

NOTES ON AN AIRBORNE SPIDER FOUND IN ANTARCTICA¹By R. R. Forster²

A small male erigonid spider was captured in the aerial nets at Marble Point, Antarctica on 21 February 1960 by C. W. O'Brien. The specimen has been dried and lost all except one of the legs and also one of the palps but is still capable of a detailed examination. It has been tentatively identified as *Erigone autumnalis* Emerton.

No direct comparisons have been made with identified material but the specimen agrees closely with the description and figures given by Crosby & Bishop (N.Y. State Bulletin No. 276, 1928). The palp of the Marble Point specimen is shown in Fig. 1. The shape of the carapace and the disposition of the eyes is as stated by Crosby and Bishop and the marginal teeth on the carapace are lacking except for a few very small denticles at the posterior margins. There is a large projection below the trochanter of the palp and a prominent tooth on the maxillae. However in addition to the two small teeth on the face of the chelicerae mentioned by these authors, there is a row of from 14-15 minute teeth distally.

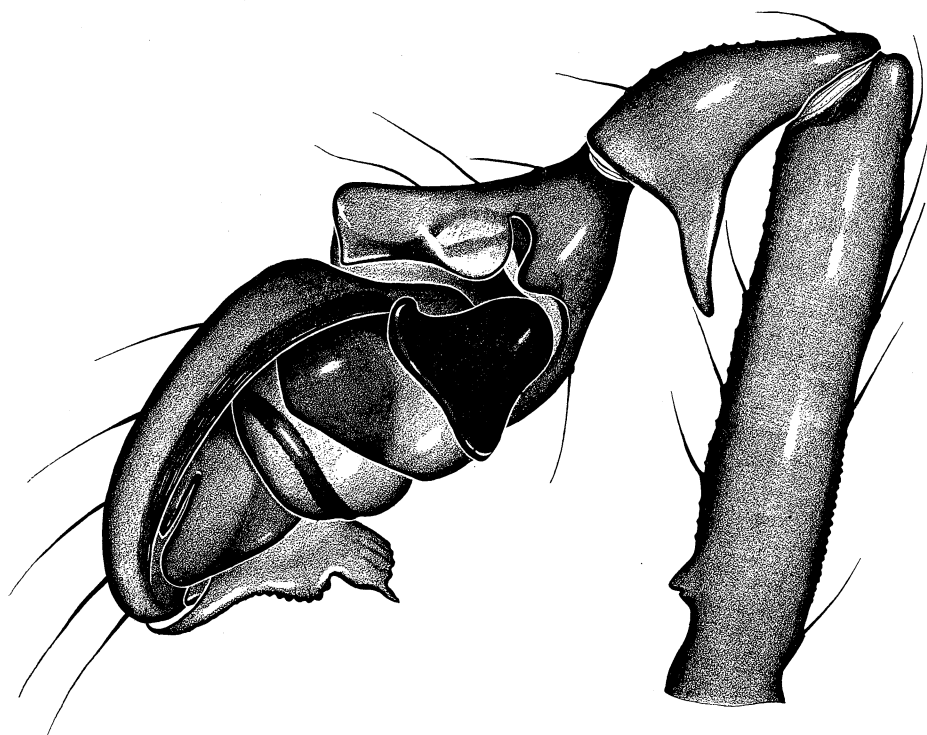


Fig. 1. Palp of *Erigone autumnalis* Emerton from Marble Point, South Victoria Land.

1. Partial results of field work on U.S.A.R.P, NSF-G-9909 (Bishop Museum).
2. Otago Museum, Dunedin, New Zealand.

There can be no question but that this spider is either *Erigone autumnalis* or a very closely related species. *E. autumnalis* is native to the United States where it is widely distributed and the source of this spider must be either from a ship or from stores brought in to McMurdo Sound.

Although various species of *Erigone* have been recorded from the Southern Hemisphere, including three species from New Zealand, these have all proved to have been introduced and it is doubtful that this genus occurs naturally in this region.

A note on another specimen of spider trapped in Antarctica was published recently (Forster, 1970, *Pacif. Ins. Monogr.* 23: 42).