

ACANTHEPEIRA VENUSTA (BANKS)
(ARANEÆ)¹

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Among the collection of spiders in the Museum of Comparative Zoology, several specimens including both sexes of *Acanthepeira venusta* (Banks), from various localities in Florida, were identified. The male has never been recognized before, and as the original description was based on a female, a more complete description of both sexes with figures seems desirable.

The genus *Acanthepeira* appears in the list of Arachnida by Marx in Howard's "List of the Invertebrate Fauna of South Carolina" 1883, used for the species *Epeira stellata* Walck., 1805. As Howard's list is quite rare, it is not surprising that the Marx genus has been overlooked. In 1892, McCook proposed the genus *Marxia* for the same species, *Epeira stellata* Walck. The generic description lists few structural characters and is based largely on the marginal tubercles of the abdomen and the width of the clypeus, characters that are shared by other genera of the family. So in 1904, F.O.P.—Cambridge redescribed the genus using more definite characters. This definition has been generally accepted. In 1941, Archer reinstated the generic name, *Acanthepeira* and it has also been recently used by Kaston in the "Spiders of Connecticut," 1948.

Acanthepeira venusta (Banks)

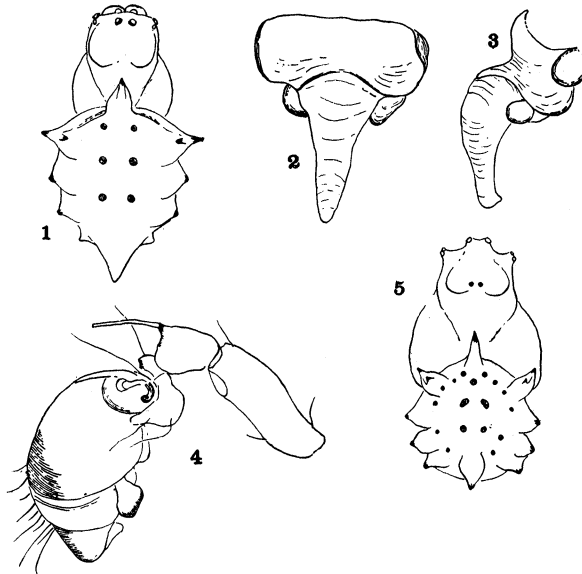
Figures 1-5

Plectana venusta Banks, 1896, p. 69. "♀ Florida; Punta Gorda."

Female. Length, 6.0 mm., ceph. 3.0 mm. long, 2.2 mm. wide, abd. 4.2 mm. long without the anterior and posterior tubercles, 4.0 mm. wide.

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Cephalothorax brown, cephalic portion pale and covered with white hairs, a pair of large circular elevations directly posterior to the eyes, anterior margin wide and truncate; *eyes* in three groups, seen from the front, the anterior row procurved, median eyes carried forward on a small lobe, a.m.e. smaller than the p.m.e., separated by about two diameters, p.m.e. separated by a diameter, lateral eyes subequal on a distinct tubercle at the extreme angle of the carapace; *quadrangle* higher than wide and as wide in front as behind; *clypeus* below the a.m.e. as high as the quadrangle; *mandibles* brown, vertical, fang



Figs. 1-5. *Acanthepeira venusta* (Banks). Fig. 1. Female, dorsal, (type); fig. 2. Epigynum, ventral; fig. 3. Epigynum, lateral; fig. 4. Left palpus, retrolateral; fig. 5. Male, dorsal.

groove oblique, upper margin with a row of black bristles followed by three teeth, lower margin with four subequal, contiguous teeth, fang short; *labium* wider than long, basal half dark, tip pale; *sternum* lateral margins dark, triangular, one and a half times as long as broad, fourth coxæ touching; *abdomen* pale, with a vague folium on the

posterior half, with ten tubercles on the margin, each with a corneous tip, the pointed anterior median tubercle extends well over the cephalothorax, the posterior median tubercle blunt and hairy, and the tip darker, as wide at the base as it is long, extends well over the spinnerets, four pairs of graduated lateral tubercles, the largest at the lateral angles, bifid at the tip, the posterior pair very small and not in line with the other pairs, venter infuscate with a pale transverse bar posterior to the epigynum; *legs*, 1-2-4-3, rather short, brown, with darker brown rings, more distinct on the ventral side, spines shorter than the diameter of the joint, no ventral spines on the femora, a dorsal basal spine on III and IV tibiae; *epigynum*, area longer than wide, a narrow chitinized base, from which projects a slender, graduated fleshy scape, fully twice as long as the chitinized base, tip curled inward, each side of the base a circular opening, with a second smaller opening at the base of the scape.

Male. Length, 6.2 mm., ceph. 4.0 mm. long, 3.4 mm. wide, abd. 3.0 mm. long, 2.9 mm. wide.

Cephalothorax dark brown, broader than in the female and the anterior margin much narrower, many pale hairs in the ocular area, the circular elevations posterior to the eyes more distinct than in the female, with a pair of dark dots close together as figured; *eyes*, median eyes carried forward on a lobe, lateral eyes on distinct tubercles; *mouth parts* and *sternum* as in the female; *abdomen* with the tubercular pattern as in the female, except that the anterior median tubercle is more slender, and the posterior median tubercle is cone-shaped and extends upward at almost right angles to the abdomen, not a longitudinal extension, the muscle spots large and chitinized with numerous small chitinized flecks on the dorsum; *legs*, 1-2-4-3, brown, with darker rings on all joints, legs longer than in the female, with no hook on the first and second coxae, a coniform spur on the fourth coxa, second tibia not incrassate, nor with any specialized spines, spines longer than in the female, a retrolateral row of spines on the fourth femur, with two short chitinized

spurs on tubercles near the base; *palpus* not as long as the cephalothorax, patella with one long stout bristle at the tip, tibia not as long as the patella, swollen ventrally, with a long pale, retrolateral process extending dorsally with several long colorless bristles near the tip, paracymbium in two parts, the ventral section small, of the typical form, dark and strongly chitinized and almost touching the tip of the ventral process, the dorsal portion pale, larger, with a recurved tip, the basal part of the cymbium depressed, cymbium not covering all parts, embolus an obscure process near the tip.

Holotype ♀ Florida; Punta Gorda, Banks Coll., no. B.0183. Allotype (by present designation) ♂ Florida; Royal Palm Park, 25–30 March 1927, (Blatchley).

Additional material, not types: 2 ♂s Georgia; Waycross, August 1903, (Morse), Emerton Coll.; ♀ Florida; Coconut Grove, July 1929, (Fairchild); ♂ ♀ Florida; Royal Palm Park, 25–30 March 1927; ♂ ♀ 1–18 April 1927; ♀ 5–17 December 1927, (Blatchley); ♂ ♀ Florida; Dade Co., Paradise Key, from a nest of mud dauber, 23 May 1927 (Dow).

Cambridge had but one species of *Marxia* from Central America when he defined the genus and he states that the species identified as *stellata* from Mexico and Guatemala may not be the same species as figured by Emerton in the Epeiridæ of New England, 1884.

Acanthepeira venusta differs from the generic description as given by Cambridge in three structural characters. The p.m.e. are larger than the a.m.e.; the quadrangle is as wide behind as in front, and it is distinctly longer than wide; the lower margin of the fang groove has four teeth.

The males of *A. venusta* can be separated from *A. stellata* by the narrower abdomen with the terminal tubercle turned upward, the much narrower ventral apophysis on the tibia of the palpus and the paracymbium. The females can be separated from *A. stellata* by the narrower abdomen and the epigynum.

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