



Review of different classes of RFID authentication protocols

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Abstract

Radio-frequency identification (RFID) is an up-and-coming technology. The major limitations of RFID technology are security and privacy concerns. Many methods, including encryption, authentication and hardware techniques, have been presented to overcome security and privacy problems. This paper focuses on authentication protocols. The combination of RFID technology being popular but unsecure has led to an influx of mutual authentication protocols. Authentication protocols are classified as being fully fledged, simple, lightweight or ultra-lightweight. Since 2002, much important research and many protocols have been presented, with some of the protocols requiring further development. The present paper reviews in detail recently proposed RFID mutual authentication protocols, according to the classes of the authentication protocols. The protocols were compared mainly in terms of security, the technique that they are based on, protocols that the presented protocol has been compared with, and finally, the method of verifying the protocol. Important points of the comparisons were collected in two tables.

Keywords Authentication protocols · Radio-frequency identification · Radio-frequency identification attacks · Radio-frequency identification authentication protocols

1 Introduction

Radio-frequency identification (RFID) is being developed to distinguish the correct object with a small tag. This technology has been considered as one of the most substantial technologies of these decades [1]. RFID systems consist of a tag, a tag reader and a back-end database server. The reader reads the RFID tag's identifier and sends the queried identity to the back end server. The information obtained from the tag is mostly an index to a back end database.

The tags are classified into three types according to how they are powered: active, semi-active and passive tags. Active RFID tags need internal batteries to power the electronic components and to create a reply signal to the reader. Semi-active tags or in other words semi-passive use

batteries only for powering microchip's circuit and they harvest energy to create a reply signal to the reader by using reader's radio signal. Passive tags harvest their energy from the reader. RFID tags are also grouped into three basic frequency ranges: low frequency (125–134 kHz), high frequency (13.56 MHz) and ultra-high frequency (860–960 MHz) ranges [2]. Passive (low-cost) RFID tags that operate in ultra-high-frequency bands have allowed innovation in several fields of daily application, such as building access control, supply chain management and goods tracking. The Electronic Product Code (EPC) Class1 (C1) Generation2 (Gen2) standard is an example of passive RFID technology [3].

Some experts believe that optical barcodes will be replaced with low-cost RFID tags attached to consumer items [4]. However, owing to the wireless nature of communication between the tag and reader, this technology has major security and privacy threats. Mutual authentication protocols are generally used to overcome security attacks between the reader and tags. Since 2002, much research has been conducted and numerous protocols are proposed but some of these still need to be developed further.

In the proceeding sections, Sect. 2 discusses and explains authentication protocols and their goals. Section 3

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examines and compares protocols according to their class. Section 4 evaluates the comparison. Section 5 presents conclusions drawn from the review of authentication protocols.

2 Authentication protocols

Lopez et al. [5] presented many solutions to overcome the security issues and risks associated with the RFID systems. In this study, we aimed to deepen on authentication protocols. Authentication is the first step in defending against wireless attacks on RFID systems. Once the server validates the identity of the RFID tag, it begins trusting the tag. After authentication, the reader can access the contents of the authenticated tags.

2.1 Classes of authentication protocols

Chein [6] stated that authentication protocols are divided into four classes with accordance to the tag's computational cost and supported operations.

- Fully fledged protocols: Protocols that support symmetric and asymmetric encryption, and a one-way function. Examples are in [7, 8].
- Simple protocols: Protocols that support hash function and random number generator (RNG). Examples of this class are given in [9, 10].
- Lightweight protocols: Protocols that support cyclic redundancy check (CRC) and RNG. Examples are given in [11–14].
- Ultra-lightweight protocols: Protocols that are tailored specially to extremely constrained devices. These protocols involve only simple bitwise operations (like AND, OR, XOR) on tags. Examples are given in [15, 16].

2.2 Goals of authentication protocols

Considering the variety of potential threats, an authentication protocol, whatever the class, should address all or most of the following security threats and services.

Security threats

- Tracking attack: The attacker can track information linked to a given tag.
- Denial-of-service (DoS) attack: It is attempting to crash tags by having malicious readers overload them with more data than they can handle.
- Desynchronization attack: The attacker desynchronizes the reader and tag.

- Man-in-the-middle attack: It is taking control of the message flow.
- Impersonation attack: The attacker forges an authenticated tag and acts as a valid tag.
- Cloning attack: The attacker fools the reader into believing that it receives data from a legitimate tag.
- Full-disclosure attack: The attacker compromises all secret information of the tag.
- Eavesdropping: The attacker eavesdrops on the communication channel.
- Replay attack: The originator or attacker intercepts and retransmits data, possibly as part of a masquerade attack by packet substitution.

Security services

- Mutual authentication: Property that both the tag and server are authenticated to each other.
- Confidentiality: Property that all secret information is securely transmitted.
- Availability: Property that authenticating parties are always available to communicate.
- Forward/backward security: Property that an attacker cannot compromise the previous/current confidential information even if it obtains the current/previous confidential information.
- Ownership transferable: Property that the privacy of the present and new owners is not violated when the existing owner passes necessary data to the new owner.
- Tag anonymity: Property that the attacker cannot trace a tag by listening to the channel.
- Traceability: The tag holder can be traced by using the location privacy information stored in the tag.
- Location privacy: Property that the attacker cannot judge the tracking object from the information of a tag.
- Information privacy: Property that only the legitimate reader can access the information stored in the tag.

3 Examination and comparisons of authentication protocols

Unlike the study of Soos [17] where protocols are categorized according to the services provided and the employed algorithms, this section presents 22 recently proposed RFID authentication protocols with respect to their class; some protocols are examined and explained in detail while others are given in tables because of space limitations. The first column of Table 1 lists the 22 protocols in terms of their class starting from fully fledged protocols and ending with ultra-lightweight protocols. The second column gives the function that the protocol is based on. The third column gives the verification tool used for the

Table 1 Techniques, verifications and classes of authentication protocols (*P* protocol, *C* class, *F* fully fledged, *S* simple, *L* lightweight, *UL* ultralightweight)

P	Function based on	Verified by	EPC	Compared with	C
[31]	ECC	...	X	[27, 28, 30]	F
[37]	Public key cryptography	BAN logic	X	[38–42]	F
[32]	ECC	Random oracle model	X	[25, 28, 30, 43]	F
[33]	ECC & AES	Tested and realized on real devices	X	[25, 28–30]	F
[44]	Increasing key space using nonces	AVISPA	X	[45–47]	F
[48]	Cryptographically supported NFC tags in Medication	Manually as in [49]	X	[49]	F
[50]	One-way hash function and semi randomized encryption keys	Manually as in [51]	X	[9, 10, 36, 51, 52]	F
[53]	Hash based	X	[36, 51, 54]	S
[55]	Hash based	Manually	X	[6, 56–61]	S
[62]	Hash and PRNG based	GNY logic [63]	✓	[64–66]	S
[67]	Constant-time complexity	Byzantine adversarial model [52]	X	[68]	S
[69]	Hash operation & RNG	GNY logic [63]	X	[10, 70–75]	S
[76]	One-way Hash Function	GNY logic [63]	X	[10, 77, 78]	S
[79]	XOR, PRNG and CRC based	Manually	✓	[42, 80]	L
[81]	XOR and PRNG based	Manually as [82]	✓	[83–86]	L
[87]	Fast tag indexing, CRC & PRNG	A Simulation Program	✓	[10, 73, 77, 88–91]	L
[92]	Learning parity with noise	Manually as in [93]	✓	[93–96]	L
[97]	A Pseudo Random Generator Shared Between Readers and Tags	AVISPA	✓	[98–103]	L
[104]	CRC and permutation	Simple Promela Interpreter (SPIN)	✓	[6, 38, 56, 105]	L
[106]	A security ultralightweight bitwise conversion	Manually	✓	[6, 38, 57, 58, 64, 105, 107]	UL
[108]	XOR bitwise rotation based	Manually	✓	[6, 38, 56–58, 105]	UL
[109]	Physically Uncloneable Functions PUF	...	✓	[110–112]	UL

authentication. The EPC column lists whether the protocol is compatible with EPC Gen2. The ‘compared with’ column lists the other protocols that the protocol is compared with. The last column gives the class of the authentication protocol. The protocols comparison in terms of security threats and security services in Table 2. Whilst, Table 3 presents the examined paper names and publishing year along with their references.

3.1 Fully fledged protocols

The fully fledged class involves cryptographic algorithms that are divided mainly into two groups: symmetric algorithms and asymmetric algorithms. Asymmetric algorithms based on elliptic curve cryptography (ECC) are strong in terms of security and the services they provide. Compared with the Rivest–Shamir–Adleman (RSA) scheme, ECC-based systems are smaller, faster and consume less power. Hereby, for resource constrained systems, the ECC-based algorithm is a better choice than the RSA algorithm. It is

noted that the RSA scheme has an ECC-based variant. Many ECC-based authentication protocols have thus been proposed to satisfy severely constrained tags.

In 2006, Tuyls et al. [7], using the Schnorr identification protocol, proposed an ECC-based RFID identification protocol. They asserted that the protocol is resistant against tag counterfeiting. However, in 2008, Lee et al. [18] showed that the Tuyls et al.’s protocol is defenseless against a location tracking, does not insure forward security nor mutual authentication and lacks scalability. In 2007, Batina et al. [19], based on Okamoto’s authentication protocol, proposed an RFID identification protocol based on ECC and mentioned their proposal could avoid active attacks. Yet, Lee et al. [18] stated that the protocol is vulnerable in terms of forward security and location tracking attack and lacks scalability. Lee et al. [18] claimed to have solved these three issues, but studies published in 2008 [20, 21] showed that the Lee et al.’s proposal is defenseless against tracking and forgery attacks and does not provide mutual authentication.

Table 2 Comparison of authentication protocols in terms of security threats and security services (*F* fully fledged, *S* simple, *L* lightweight, *UL* ultra-lightweight)

Protocol	31	37	32	33	44	48	50	53	55	62	67	69	76	79	81	87	92	97	104	106	108	109
Security threats																						
Tracking attack							✓					✓		✓						✓	✓	
DoS	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓					✓	✓			✓
De-synchronize	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	
Man-in-the-middle	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								✓	✓			✓	
Impersonation attack	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓							✓
Cloning attack	✓						✓					✓	✓	✓			✓					
Full disclosure attack							✓												✓	✓	✓	
Eaves dropping		✓							✓									✓	✓			
Replay attack	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Security services																						
Mutual authentication	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Confidentiality	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Availability	✓																					
Forward security	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		✓			
Backward security			✓	✓						✓	✓						✓	✓				✓
Ownership transferable													✓									
Tag anonymity	✓																					✓
Traceability	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓	✓	✓								
Location privacy				✓	✓				✓										✓			✓
Information privacy	✓								✓									✓		✓		
Class																						
Class	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	S	S	S	S	S	S	L	L	L	L	UL	UL	UL	UL	

In 2009, by reconstructing the three components of elliptic curve discrete logarithm problem based randomized access control (EC-RAC) [18]; transfer schemes for secure ID and the secure password, and the server's authentication according to the system requirements and security properties, Lee et al. [22] proposed 6 different protocols to minimize the computation amount on tags.

In 2010, Lee et al. [23] came up with an ECC-based authentication protocol that addressed the existing tracking problems for the protocols presented in [7, 19]. This scheme considers only tag to reader identification and excludes reader to tag authentication. In 2011, Zhang et al. [24] proposed a randomized key protocol based on ECC that is an improvement on the schemes of Lee et al. and Tuyls et al. This protocol is safe against some relevant attacks, but still does not provide mutual authentication.

In 2014, to achieve mutual authentication, Liao et al. [25] proposed a secure authentication protocol based on the strength of ECC with an ID-verifier transfer protocol. However, studies [26–28] showed that the Liao et al.'s proposal suffers from security flaws and lacks performance efficiency. Later in the same year, using ECC, Chou [29] proposed an authentication protocol and informed that their

proposal can resist different attacks. Nevertheless, Zhang and Qi [30] showed that Chou's proposal faces problems in terms of tag information privacy and backward and forward traceability. Then, in 2015, Jin et al. [31] suggested a secure mutual authentication protocol for healthcare environments based on ECC and asserted that their proposal can resist different attacks and performs better than schemes presented in [27, 28, 30].

In 2016, Farash et al. [32] showed that Zhang et al.'s [30] scheme does not provide forward privacy. Very recently, in 2017, Ibrahim et al. [33], proposed a strong and powerful mutual authentication protocol based on ECC and proven on the last revision of the wireless identification and sensing platform (WISP5). In the proposal, mutual authentication is proceeded in only two steps and withstands almost all common attacks and fulfills the RFID systems' security requirements.

Asymmetric algorithms are not the only choice for RFID systems because they are time consuming. Moreover, their implementation to RFID systems remains considerably challenging. Some researchers have thus directed their attention towards symmetric schemes, which are divided mainly into two groups: block ciphers and stream ciphers.

Table 3 Examined protocols' reference numbers and names

Refs.	Paper name and publishing year
[31]	A secure RFID mutual authentication protocol for healthcare environments using elliptic curve cryptography (2015)
[37]	A novel mutual RFID authentication protocol with low complexity and high security (2014)
[32]	A provably secure RFID authentication protocol based on elliptic curve for healthcare environments (2016)
[33]	An advanced encryption standard powered mutual authentication protocol based on elliptic curve cryptography for RFID, proven on WISP (2017)
[44]	Increasing key space at little extra cost in RFID authentications (2014)
[48]	Cryptographically supported NFC tags in medication for better inpatient safety (2014)
[50]	HPAP: A novel authentication scheme for RFID systems (2013)
[53]	A hash based mutual RFID tag authentication protocol in telecare medicine information system (2015)
[55]	An efficient RFID authentication protocol providing strong privacy and security (2016)
[62]	Cryptanalysis of the LMAP protocol: A low-cost RFID authentication protocol. (2017)
[67]	An efficient and private RFID authentication protocol supporting ownership transfer (2013)
[69]	RSEL: revocable secure efficient lightweight RFID authentication scheme (2014)
[76]	An one-way hash function based lightweight mutual authentication rfid protocol (2013)
[79]	A novel mutual authentication scheme for low-cost RFID systems (2016)
[81]	An efficient lightweight RFID authentication protocol with strong trajectory privacy protection (2017)
[87]	Secure and efficient lightweight RFID authentication protocol based on fast tag indexing (2014)
[92]	An improvement in HB-family lightweight authentication protocols for practical use of RFID system (2013)
[97]	KEDGEN2: A key establishment and derivation protocol for EPC Gen2 RFID systems (2014)
[104]	An ultralightweight RFID authentication protocol with CRC and permutation (2014)
[106]	SLAP: Succinct and lightweight authentication protocol for low-cost RFID system (2016)
[108]	Cryptanalysis of a novel ultra-lightweight mutual authentication protocol for IoT devices using RFID tags (2017)
[109]	k-strong privacy for radio frequency identification authentication protocols based on physically unclonable functions (2014)

Stream ciphers are faster and easier to implement but are weaker comparing with block ciphers. Block ciphers are thus preferable, and the most popular block cipher encryption algorithm is the Advance Encryption Standard (AES).

It is worth mentioning that Feldhofer et al. [8] introduced an efficient implementation of AES in 2004. However, in 2008, Kaps [34] noted that the implementation of the Extended Tiny Encryption Algorithm (XTEA) needs less power and fewer resources than that of the AES. Furthermore, searches that use the AES mostly refer to the number of gates rather than the security goals of the authentication protocol, which is the main subject of the present paper.

3.2 Simple protocols

The simple protocol class includes protocols that support RNG and a one-way hash function. Okhubo et al. [35] came up with a strong protocol, as an example of a hash-based protocol, in 2003. However, the tag searching cost by the server is high for this protocol. In the same year, the proposal was updated by Weis et al. [10] under the name of the hash-lock protocol. Although the hash-lock protocol

performs well in tag implementation and effectiveness of the server, it performs poorly in terms of security. In 2006, Tsudik claimed that Yet Another Trivial RFID Authentication Protocol (YA-TRAP) [9] resists the tracing attack.

In 2007, however, Tsudik noted the flaws of his previous protocol and proposed a new protocol [36], even though his new protocol does not reflect his original purpose and is vulnerable to a reply attack. In 2011, Chien et al. [113] showed that the scheme presented in [9] is vulnerable to replay attacks and DoS and proposed a secured version. In the same year, Lopez et al. [114] claimed that the proposal of Chien et al. [113] is defenseless against impersonation and replay attacks and proposed a new concept called Inpatient Safety RFID system (IS-RFID).

In 2012, Yen et al. [115] noted that medication evidence generated by an IS-RFID system can be modified by a hospital easily. In 2012, Chen et al. [116] suggested a forge resistant protocol that withstands impersonation, desynchronization and traceability attacks. In 2012, Cho et al. [65] came up with a hash function based mutual authentication protocol that was inspired from his previous work [54]. In the years 2012 and 2013, the scheme of Cho et al. [65] was analyzed by Kim et al. [117, 118] and found to be most vulnerable to a desynchronization attack.

In 2014, Safkhani et al. [119] also analyzed the scheme of Cho et al. [65] and showed that it is vulnerable to desynchronization, tag and reader impersonation. Moreover, the scheme introduced in [117, 118] based on the work presented in [65] was analyzed [119] and found to have the same security faults. In 2015, a new mutual authentication protocol based on hash function proposed by Srivastava et al. [53] was qualitatively compared with protocols proposed in [36, 51, 54] and found to be superior. In 2016, Shen et al. [55] proposed an efficient RFID authentication protocol (ERAP) and claimed that compared with the previous researches, their protocol withstands different types of attacks with low cost, which satisfies the requirement of highly resource constrained RFID tags. Finally, in 2017, Li et al. [62] pointed out that the lightweight mutual authentication protocol (LMAP) [120] is vulnerable to some attacks and data integrity. To enhance the security and the privacy of LMAP, they proposed an improved version of LMAP and claimed that their protocol meets all the requirements of RFID applications and resists common attacks.

Other protocols that may fall into this class and be worthy of mention are the Hopper and Blum (HB) family of protocols. In 2001, Hopper and Blum proposed an extraordinarily lightweight protocol that uses only the AND and XOR operations on binary vectors and a noise bit called the HB bit [94] that can be generated from a physical event. To resist passive attacks, the protocol depends on the computational complexity of the learning parity with the noise problem.

The HB protocol was not designed for RFID or categorized as being lightweight or ultra-lightweight. Afterwards, the lightweight authentication protocol family based on the HB protocol was proposed. As the HB protocol resists passive attacks, Juels and Weis proposed in 2005 a modified protocol, named the HB+ protocol [93], to resist active attacks. They claimed that their protocol is lightweight but may not be directly applied to RFID tags, and their use of a two-round version may not be secure. Also in 2005, Gilbert et al. [14] mentioned that the HB+ protocol is defenseless against a linear time active attack.

In 2006, Bringer et al. [11] modified the HB+ protocol to develop the HB++ protocol, which avoids the attack of Gilbert et al. However, to detect attacks, it requires universal hash functions and additional secret key material. In 2007, Munilla et al. [95] introduced the idea of a round and proposed a new protocol, named as the HB-MP protocol, to resist man-in-the-middle and active attacks that are effective against HB and HB+ protocols.

In 2008, Gilbert et al. [121] revealed that it is possible for a simple passive attack to impersonate a valid tag by eavesdropping on communication. In 2008, the HB# protocol was introduced as an improvement on the Random-

HB# protocol that was described in the same work [122]. The HB# protocol is resistant against an extended class of active attacks embracing the Gilbert et al. active attack on HB+ and HB-MP protocols [121] and, unlike the HB++ protocol [11], the HB# protocol does not require additional hardware that would increase the complexity of the HB protocol. Also in 2008, Leng et al. [96] improved on the HB-MP protocol by proposing the HB-MP+ protocol. However, Yoon et al. [123] noted that the HB-MP+ protocol does not have a real function with which to defend against an advanced active attack or strong methods for preventing the tracking problem, and they subsequently proposed the HB-MP++ protocol. Again in 2008, Quafi et al. [124] conducted a man-in-the-middle attack on the HB# protocol and retrieved a secret shared by communicating parties.

In 2009, Halevi et al. [125] indicated that PRF-based protocols, such as HB+ and HB# protocols, are not applicable to low-cost tags, and announced Tree-HB+ and Tree-HB# protocols. In 2012, the GHB# [126] protocol was developed and claimed to resist a man-in-the-middle attack, which is an effective attack on the HB# protocol. With the proposal of the Tree-LSHB+ protocol in 2013 [127], however, Deng et al. claimed that tree-based and regular HB protocols provide only one-way authentication, only tag is authenticated by the reader, and they added mutual authentication. Finally, the Tree-LSHB+ protocol cannot resist disclosure, desynchronization and traceability attacks [128]. In [128], a revised Tree-LSHB+ protocol was developed and claimed to have advantages over the past Tree-LSHB+ protocol. The evolution of the HB family protocols is shown in Fig. 1. Other examined protocols of this class are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

3.3 Lightweight protocols

The lightweight protocol class includes protocols that require simple functions, such as CRC code, and an RNG and broadly involves protocols conforming to the EPC C1 Gen2 standard. Operations supporting EPC C1 Gen2 might not be ideal for security purposes and it is thus important to improve them. Moreover, it is usual to face new problems when trying to solve expected problems. In protocols conforming to the EPC C1 Gen2 standard, the main security problem is $\text{CRC-16}(\text{a} \oplus \text{b}) = \text{CRC}(\text{a}) \oplus \text{CRC}(\text{b})$.

In 2005, Juels [129] was among the first to propose a solution that conforms to the EPC C1 Gen2 and was claimed to resist cloning and spoofing. In the same year, Karthikeyan et al. [130] proposed a protocol and used XOR and matrix operations not to be tracked and used timer and key updating to achieve mutual authentication. However, their protocol is vulnerable to DoS and replay attacks. In

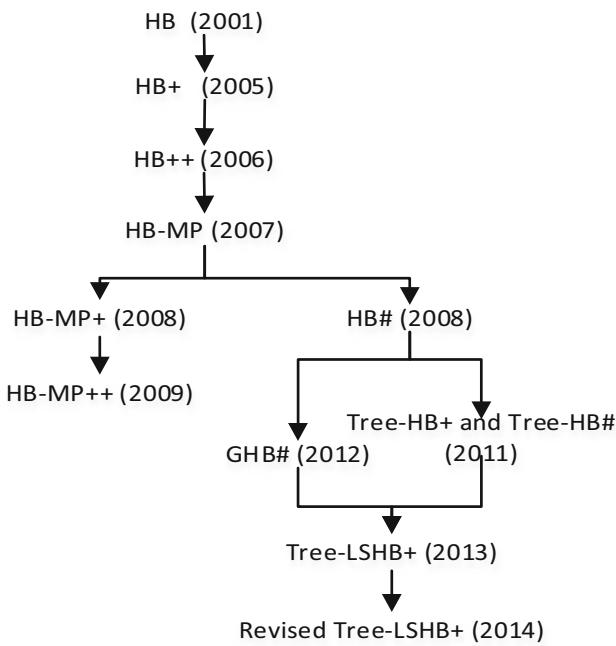


Fig. 1 Evolution of the HB family

2006, Duc et al. [13] showed that Juels' [129] scheme suffers from privacy and information leakage. Moreover, they proposed a new protocol that uses CRC, XOR and a pseudorandom-number generator (PRNG) to guarantee interactive information security, achieving mutual authentication and synchronous updating of the secret key. However, their protocol is vulnerable in terms of a DoS attack and forward security.

In 2007, Chien et al. [12] embellished on both the works of Karthikeyan et al. [130] and Duc et al. [13] in proposing a new protocol called the Chien & Chen (CC) protocol and claimed that they had achieved forward security and resistance against DoS and reply attacks; however, the claimed security objectives were later shown to be false owing to the linear property of the CRC operation used in the protocol. In the same year, Lo et al. [131] improved the CC protocol [12] in terms of data security, privacy and efficiency, but the CC protocol is still vulnerable to eavesdropping and location tracking.

In 2009, Lopez et al. [132] noted the CC protocol cannot hold tag and reader impersonation, desynchronization and tracing attacks. In 2010, Yeh et al. [133] asserted a new protocol, referred to as the secure remote password (SRP) protocol, which is easy and convenient to implement and which they claimed not only resolved the flaws of the CC protocol but also enhanced the overall performance efficiently. However, Habibi et al. [83, 134] noted that the SRP protocol is defenseless to a tracking attack and information leakage and that the complexity of a successful attack is only 2^{16} , and they improved SRP and suggested this new version.

In 2014, Mohammadi et al. [120] studied the scheme proposed in [83] and showed that it is vulnerable to an attack that reveals secret parameters, a tag impersonation attack, a data desynchronization attack and a traceability attack. Additionally, they improved the scheme proposed in [83] and proposed a new protocol called the improved lightweight mutual authentication protocol (ILMAP). Later, in 2014, Alavi et al. [135] investigated the ILMAP protocol and showed that it is vulnerable to an attack that reveals secret parameters, a data integrity attack, a reader forward compromise attack, a traceability attack and backward and forward traceability attacks. Additionally, by altering processes of the ILMAP, they proposed a strengthened version of the ILMAP. In 2013, based on the SRP protocol, Pang et al. [136] suggested an authentication protocol, named SRP+, and they argued that they had overcome the weaknesses of the SRP protocol and increased the complexity of a successful attack to 2^{23} .

In 2015, however, Wang et al. [137] analyzed the SRP+ protocol and showed that it is vulnerable to a desynchronization attack because of the well-known security defect of the CRC function and a passive disclosure attack with a complexity of $O(2^{16})$. Furthermore, an updated version of the SRP+, called the SRP++, has been proposed and it has been asserted that this proposal can withstand disclosure attack with a complexity reaching $O(2^{32})$, thus providing better security than its predecessors.

In 2016, Maarof et al. [79] suggested a new mutual authentication scheme that is compliant with EPC C1 Gen2 standard. They demonstrated that their scheme resists against security attacks, is better than the previous schemes and is easy to implement in low cost RFID systems because the simple operators (XOR, CRC and PRNG) are used. Finally in 2017, Zhang et al. [81] proposed a lightweight RFID authentication protocol with strong trajectory privacy protection (LAP-STP). They informed their protocol can withstand different attacks and warrant the strong trajectory privacy. Other examined protocols of this class are given in Tables 1 and 2.

3.4 Ultra-lightweight protocols

Ultra-lightweight protocols are tailored specially to extremely constrained devices in which only simple bit-wise operations (e.g., XOR, AND, OR) are implemented. After Gen-2 was released in 2006, Lopez et al. proposed ultra-lightweight RFID protocols named the ultralightweight mutual authentication protocols (UMAPs) and comprising the minimalist mutual authentication protocol (M^A2AP) [56], lightweight mutual authentication protocol (LMAP) [57] and efficient mutual authentication protocol (EMAP) [58], which use only triangular functions (\vee , \wedge , \oplus) and

addition [48]. This family is efficient for low-cost RFID tags in terms of the computation cost and storage cost.

In 2007, however, Li et al. [15, 16] presented several attacks on the M²AP, LMAP and EMAP. In the same year, Chien [6] pointed out the UMAPs were vulnerable to many attacks, introduced the rotation operation and proposed the strong authentication and strong integrity (SASI) protocol. However, owing to its use of triangular functions (\vee , \oplus), only a limited number of rotations and addition, SASI protocol is defenseless against various kinds of attacks and this was shown by [138, 139]. Later, in 2009, Lopez et al. [105] used XOR encapsulated in nested rotation functions and addition and produced Gossamer protocol, which is inspired from the SASI protocol.

In 2010, however, Tagra et al. [140] conducted a desynchronization attack on Gossamer. After Gossamer, in 2009, Lopez et al. [141] slightly improved the LMAP and produced the ultra-lightweight authentication protocol (ULAP), which uses only addition and triangular functions, to overcome passive attacks. Meanwhile, in 2010, a passive attack on ULAP was conducted by Wang et al. [142].

In 2012, Tian et al. [38] proposed an interesting ultra-lightweight RFID authentication protocol, named the RFID authentication protocol with permutation (RAPP), which have only three operations as bit-wise XOR, left rotation and permutation. However, because the Hamming weight of rotation and permutation is invariant (i.e., the Hamming weight output of two operations is the same as that of the first parameter) and because of permutation properties, Zhuang et al. [143] in 2013 applied two attacks on the RAPP that can cause a tag to fall into the DoS state in addition to desynchronization and replay attacks.

Also in 2013, Jeon et al. [144] by using merge (merging two bit strings) and separation (inverse of merging) operations suggested a new authentication protocol called the efficient ultra-lightweight RFID authentication protocol (EURFID). In the same year, however, the same authors [66] found that EURFID protocol does not serve correctly in the case of collision between tags and they improved EURFID protocol and proposed the RFID authentication protocol for low-cost tags (RAPLT) that is a new merge and separation operations based ultra-lightweight protocol. Nevertheless, RAPLT is vulnerable in terms of replay and desynchronization attack, and protecting data integrity and user privacy according to Zhuang et al. [145]. In 2015, Wang et al. [137] applied a passive disclosure attack on the RAPLT [66] using the linear property of the merge operation and applied de-synchronization attack on SRP+ [136] using the linearity property of CRC operation. They presented a modified and efficient version of SRP+ protocol that is EPC C1 Gen2 standard compliant, denoted by SRP++. They claimed for this protocol that exhaustive search attack could be resisted.

In 2016, Luo et al. [106] presented a new secure ultra-lightweight bitwise conversion based ultra-lightweight mutual authentication protocol. The aim was to improve the ultra-lightweight authentication against the weak security resistance in recent protocols described in references [107] and [64]. Their protocol employed only three bitwise operations; XOR, left rotation and conversion. They claimed that their protocol is more secure than other compared protocols, can resist various existing attacks and preferable in a low-cost RFID system than other compared protocols. Finally in 2017, Tewari et al. [108] presented an ultra-lightweight mutual authentication protocol that uses bitwise XOR and left-rotation. They pointed out that their protocol ensures data confidentiality, integrity, tag anonymity, and has resistance against tracking and various attacks. Other examined protocols of this class are given in Tables 1 and 2.

3.5 Less traditional forms of authentication

It is worth mentioning that less traditional forms of authentication such as using exhaustive searches to enable privacy-preservation, are also used. The mechanism of randomizing a tag identifier to protect its privacy was firstly proposed in 2003 by Weis et al. [10]. By using a nonce generated by a tag and secret value, they computed the identifier. In the same year, Ohkubo et al. [35] and in 2005 Avoine et al. [146] improved this idea by a different approach; the key that produced the identifier continually changes, where the new key was the message digest of the former.

In 2008, Henrici et al. [147] used the same approach of Ohkubo et al. [35] and Avoine et al. [146], but the new key was triggered by the hash chains of the former. The main problem of randomized tag identifier is on the server side where the identifier has to be searched among a bulk of data. A solution to this problem is a tree search structure approach used by Molnar et al. [70], Molnar et al. [148] and Dimitriou [149]. In this proposal, branches have specific keys and each tag has set of keys. To identify a tag, the keys on each level and on a specific branch are used.

However, in 2010, Avoine et al. [150] mentioned that protocols that use exhaustive searches are vulnerable to a timeable attack. In 2014, Figueiredo et al. [151] proposed a protocol where RFID tags are used on vehicles. The tag, uses the stored secret key with two random values generated by the reader and the tag itself to generate the pseudo-random identifier. The identification application makes an exhaustive search to discover the tag that generated the identifier.

Figueiredo et al. [151] mentioned that approaches of [35, 146, 147] raise critical synchronization matters between identification applications and tags. They also

Table 4 MIFARE products overview

Products	Authentication	Confidentiality
MIFARE Classic EV1	CRYPTO1	CRYPTO1
MIFARE Plus	AES	CRYPTO1 + AES
MIFARE Plus SE	AES	CRYPTO1 + AES (Optional)
MIFARE Plus EV1	AES	AES
MIFARE Ultralight C	3DES	–
MIFARE Ultralight EV1	–	–
MIFARE Ultralight Nano	–	–
MIFARE DESFire EV1	AES + 3DES + DES	AES + 3DES + DES
MIFARE DESFire EV2	AES + 3DES + DES	AES + 3DES + DES

mentioned that the tree search structure approach used by [70, 148, 149], increases the computation within tags and increases the length of the tag's reply. Lastly, they claimed that they solved the above-mentioned issues and informed that the aim of their proposal was not to provide best privacy to tag owners but to reveal the possibility of exhaustive key searches without conveying any direct or clear identifiers during tag authentication.

4 Comparison evaluation

In Table 2, the protocols are compared in terms of security threats and services. Each of the examined protocols has a specific ability to cope with security and privacy issues. When the number of checks counted from the table, the class that overcomes most threats and provides more services is the fully fledged and the class that overcomes least threats and provides least services is the ultra-lightweight. The protocol presented in [33], which provides the best security is fully fledged, and has overcome (9) threats and provides (9) services. The protocol presented in [106], which provides the least security is ultra-lightweight, and has overcome (3) threats and provides (0) service. This is to be expected considering the definitions of authentication classes. In other words, less can be achieved with an authentication protocol when the hardware capability of a tag is low. Not surprisingly, most of the practical RFID-based applications such as building access control [152], e-passports [153], electronic toll collection [154] and electronic ticketing [155] are using fully fledged class. Moreover, the widely-used technology in this field, such as Calypso [156] and most generations of MIFARE [157] (Table 4) are using fully fledged class. When the matter is the life of a person and privacy, this is to be expected. However, the cost must be reduced and a need for more and stronger light and ultra-lightweight authentication protocols is obvious. For the readers who want to deepen on other specific features, please check [158].

5 Conclusion

The use of authentication protocols is the first step in defending against wireless attacks on RFID systems. The present paper reviewed and compared recently proposed RFID authentication protocols. The major points of the comparison were presented in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 showed that, to deal with attacks and to ensure security and privacy, the examined authentication protocols have adopted different methods, such as ECC, hash functions, random-number generators and merge, separation, mix-bit and rotation operations and different verification methods have been used to verify the proposed protocols. As low-cost RFID tags are severely constrained by their hardware in terms of storage and processing capabilities, most of the examined proposals lie within the fully fledged class and few of the examined proposals lie within the ultra-lightweight class.

Table 2 showed that each of the examined protocols has a specific ability to cope with security and privacy issues. Fully fledged protocols overcome many threats and provide more services than other protocols. Taking into account the authentication classes' definitions and the goals that authentication protocols must achieve, this is to be expected.

The present paper concludes that there is a need for more and stronger authentication protocols, especially ultra-lightweight authentication protocols. It is thus necessary to propose a strong authentication protocol with an integrated approach to deal with all or at least most threats than the protocols mentioned in the present paper in future work.

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