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A new species of *Phytocoris* (*Exophytocoris?*) from Morocco (Hemiptera: Heteroptera: Miridae)

A. Matocq[1], S. Pagola-Carte[2]

[1]Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle; Département Adaptation du Vivant, MECADEV, UMR7179 MNHN/CNRS; C.P. 50, Entomologie; 57 rue Cuvier; F-75231 Paris cedex 05; E-mail: matocq.armand@wanadoo.fr
[2] Apdo. 70 P.K.; E-20150 Villabona (Gipuzkoa); E-mail: pagolaxpc@telefonica.net

Abstract

A new species of the plant bug genus *Phytocoris* (Hemiptera: Heteroptera: Miridae: Mirinae), *P. streitoi* **n. sp.**, is described from Morocco, northern Africa. Tentatively ascribed to the subgenus *Exophytocoris*, it actually shows a combination of characters between *Exophytocoris* and *Compsocerocoris*. The male genitalia, particularly the endosoma and its dentate longitudinal area are strongly distinguishing from all other taxa in those subgenera, while they bring the new species closer to some *Exophytocoris* members.

Key words: *Phytocoris*, *Exophytocoris*, new species, Heteroptera, Miridae, Morocco, taxonomy.

Resumen

***Una nueva especie de* Phytocoris (Exophytocoris?) *de Marruecos* (*Hemiptera: Heteroptera: Miridae*)**

Se describe una nueva especie de mírido del género *Phytocoris* (Hemiptera: Heteroptera: Miridae: Mirinae) de Marruecos, norte de África: *P. streitoi* **n. sp.** Asignada provisionalmente al subgénero *Exophytocoris*, en realidad muestra una combinación de caracteres entre *Exophytocoris* y *Compsocerocoris*. La genitalia masculina, y especialmente el endosoma y su área longitudinal dentada son muy distintivos con respecto al resto de taxones de dichos subgéneros, al tiempo que aproximan más la nueva especie hacia algunos miembros de *Exophytocoris*.

Palabras clave: *Phytocoris*, *Exophytocoris*, nueva especie, Heteroptera, Miridae, Marruecos, taxonomía.

Laburpena

Phytocoris (Exophytocoris?)-*en Marokoko espezie berri bat* (*Hemiptera: Heteroptera: Miridae*)

Miridoen *Phytocoris* generoko (Hemiptera: Heteroptera: Miridae: Mirinae) espezie berri bat, *P. streitoi* **n. sp.**, deskribatzen da Marokokoa, Afrikaren iparraldean. *Exophytocoris* subgeneroari esleitu arren, *Exophytocoris* eta *Compsocerocoris* arteko karaktere-nahasketa bat erakusten du, berez. Arren genitalia, eta bereziki endosoma eta bere luzetarako eremu horzduna, oso bereizgarri suertatzen dira aipaturiko subgeneroen taxoiekiko; aldi berean, areago hurbiltzen dute espezie berria *Exophytocoris*en zenbait kiderenganantz.

Gako-hitzak: *Phytocoris*, *Exophytocoris*, espezie berria, Heteroptera, Miridae, Maroko, taxonomia.

Introduction

Phytocoris Fallén, 1814 is the largest genus known within Miridae, with more than 700 species described worldwide and including a vast majority of non-tropical members, mainly from the Holarctic Region but also from the temperate zones of the Southern Hemisphere (Stonedahl, 1988; Schuh, 2002-2013). Such overwhelming species-level diversity means one of the most challenging tasks within a single genus in miridology, and even hemipterology, and comprehensive phylogenetic studies aimed at clarifying species relationships and establishing a taxonomic classification at a global scale are pending.

In any case, the Palaearctic *Phytocoris* are usually classified according to the recognition of 9 subgenera (Wagner and Weber, 1964; Wagner, 1974; Kerzhner and Josifov, 1999; Aukema, 2019). Delimitation between subgenera is not free of controversy and ascribing any given species to one or another subgenus may sometimes be difficult. This is particularly so because the subgenera were defined mainly on the basis of characters of external morphology, which: on the one hand, are not always completely consistent within each of those subgenera; on the other hand, do not perfectly fit the conclusions obtained by examination of genitalic characters. Indeed, the male genitalic structures frequently open a rich «new world» of interpretative possibilities, as can be ascertained by browsing the *oeuvre* of several of the most prolific «phytocoridologists» illustrating those structures in the Palaearctic (Wagner, Linnavuori or Carapezza, for example).

Within the subgenus *Exophytocoris* Wagner, 1961 a richer diversity than expected has been revealed in recent times, not only concerning species diversity but also genitalic variety (Carapezza, 2016; Pagola-Carte and Rieger, 2017, 2021; Çerçi *et al.*, 2019; Pagola-Carte, 2019; Pagola-Carte *et al.*, 2022). Simultaneously, the controversial separation between subgenera *Exophytocoris* and *Compsocerocoris* Reuter, 1876 (Linnavuori, 1974, 1999; see also: Pagola-Carte, 2010: pp. 112, 115) is more and more apparent.

Examination of unsorted material of *Phytocoris* from Morocco in AM collection has allowed us to discover an undescribed, quite distinctive species on the border between *Exophytocoris* and *Compsocerocoris*. We herein describe this interesting new taxon as well as discuss its placement and affinities.

Throughout the description, measurements are based on 5 males and 4 females of the type series and are given in millimetres (mm). For most morphometric characters, the whole range is given in parentheses after the average value. When possible and/or convenient (*e.g.* characters showing sexual dimorphism), measurements are indicated separately for males and females. If a character was not measurable in one given specimen (*e.g.* a missing antennal segment), the ranges (and derived ratios) were adapted accordingly. Measurements are given in greater detail in the description than in the diagnosis. Female genitalia were not studied because of the currently undeveloped comparative knowledge at species level. In the transcriptions of labels, «//» indicates separation of lines.

Results

Phytocoris (*Exophytocoris?*) *streitoi* n. sp.

(Figs. 1-4)

Type material:

HOLOTYPE:

♂, labelled «Maroc: Entre Azizal et // Ait Taguella. 18-VI-2013 // , à la lumière, // A. Matocq leg» [white, printed label]. Deposited in the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (MNHN, Paris) with number MNHN(EH) 25708.

PARATYPES: 8 ♂♂, 14 ♀♀:

2 ♂♂, 3 ♀♀, labelled «Maroc: Rte 7002 entre Oulma et // Immouzzèr-des-Ida-Outanane, // gorges asif n'Tarhat, 9-V-2000 // A. Matocq leg.» [white, printed label]. Matocq coll. (Paris) (1 ♂, 2 ♀♀) and Rieger coll. (Nürtingen) (1 ♂, 1 ♀).

1 ♂, 2 ♀♀, labelled «Maroc: Environ. de Aqesri, // N 30° 37 549, W 9° 30 511 // Alt. 207 m, 6-V-2009 // A. Matocq leg» [white, printed label]. Matocq coll. (Paris).

3 ♂♂, 1 ♀, labelled «Maroc: Route du Djel // Touchka, N 30° 39 926 // W 9° 26 079. Alt 1361 m, // 7-V-2009 A. Matocq leg.» [white, printed label]. Matocq coll. (Paris) (1 ♂, 1 ♀) and Pagola-Carte coll. (Villabona) (2 ♂♂).

2 ♂♂, 8 ♀♀, labelled «Maroc: Ouarzazate // N 29° 45 374, W 8° 57 711 // Alt 951 m, 19-V-2009 // A. Matocq leg.» [white, printed label]. 1 ♂, 2 ♀♀ deposited in the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (MNHN, Paris) with numbers MNHN(EH) 25709, 25710 and 25711. The others: Matocq coll. (Paris) (1 ♂, 4 ♀♀) and Pagola-Carte coll. (Villabona) (2 ♀♀).

A red, printed label is now added below to each specimen: «HOLOTYPE [or PARATYPE] ♂ [or ♀] // *Phytocoris* (*Exophyto- // coris?*) *streitoi* **n. sp.** // Matocq & Pagola-Carte, 2023». The specimens are mounted on a white card, several males with the genitalic structures deposited inside a microvial, and pinned below.

Diagnosis:

A mirid undoubtedly belonging to the genus *Phytocoris* and to any of its subgenera *Exophytocoris* or *Compsocerocoris* (as currently defined). Tentatively placed in the former and clearly separated from all known species of both the former and the latter by the following combination of characters (in order of relevance): (a) Male genitalia: endosoma presumably of *Exophytocoris* type but very different from endosoma of all other known species and not ascribable to any of the endosoma types (= groups of species) recognized by Linnavuori (1994) in that subgenus;

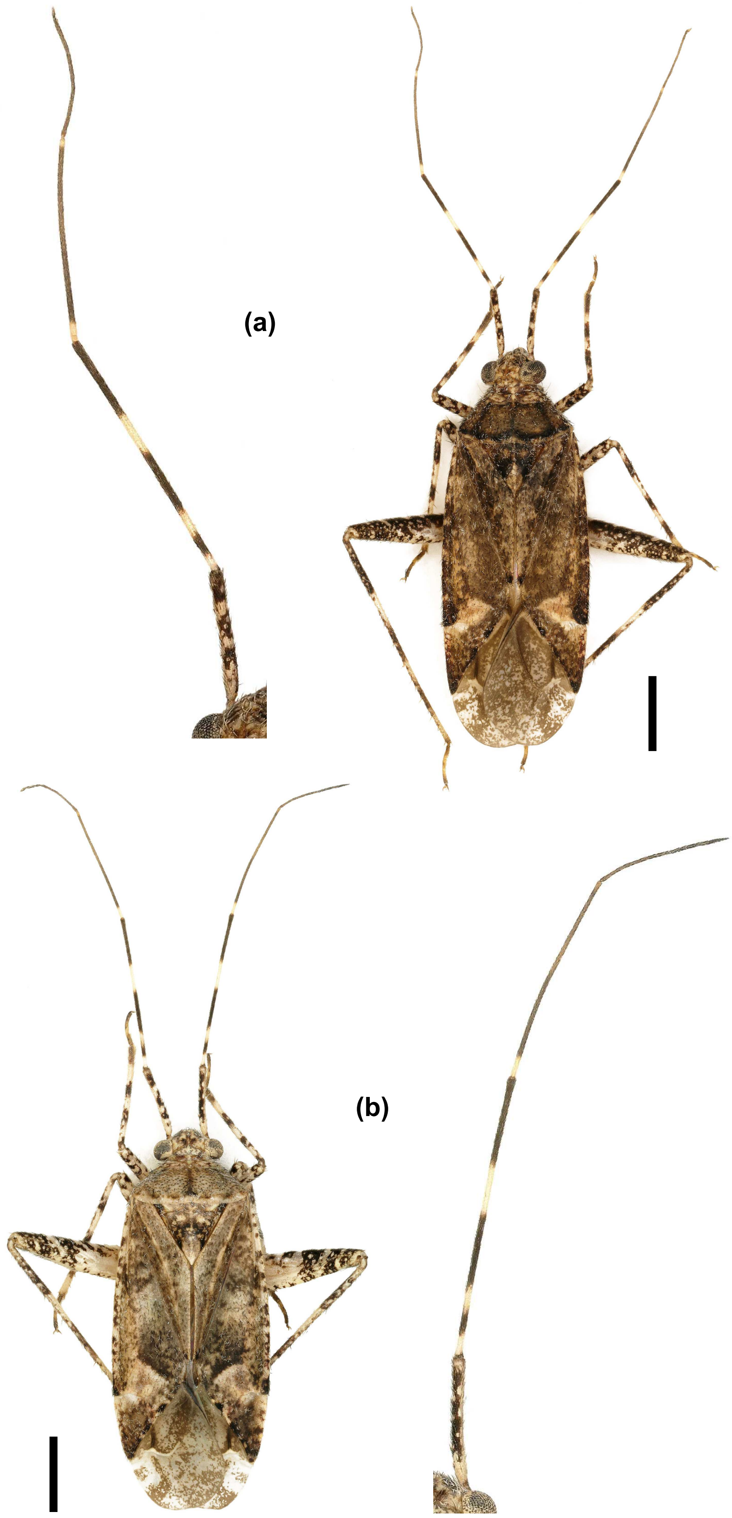

FIGURE 1. *Phytocoris* (*Exophytocoris?*) *streitoi* **n. sp.**, habitus and detail of antenna: (a) Male (holotype); (b) Female (Scale bars = 1 mm) (Photos: Jean-Claude Streito).

left paramere edentate; (b) Shape of head: of *Compsocerocoris* type, with a marked fronto-clypeal notch; (c) Colouration of antennae: segments II, III and IV mostly dark, with three pale rings on segment II and two on segment III; (d) Size and general shape: small to medium (4.9–5.6 mm) and elongate to slightly ovate (*e.g.* length/width = 2.8 in ♂♂ and 2.5 in ♀♀); (e) Other morphometric characters: moderate ocular index (around 1.2 in ♂♂ and 1.6 in ♀♀) and short to moderate antennal segments I and II, resulting in comparatively intermediate ratios segment I / diatone (0.8–1.0) and segment II / pronotum (1.1–1.3), being the ratio segments II/I = 1.9–2.4.

Description:

General habitus: (Fig. 1)

Macropterous males (Fig. 1a) and females (Fig. 1b). Length (mm): ♂♂ = 5.40 (5.00–5.63); ♀♀ = 5.21 (4.91–5.55). Body elongate to slightly ovate (♂♂) or more clearly ovate (♀♀), 3.45 (3.38–3.57) × (♂♂) and 3.33 (3.25–3.38) × (♀♀) longer than basal width of pronotum and 2.80 (2.73–2.96) × (♂♂) and 2.54 (2.44–2.60) × (♀♀) longer than maximum width. Dorsal vestiture consisting of strong, dark, semierect setae intermixed with fine, whitish, reclining setae. Dorsally matt. General dorsal colour yellow ochre (stramineous) to brown, profusely irrorated or mottled with dark brown spots and including more extensive brown areas on pronotum posteriorly (with a distinctive pronotal pattern), mesoscutum, scutellum, clavus and endocorium; pronotum anteriorly reddish; endocorium posteriorly with a triangle-shaped pale area. Ground colour of legs and antennal segment I whitish, largely mottled and banded (or even ringed: tibiae and antennal segment I) with brown or maroonish brown. Antennal segments II, III and IV mostly dark brown to black, with a total of five pale rings (three on segment II + two on segment III). Beyond general interindividual variability, females are noticeably paler, their hemelytra frequently showing large regions of corium and membrane rather pale, even whitish. In some males, on the contrary, the brown spots on hemelytra tend to merge resulting in an overall dark brown appearance in some specimens.

Head:

Clearly wider than high (× 1.2–1.3) in front view; and higher than long (× 1.3–1.5) in lateral view. Frons evenly convex and protruded anteriad of antennal fossae, about 1/3 (♂♂) or almost 1/2 (♀♀) of the eye length (Fig. 2g). Clypeus as protruding as frons in lateral view, concealed by it in dorsal view; frons and clypeus meeting along a marked notch (Fig. 2e). Ground colour of head dirty cream to stramineous; profusely spotted with brown, typically as follows: vertex with an approximate *fleur-de-lis*-shaped mark (with a widespread base) (see Fig. 2a) delimiting a pair of pale areas adjacent to inner margin of eyes; frons with 4-6 pairs of striae bilaterally branched from a pale central axis; several spots more or less developed around the fronto-clypeal suture; rest of clypeus with a pale «U»-shaped band in frontal view as a result of a conspicuous dark apical area reaching higher laterally; antennal fossae approximately encircled by the combination of a crescent (above) and a longitudinal stripe (below), the latter located on the upper part of mandibular plates; maxillary plates largely brown with the anterior apex pale; bucculae with a maroon to brown, longitudinal stripe along upper margin and a whitish to reddish lower part. Diatone = 0.9–1.0 mm. Ocular index: ♂♂ = 1.22 (1.14–1.27); ♀♀ = 1.60 (1.49–1.70). Eyes big and globose, occupying about 3/4 (♂♂) or 2/3 (♀♀) of height of head in lateral view; stramineous to brown (sometimes with golden shine) in preserved specimens; minute setae arising from between the ommatidia. Maxillary plates in front view protruding or arcuate. Bucculae almost not concealing segment I of rostrum. Rostrum reaching or exceeding metacoxae; segments I to III pale; a lateral, thin, red stripe on segment I, being the brightest red part of the insect; segment IV infuscated. Antennae subequal in length to body in both sexes. Length of antennal segments: I–II–III–IV = (0.78–0.95) – (1.65–2.05) – (1.25–1.55) – (0.85–1.00) mm. Segment I, dorsally and dorsolaterally, bearing a few translucent to white, erect (or semierect) setae, about as long as (or rarely longer than) the diameter of the segment, in addition to the dense, pale or dark, short adpressed setae directed forward. Colour pattern of segments as in Fig. 1a-b. Segment I whitish cream with maroonish or maroonish brown irrorations dorsally, in some specimens forming three hardly recognizable rings separated by pale bands; basally starting pale, apically ending dark; an outer-lateroventral longitudinal area completely pale. Segment II narrower (1/2–2/3) than segment I, mostly dark brown to black, and with three pale rings: a short, white, basal one (6–8% of segment length); a short, yellowish white, subbasal one (8–10% of segment length); and a greater, yellowish white, medio-apical one (13–18% of segment length), which is usually barely longer in ♀♀ than in ♂♂. Segment III slightly narrower than II, dark brown to black, with

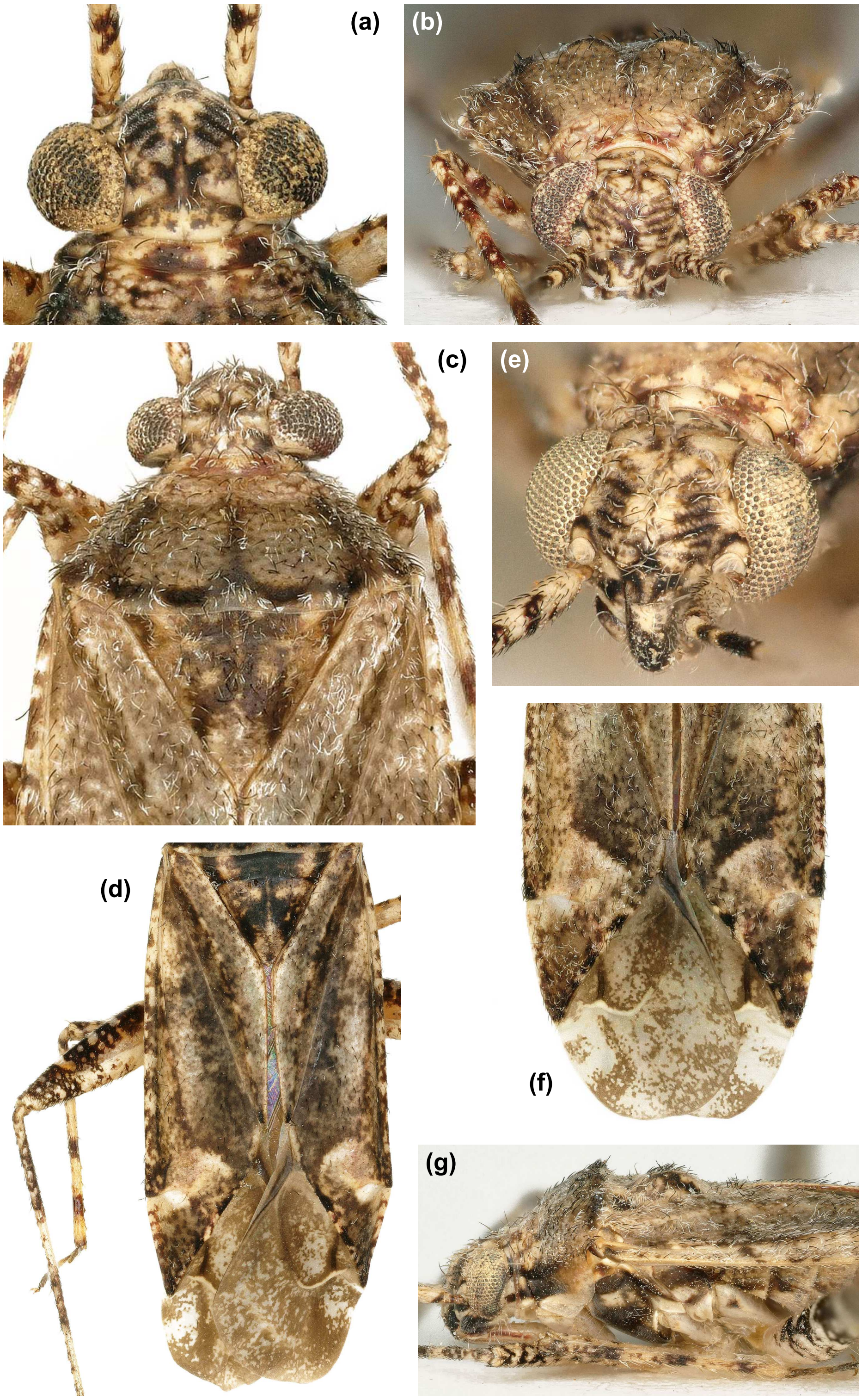

FIGURE 2. *Phytocoris* (*Exophytocoris*?) *streitoi* **n. sp.**, details of external morphology: (a) Head, dorsal view; (b) Head and pronotum, frontal view; (c) Head, pronotum and scutellum (paler specimen); (d) Scutellum and hemelytra (darker specimen); (e) Head, fronto-lateral view; (f) Cuneus and membrane; (g) Anterior part of the body, lateral view / (a)-(d) Males; (e)-(g) Females (Photos: Jean-Claude Streito).

two short, pale (yellowish white) rings: a basal one (less than 10% of segment length) and an apical one (less than 5% of segment length). Segment IV imperceptibly narrower than III, entirely dark brown to blackish. Ratio segment I / diatone: ♂♂ = 0.93 (0.86–0.97); ♀♀ = 0.98 (0.91–1.03). Ratio segment II / diatone: ♂♂ = 1.96 (1.83–2.03); ♀♀ = 2.09 (2.00–2.19). Ratio segment II / basal width of pronotum: ♂♂ = 1.21 (1.12–1.25); ♀♀ = 1.25 (1.15–1.30). Ratio segments II/I: ♂♂ = 2.11 (2.05–2.19); ♀♀ = 2.13 (1.97–2.41). Ratio segments II/III+IV = 0.79–0.86.

Thorax:

Pronotum (Fig. 2b-c, g) subtrapezoidal, 1.98 (1.97–2.03) × (♂♂) and 1.98 (1.93–2.03) × (♀♀) wider than long (including collar) and 1.62 (1.61–1.64) × (♂♂) and 1.68 (1.59–1.73) × (♀♀) wider than diatone. Basal width = 1.45–1.63 mm. Mesal length (including collar) = 0.73–0.83 mm. Moderately to strongly declivent anteriad. Lateral margins almost straight. Posterior margin, in dorsal view (Fig. 2c), evenly convex except for a mesal concavity; in frontal view (Fig. 2b) unevenly convex, showing an undulating shape due to 6 protuberances, the outermost pair being the greatest and coinciding with the posterolateral angles of pronotum. Pronotal calli distinct. Pronotal ring or collar subequal in length to, or slightly shorter than, the width of antennal segment I. Anterior 1/3 of pronotum, including collar and calli, pale with a mesal stripe the palest; collar largely reddish; calli and adjacent areas more or less tinged or irrorated with red or maroon; posterior 2/3 of pronotum stramineous to brown, with some regions darker posteriad and/or with small dots darker (seemingly corresponding to the arising points of dark setae), and a typical (although not totally developed in every specimen) pattern of 5 dark, longitudinal stripes: a pair of lateromarginal ones, a pair of sublateromarginal ones and a mesal one; the former two pairs ending each in a protuberance of the pronotal posterior margin, the latter one ending in the concavity of that margin between the other two protuberances; all 5 dark longitudinal stripes and the basal dark band forming an approximately, continuous or not, fork-shaped pattern. Mesoscutum largely exposed, raised, and forming a deep concavity (Fig. 2g) between it and the scutellum *sensu stricto*; with a pale mesal stripe, a pair of dark spots on the margins and a pair of pale, submarginal ones, these being the palest regions of the mesoscutum. Scutellum (Fig. 2c-d) triangular, slightly wider than long, centrally swollen, and with acute apex; showing a high degree of variability (independent of sexual dimorphism) concerning the raised appearance; largely brown with very pale apex, and generally with additional pale regions very variable in size (much greater and paler in females): a mesal stripe, a pair of submedian spots or regions and a pair of lateromarginal stripes on the anterior region. Pronotum laterally (propleura) largely dark brown to maroon, with a lower whitish region. Meso- and metapleura similarly combining dark and pale regions in a more checkered pattern (Fig. 2g). Coxae, trochanters, base of femorae and scent efferent system pale.

Hemelytra:

Sides subparallel to moderately arcuate. Largely surpassing the apex of abdomen (Fig. 1a-b, 2d, f). General colour stramineous to brown, profusely irrorated or mottled with dark brown spots; males darker than females (in the former, the spots usually tend to merge, prevailing the dark brown colour; in the latter, large stramineous or even whitish regions dominate); embolium and radial vein mottled with rows of dark spots; clavus generally paler on its inner part and with apex narrowly black; endocoria darker along the clavo-corial suture and ending in a chromatically contrasting, anteriorly pointed triangle (as typically in many *Phytocoris* species) which is markedly pale, preceded by a very darkened region on posterior half of endocorium and followed by a whitish spot on anterior part of cuneus (Fig. 2d, f); cuneal fracture noticeable for dividing the also darkened apex of embolium and the whitish base of cuneus; inner margin of cuneus ornamented with several dark spots, outer margin similar to embolium in colour and with black apex; central region of cuneus gradually darkening posteriad and generally tinged with orange or red to both sides (Fig. 2d); in some specimens, orangish tinge extended anteriad to corium, particularly along radial vein (Fig. 2f). Membrane whitish grey mottled with brownish grey, paler or darker (less or more mottled) in females (Fig. 2f) and males (Fig. 2d), respectively; four conspicuous pale areas (usually coalescent in females): two posteriorly to cuneus, one in the apical region and another one inside major cell; veins generally two-coloured: longitudinal veins brown, transversal veins anteriorly brown, posteriorly whitish grey.

Legs:

With dense, pale and dark, adpressed setae; tibiae bearing semierect, whitish to amber coloured spines, slightly longer than tibial width; not arising from dark dots; metatibial spines the longest. Ground colour whitish but largely mottled and banded with brown or maroonish brown; generally paler (less extended dark irrorations) in females. Femora basally largely pale; centrally and apically irrorated with brown to maroonish brown spots unevenly distributed; dorsally less mottled than ventrally; pro- and mesofemora generally paler than metafemora; two to three preapical dark bands on metafemora, particularly noticeably in females (Fig. 1b), more cryptic, diffused or inexistent in most males (Figs. 1a, 2d). Tibiae with a conspicuous pattern of alternate colour rings, as follows: protibiae with three dark and three pale rings, mesotibiae with three dark and four pale rings; usually both pro- and mesotibiae with an additional, shorter but darker, basal one; metatibiae with three dark and three pale rings, the most basal being the longest of dark ones (Fig. 2d). All tarsi of roughly equal colour: brownish basally (tarsomere I) and apically (apical part of tarsomere III) and stramineous medially (tarsomere II + basal part of tarsomere III). Length of metatibiae = 2.93–3.58 mm. Ratio metatibia / basal width of pronotum = 1.98–2.28. Length of metatarsomeres (relative proportions): I–II–III = 6.5 – 8 – 10.5.

Abdomen:

Ventrolaterally stramineous with ill-defined reddish brown longitudinal bands. Genitalic segments darker than preceding sternites; particularly, pygophore dark brown.

Male genitalia:

Pygophore (Fig. 3a-b) troncoconical to subtriangular, slightly longer than wide; a conspicuous tubercle on the left side of genital opening, and an almost unnoticeable one on its right side. Right paramere as in Fig. 3c: elongate, with the apex more chitinized, and bearing uniformly scattered setae along outer side. Left paramere as in Fig. 3d: edentate, with the primary apophysis apically enlarged and the sensory lobe slightly protruded; apical enlargement showing an obvious crest; abundant setae on body and sensory lobe. Endosoma as in Fig. 4: with membranous sac mainly bilobed; sclerotized basal process (SBP) (= spiculum) consisting of a long sclerite, between blade-like and trough-like shaped, bearing 20-25 teeth along its most obvious comb-like margin; variously chitinized areas, including a conspicuous, club-shaped, dentate longitudinal area (DLA) near secondary gonopore, and a less obvious longitudinal structure laterally located and most strongly chitinized anteriorly to secondary gonopore.

Female genitalia:

Not studied.

Etymology:

The name of the new species is dedicated to our colleague and friend the hemipterist Jean-Claude Streito (Montpellier, France), as evocation of collecting trips in Morocco and for his valuable and competent help in the study of mirids. The name is a noun in genitive.

Type locality:

Morocco: between Azizal and Ait Taguella.

Distribution and biology:

All the specimens were collected in the High Atlas mountain chain, Morocco, between May and June. Host plant unknown. The holotype was collected by beating *Quercus ilex* and *Juniperus* sp.

Discussion

P. (*E.*) *streitoi* **n. sp.** is tentatively placed in the subgenus *Exophytocoris* of *Phytocoris* because it is, in our opinion, most closely related to the species therein contained. However, according to the subgeneric diagnoses and to the sets of characters usually adduced for separating subgenera in the Palaearctic Region (for example: Wagner, 1974; Rieger, 1989; Linnavuori, 1999), the new species could be ascribed either to *Exophytocoris* or *Compsocerocoris*, or to neither of them; that is to say, it shows a combination of characters of both.

Among the three subgenera with dark antennal segment III, *Phytocoris s. str.* must be left aside (mainly due to its head shape), and then *Exophytocoris* or *Compsocerocoris* appear in every identification key as two closely related subgenera with a few distinguishing characters between them: essentially, *Exophytocoris* species are generally small (< 6 mm) with reddish or reddish brown patterns and antennal segment I shorter than diatone; and *Compsocerocoris* species show a deep notch between frons and clypeus and small teeth on the left paramere. Beyond that, no other differences can be found which are unique to the members (and to all of the members) within each subgenus. Moreover, some of the mentioned ones are even not always reliable, since several species «fail to comply with» them. For example, *P.* (*E.*) *buxi* Ribaut, 1928 has small teeth on the left paramere, and *P.* (*C.*) *ribesi* Wagner, 1969 shows the ratio antennal segment I / diatone < 1. Concerning the male genitalic structures, no unifying characters are useful to distinguish be-

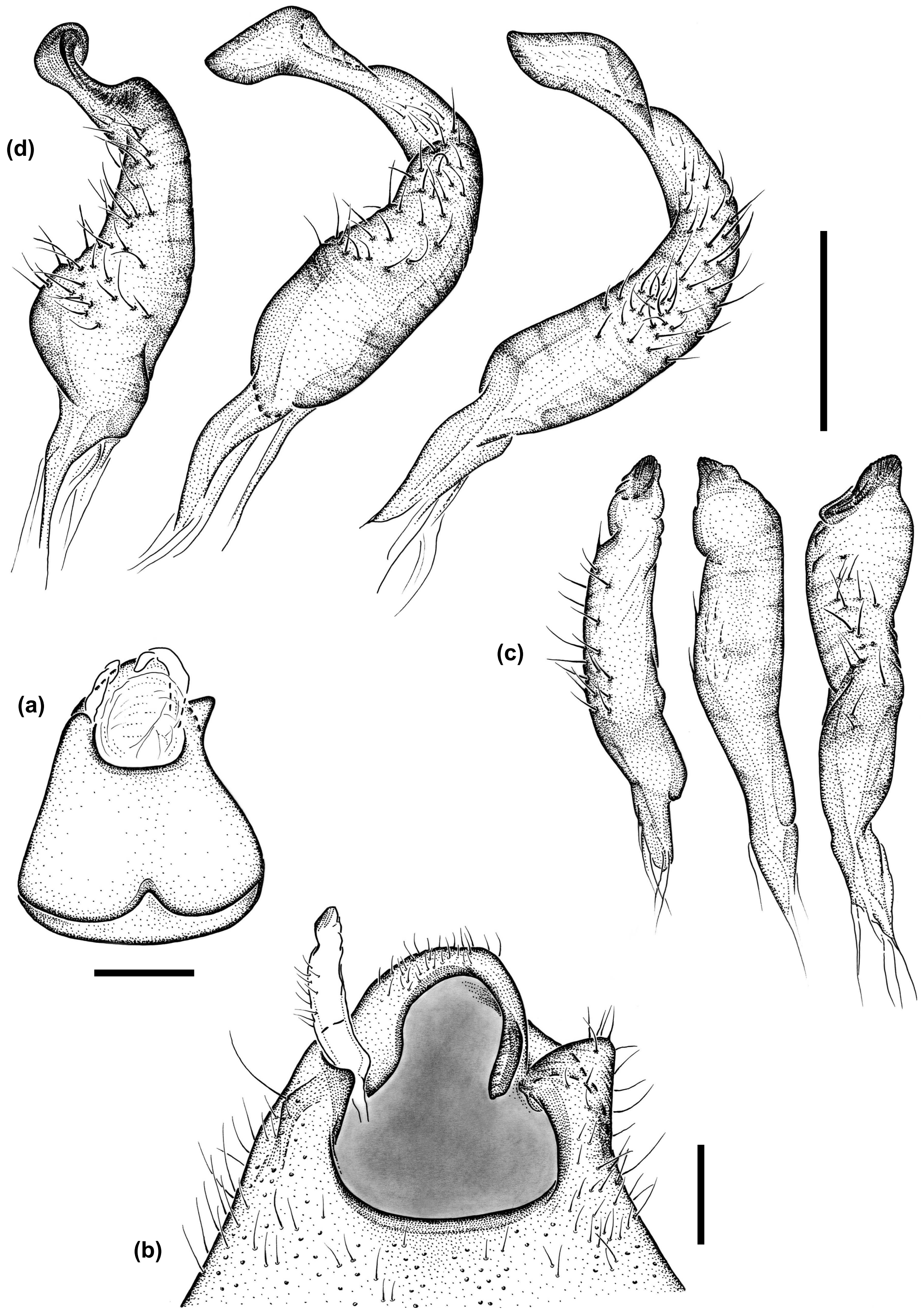

FIGURE 3. *Phytocoris* (*Exophytocoris?*) *streitoi* **n. sp.**, male genitalia: (a)-(b) Pygophore in dorsal view; (c) Right paramere in different views and/or specimens; (d) Left paramere in different views and/or specimens (Scale bars: (a) = 0.5 mm; (b)-(d) = 0.2 mm).

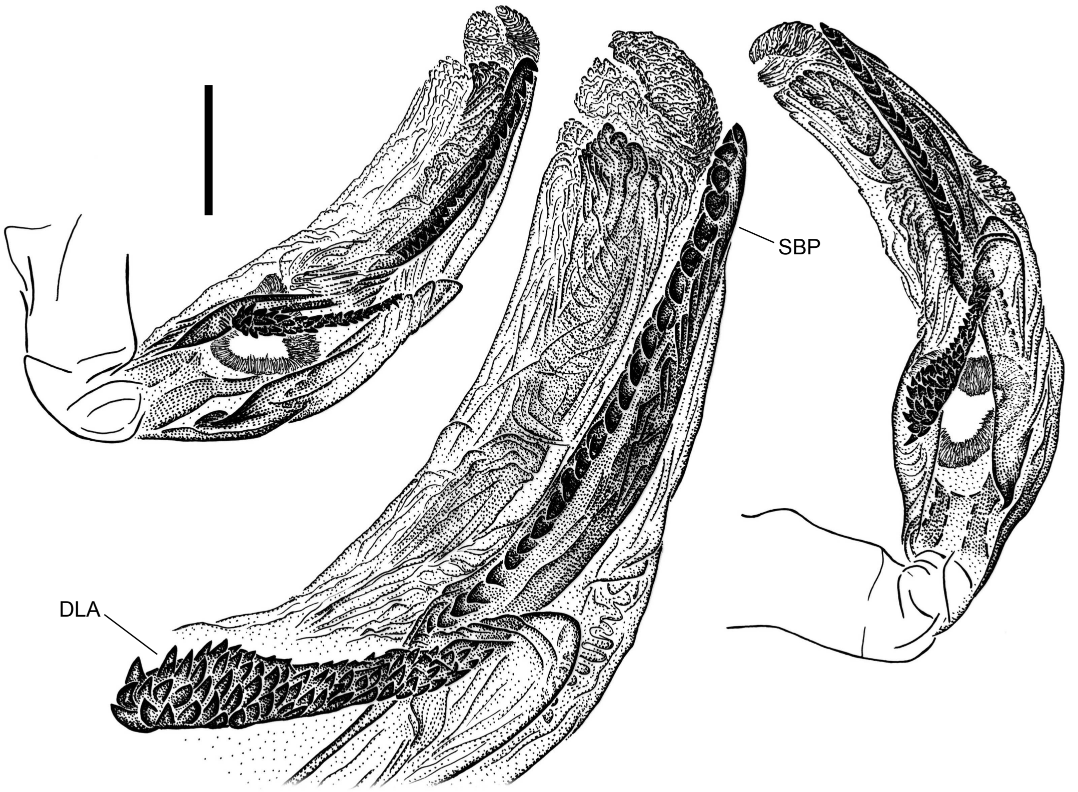

FIGURE 4. *Phytocoris* (*Exophytocoris?*) *streitoi* **n. sp.**, male genitalia: Endosoma in different views and/or specimens (Abbreviations: DLA = dentate longitudinal area; SBP = sclerotized basal process or spiculum) (Scale bar = 0.2 mm (left and right) or 0.1 mm (middle)).

tween *Exophytocoris* as a whole and *Compsocerocoris* as a whole, although some groups and subgroups of species within them have been established according to (and clearly sharing) their types of endosoma.

P. (*E.*) *streitoi* **n. sp.** has edentate left paramere (like *Exophytocoris*) but marked fronto-clypeal notch (like *Compsocerocoris*). Furthermore, its external appearance could perfectly fit that of many species in both subgenera. It is a small to medium *Phytocoris* (4.9–5.6 mm), with antennal segment I short although not extremely short, and with a moderate ocular index (around 1.2 in ♂♂ and 1.6 in ♀♀). Therefore, our comparative efforts have focused on the species of the two mentioned subgenera; summarized as follows.

We have not found a similar combination of morphometric and qualitative characters neither in Wagner's (1974) and Wagner and Weber's (1978) synthesis of the Mediterranean fauna, nor in subsequent works, for the same region, describing new species or clarifying others (see: Aukema, 2019). More interestingly, the structures found in the endosoma of *P.* (*E.*) *streitoi* **n. sp.** appear to be combined in a unique way, since it has been impossible to find something similar in the literature; particularly, the comb-like sclerotized basal process with 20-25 teeth and the club-shaped, dentate longitudinal area near secondary gonopore (see Fig. 4).

Following Wagner's (1974) and Wagner and Weber's (1978) identification keys, together with additional information from more recent publications (with updated known diversity of species as well as more accurate illustrations), one could reach the following confusing conclusions:

(1) Opting for subgenus *Exophytocoris*: the most similar species would be *P.* (*E.*) *oleae* Linnavuori, 1962. Curiously, there exists a high coincidence with this eastern-Mediterranean taxon concerning morphometry and other diagnostic characters such as colour patterns of antennae (see: Wagner, 1974: fig. 117b) and pronotum (see: Wagner, 1974: fig. 119a-b). Nevertheless, the «spiculum» of its endosoma (see Linnavuori, 1962: fig. 43h; Putshkov, 1978: fig. 310) is completely different.

(2) Opting for subgenus *Compsocerocoris*: the pattern of rings of antennal segments II and III would place the new species among a group formed by *P.* (*C.*) *martini* Reuter, 1895, *P.* (*C.*) *ribesi* Wagner, 1969, *P.* (*C.*) *viberti* Horváth, 1911 and *P.* (*C.*) *sanctipetri* Carapezza, 1985 (as *femoralis* Fieber, 1961 in Wagner, 1974). *P.* (*C.*) *martini* and *P.* (*C.*) *sanctipetri*, however, are distinctly bigger insects with antennal segment I longer than diatone, among other differences. As to *P.* (*C.*) *ribesi* and *P.* (*C.*) *viberti*, despite strong colour similarities with the former and strong morphometric similarities with the latter, many small details separate them from the new species. But above all, it is the endosoma of the male genitalia which is completely different in *P.* (*E.*) *streitoi* **n. sp.** (see Ribes and Heiss (2001) for accurate illustrations of the genitalia of *P.* (*C.*) *ribesi* and *P.* (*C.*) *viberti*).

In our opinion, the endosoma and left paramere of the male genitalia place the new species closer to *Exophytocoris* (or, at least, to some of its members) than to *Compsocerocoris*, even when apparently it may seem more similar to some *Compsocerocoris* species, such as the mentioned «group of *martini*». Nevertheless, it must be stressed, once again: (1) that a true separation between both subgenera is not easy, and probably also not realistic; and (2) that *P.* (*E.*) *streitoi* **n. sp.** represents another example of the inconsistency between external and genitalic morphology in the classification within *Phytocoris*.

Going deeper in the discussion about the taxonomic placement and affinities of *P.* (*E.*) *streitoi* **n. sp.** and its congeners:

(1) Assuming it as belonging to *Exophytocoris*, it cannot be ascribed to either of the three groups of species recognized by Linnavuori (1994) and with updated information and terminology by Pagola-Carte *et al.* (2022). In fact, it even seems to show a combination of endosomal characters from the three groups. They are already three species of recent description which do not fit well into those groups: *P.* (*E.*) *raunolinnavuorii* Carapezza, 2016, *P.* (*E.*) *yetillus* Pagola-Carte *et al.*, 2022 and now *P.* (*E.*) *streitoi* **n. sp.**

(2) Two species placed in *Compsocerocoris*, namely *P.* (*C.*) *minabanus* Linnavuori, 1999 and *P.* (*C.*) *thisbe* Linnavuori, 1999, have «a finely dentate area near secondary gonopore» (Linnavuori, 1999: 179-181; figs. 8-9) which resemble, and could be homologous to, the dentate longitudinal area of *P.* (*E.*) *streitoi* **n. sp.**

All in all, it seems reasonable to think that many undescribed species of «*Compso*/*Exo*» *Phytocoris* are still to be discovered in the Mediterranean region, and that the male genitalia should play a crucial role in a forthcoming, highly desirable revision of this genus.

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