016. I have been maintaining relational Internet Salticidae Database, 1995-2016, permitting to check identification of 641 genera and ca. 4800 species worldwide within seconds, reedited in 2020 into Internet e-book. While conducting that work, I communicated to specialists notes on mistaken identifications and synonymy, and listed them in my 2017 paper for the WSC sake (some examples from that work are shown below). Instead of gratitude, these corrections yielded me bad feeling of criticized authors and a boycott of my ["insulting"] database - explainable only by psychiatrists.

The presumably real motivation of the true initiators of Kropf [Nentwig?] et al., 2019 is illustrated by the insulting letter, which I quote below in full:

from [Wolfgang.nentwig@iee.unibe.ch](mailto:Wolfgang.nentwig@iee.unibe.ch) (2016-11-16 o 17:14)

Dear Jerzy

In your mail you oppose against WSC because it does not accept *Emertonius* as a valid genus. WSC follows the publication of Edwards (2013). Your comments and mails are not considered as publications [!], thus Edwards reflects the latest stand of the art [!].

The only way to modify this is to add new arguments in a standard publication, as arachnologists and scientists usually do. We do not blame and insult colleagues. I would like to ask you seriously to stop with such letters, they only provoke negative feelings. We want to work and argue in a transparent, collegial and constructive atmosphere. With kind regards

Wolfgang

The above letter distorts preceding discussion concerning only placement of the species "*exasperans*" in either "*Emertonius*" or "*Myrmarachne*".

The latest state of knowledge before above letter were documented in Prószyński & Deeleman-Reinhold, 2010: 185, f.164-167,

169-171, repeated simultaneously in my Internet Salticidae Database [https://salticidae.pl/specimen.php?id=1635], where color photographs by Knowles have been also displayed. All that, published prior to Edwards (2013: 4) is shown below, it fully defines placement of the species in the genus.

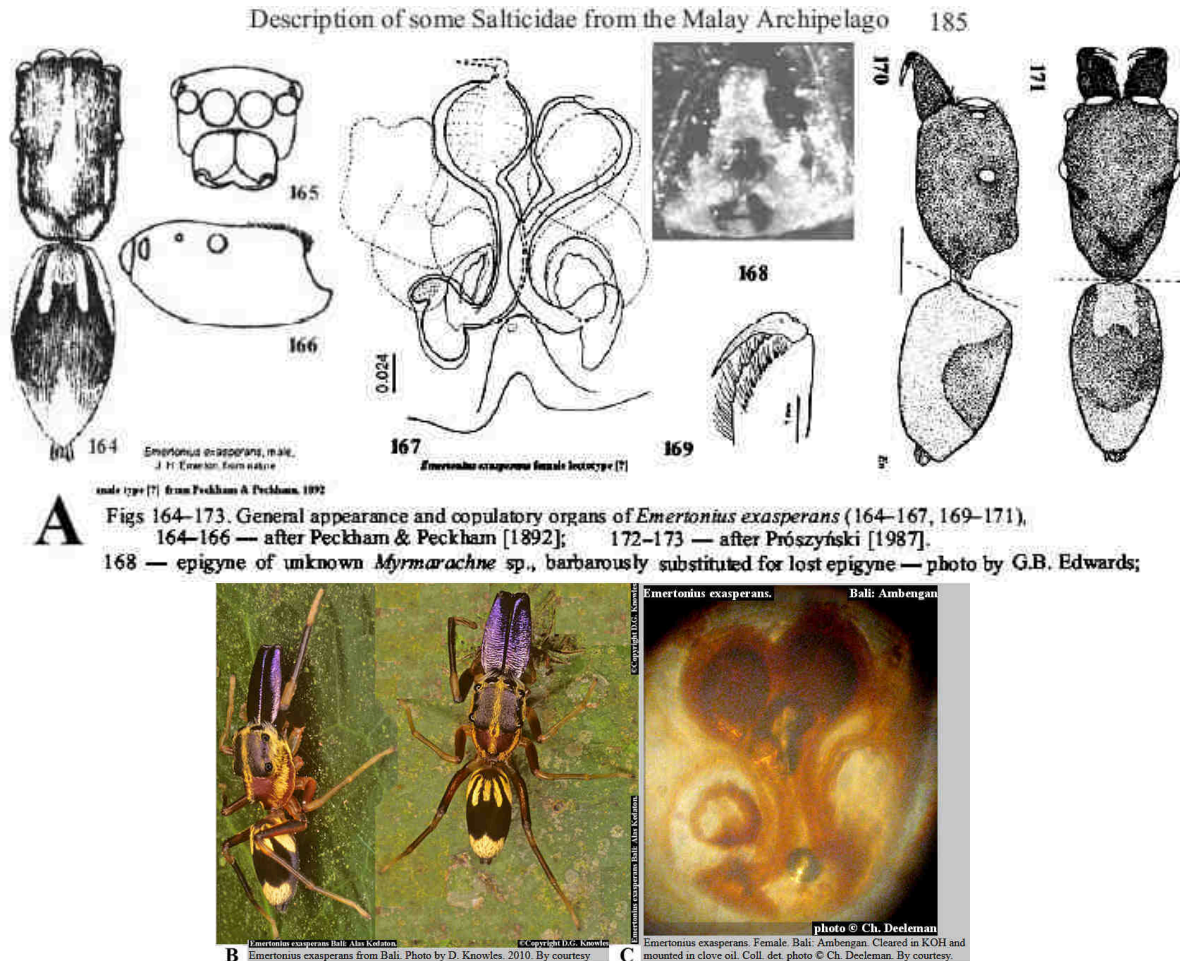


Fig.1. **A** - *Emertonius exasperans*, copy of the first documentation by Prószyński & Deeleman-Reinhold of 2010, reinstating its original placement, after hesitations of Wanless 1978b, **B** - photography of specimens from Bali, Ambengan, **C** - temporary preparation of epigyne, same species from Bali: Ambengan. Both photos are matching Peckham's lectotype from Java: Bantam[!].

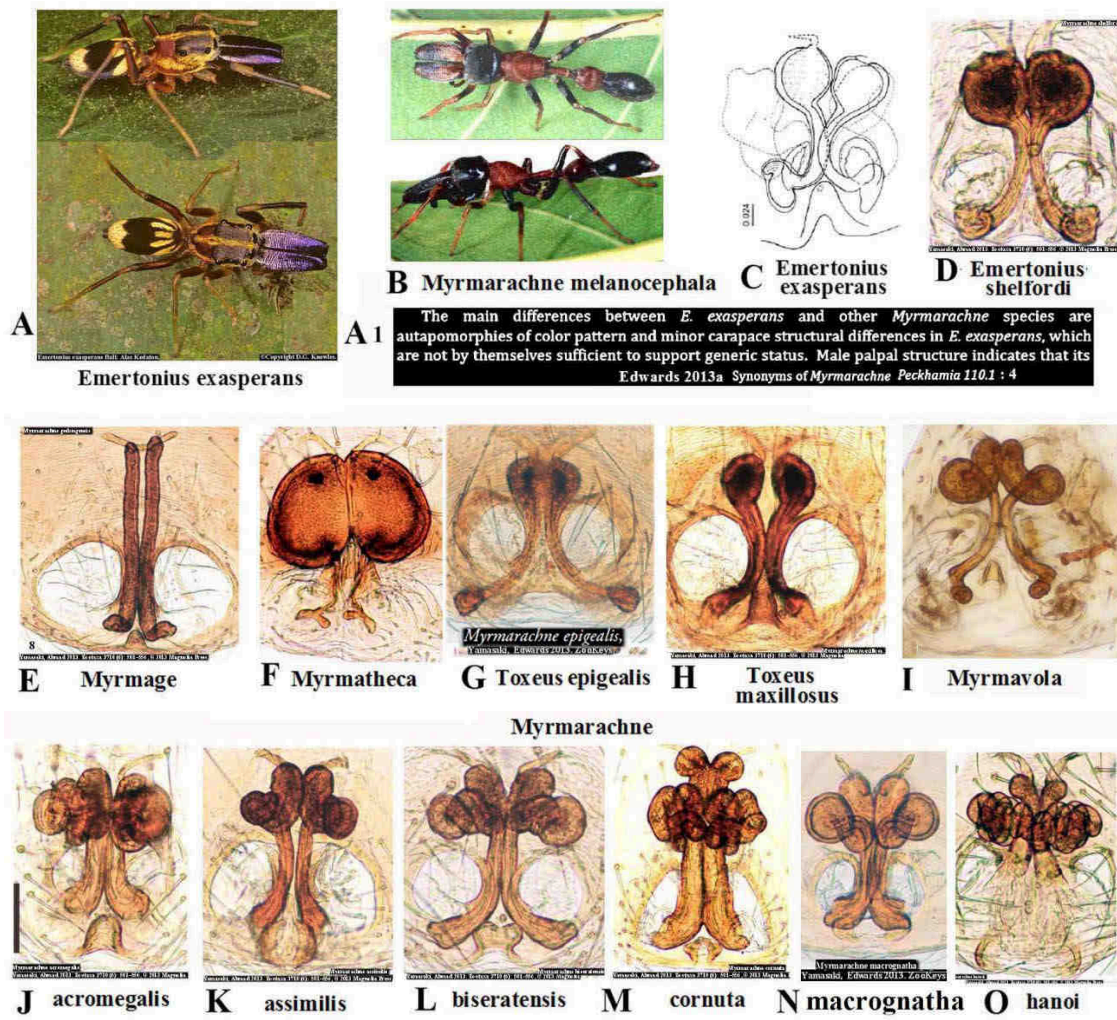
COMMENT. Dr. Edwards seen that documentation but **did not understand its significance**, editors of the WSC (Dr. Nentwig?) **did not care to check it**, in spite that I referred to it in each of my multiple request to correct the misplacement.

Source: A - *Emertonius exasperans* Prószyński & Deeleman-Reinhold, 2010: 185, f. 164-167, 169-171 (f) - as referred by WSC, B - photo by D. G. Knowles, 2010, C - coll, debt. prep. C. L. Deeleman-Reinhold.

Dr. Edwards did not understand the documentation and his subsequent publication of 2013a: 4-5 does not fulfil requirements of a scientific paper, is not even listed in the WSC references to that species. Editor in Chief of the WSC - Nentwig did not bother to check data referred to in his own Catalog. After several futile efforts to call attention of the WSC editors to that mistaken placement, I responded by publishing facsimile of the original publication by Edwards [note quality of his argumentation] in the nearest paper, (in Prószyński 2018: 160-165), dealing with the genus *Evarcha* (a fragment reproduced below on Figs 2 [= "19"]). If some readers of those quotations draw unflattering assessment of the work of the WSC editors - it is not my fault. I have only quoted verifiable facts. Anyway, that forced WSC editors to yield and finally to change interpretation of *Emertonius*. Below I reproduce that insertion.

### "Revival of the genus *Emertonius* Peckham & Peckham, 1892

*Emertonius* is a valid genus (see below), closely related to *Myrmarachne* MacLeay, 1839, but strikingly differing from it by body shape, color pattern and internal structure of epigyne (see original documentation of *E. exasperans* by Peckham & Peckham, 1892 (Figs 21A). Wanless (1978b) has hesitantly transferred it to *Myrmarachne* (Figs 21B, compare with 19B), but revision by Prószyński & Deeleman (2010) (Figs 19C, 21C-D [Fig. 1 - above]) proven that he was mistaken. That correction was emotionally dismissed by Edwards (2013: 4) (see facsimile of his text at Fig. 20 and comments) who, continuing 20 years old dispute, failed to provide any documentation, in favor to his opinion, but dismissal was endorsed by the WSC. The list of proceedings is quoted in the WSC (version 18.5): Prószyński repeated revival of *Emertonius* in two publications, in *Ecologica Montenegrina* (2016: 4 and 2017b: 100) and in two letters with included documentation (the same as shown on Fig. 19) but Editors responded by twice rejecting it (also both letters). **So the present publication constitute the fifth attempt to correct initial mistake of Wanless.** To avoid necessity of the sixth intervention I include facsimile of the original publication by Edwards, showing quality of his argumentation (below).



**Fig. 2.**[= 19] Diagnostic criteria of genera of informal group MYRMARACHNINES. A-D: type species of two genera - A - *Emertonius exasperans* - type species, A1 - Edward's opinion on identity of *Emertonius* with *Myrmarachne*, B - *Myrmarachne melanocephala* - type species, C - *Emertonius exasperans*, D - *Emertonius shelfordi*. E-I - examples of most suitable diagnostic character - internal structure of epigyne in: E - *Myrmage*, F - *Myrmatheca*, G - *Toxeus epigealis*, H - *Toxeus maxillosus*, I - *Myrmavola*. J-O - examples of diversity of the most important species character among over 100 recognizable species of *Myrmarachne*: J - *Myrmarachne acromegalis*, K - *Myrmarachne assimilis*, L - *Myrmarachne biseratensis*, M - *Myrmarachne cornuta*, N - *Myrmarachne macrognatha*, O - *Myrmarachne hanoi*.

SOURCES: A - © Photo by D. Knowles, A1 - Edwards, 2013 - Peckhamia 110.1: 4, B - Edwards, Benjamin 2009. Zootaxa, 2309: 5, f 2, ©Magnolia Press, C - Prószyński, Deeleman-Reinhold, 2010. Arthropoda selecta, 19(3): f 167, D-O - Yamasaki, Ahmad 2013. Zootaxa 3710 (6): 549- 551, f 39A-G, 40A-E. © 2013 .Magnolia Press. All copyrights are retained by the original authors and copyright holders, used here by their courtesy."

[Quotation from Prószyński 2018b: 160-161].

The impact of the above documentation could inflict discomfort to readers, although all I wrote was truth and in self defense, but the wrath of reaction surprised me. Their first reaction was 10 months delay in reporting contents of my 2018b *Evarcha* publication by the WSC, so strange that I even enquired why that boycott. After that, there appeared a comment in the WSC "*Evarcha* section" that the editors invalidate subdivision of that genus [they had no right to declare that] and advise users to not read that paper [I quote from memory, because later the texts was watered down]. There was no scientific discussion, no comparison of documentation, simply editors thundered from their Mt. Olympus - and *causa finita!* Simultaneously, I was surprised by the Kropf [Nentwig?] et al., 2019 paper - purporting to be "*scientific discussion*" - in fact a personal attack on me for departing from **customary scheme** of a taxonomic paper, breaking at the occasion my author's rights to have own opinion, aims and methodology developed during 60 years of revisionary research. All that narrow minded, prejudiced lecture, was cloaked as "intense discussions of the World Spider Catalog editorial team ... **with taxonomists from all over the world** [how impressive !], **including Prószyński himself** [I was not aware of that !]", certified by signatures of representatives [single!] of the continents: North America, South Africa, Australia, and E Asia (none a specialist in taxonomy of Salticidae worldwide, the latter notably absent on the co-signatories list). The signatories [Nentwig?] lectured that taxonomic description should resemble encyclopedic entry of **their choice**. They disregarded appropriateness of my methodology to worldwide identification of the 4800 recognizable species, for which I have already presented full diagnostic documentation [free in the Internet database by Prószyński (1995-2016) - see also my Internet e-book of 2020]. The critics failed to test my database, which majority of them has never seen, never discussed with me.

Lets' assume for a moment that my papers contain a lot of mistakes and errors - are these sufficient reason to publicize morally lethal **appeal that papers of Prószyński "...should be ignored by the community"** because **"...brings nothing but chaos in salticid systematics"** and **"...this is nothing but scientific malpractice"**. This resulted in a boycott of Prószyński's papers in journals depending from the WSC. And how anybody could know whether I was really wrong - the kangaroo court worked by correspondence, its proceedings [if any] not published and not accessible - was there any discussion among signatories, arguments and how that influenced the text?. Why I have not received copies of these e-mail, was not invited to communicate my views - a procedure followed by all courts of justice in democratic countries. Or may be the text was written by a WSC editors [Editor in Chief **Dr Nentwig?**] and enlisted signatories were asked only to e-mail their support? A year later all references to my

research disappeared mysteriously from the Internet *Wikipedia*. A worthy "Farewell Thank You" for my sixty years of dedicated research, for creating identificatory system of 4800 species of Salticidae available in the Internet, for revision and revival of over 500 forgotten type species and type specimens, for education of such prominent arachnologists as W. Wesolowska and M. Żabka, for assisting in research of two generations of arachnologists, from W. P. Maddison to J. T. D. Caleb.

Obviously the reasons were psychological, not material ones. Only exceptionally my taxonomic corrections were contested, usually left without discussion. As for World Spider Catalog editors, I respect very much value of their work: notably for presentation of the catalog as relational database and for organization of the arachnological library online. True, the references of **scientific names** often misrepresent **biological species**, they are supposed to denote, but that is guilt of referred authors, not the editors. However, notoriously unfriendly intonation of comments to my corrections in the WSC, suggest unfriendly prejudiced reaction to my whistle blowing for attention. Especially, the style of the Nentwig letter resembling teacher's disciplining a naughty school boy.

The whole happening, its nasty atmosphere and consequences to me, remind brutal beating of dissenting writers on streets by "unknown" secret police thugs, followed with ban for all their publications, which have been happening in some authoritarian states.

### References

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