

Linyphiidae: *Meioneta*, *Agyneta*, and relatives

J. Miller, March 2011

Meioneta, *Agyneta*, and their close relatives can be found worldwide. They are abundant and diverse in the Neotropics, especially in leaf litter. They are a taxonomically difficult group, probably with many undescribed species in the study region.

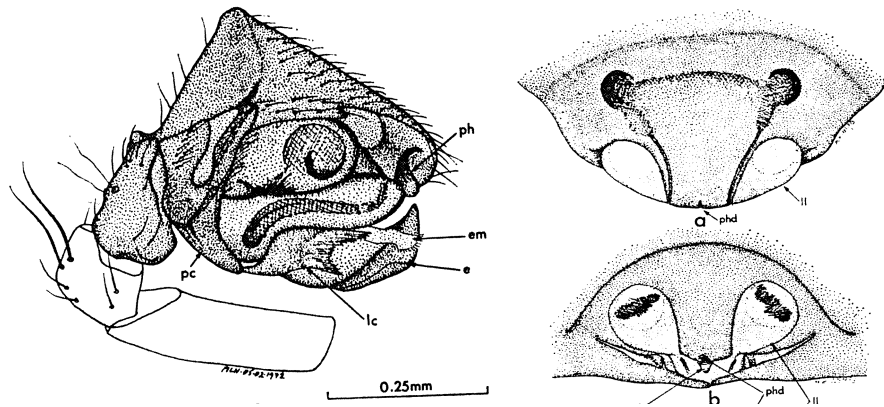


Fig 1. Distribution of *Meioneta* and relatives in the study region (based mostly on Platnick).

Monophyly. There is a distinct lineage here that is at least dominated by *Meioneta*, but the exact limits have not been adequately investigated. Whether this lineage includes a Caribbean or Neotropical clade has not been investigated.

Fossils. Four species have been described in Dominican amber (Wunderlich, 1988).

Search strategy. Small spiders (1-3 mm body length), build rather inconspicuous webs, especially in leaf litter. Sifting (and other methods of leaf litter extraction) is the most productive technique.



Recognizing the group. Eyes subequal or AME smallest, chelicerae may be somewhat excavated mesally, tibiae I-IV with two dorsal macrosetae, usually no other tibial or metatarsal macrosetae, pedipalp of adult female may be swollen. Abdomen typically uniform dark or with indistinct pattern. *Male pedipalp:* Cymbium may be somewhat raised and excavated basally, retrolateral margin with a distally-projecting process; lamella typically large and membranous, may be fringed; paracymbium complex and somewhat characteristic; tibial apophysis absent. *Epigynum:* Typically with two conspicuous atria that may be connected medially below the tip of a small, sinuous scape.

Similar taxa. Superficially like erigonine linyphiids.

Needed collecting. All areas.

References

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- Wunderlich, J. 1988. Die fossilen Spinnen im dominikanischen Bernstein. Beiträge zur Araneologie, 2: 1-378.