

THE NEOTYPE OF *PEDICULASTER MESEMBRINAE* (CANESTRINI, 1881) (ACARI: SITEROPTIDAE) AND THE DESCRIPTION OF ALL LIFE STAGES

Anne M. Camerik¹, Enrico de Lillo² and Caroline Lalkhan³

1. University of the Witwatersrand, School of Animal, Plant and Environmental Sciences, Wits 2050, Johannesburg, South Africa (e-mail: camerik@gecko.biol.wits.ac.za); 2. Dipartimento di Biologica e Chimica Agroforestale e Ambientale, Facolta di Agraria, Universita de Bari, Via Amendola, 165A, 70126 Bari, Italy (e-mail: delillo@agr.uniba.it); 3. University of the Witwatersrand, Electron Microscope Unit (e-mail: carol@gecko.biol.wits.ac.za).

ABSTRACT - The original holotype and paratypes of *Pygmephorus mesembrinae* Canestrini, 1881, now known as *Pediculaster mesembrinae* (Canestrini, 1881), once part of the Canestrini collection housed at the University of Padua, Italy, are lost. There is an urgent need for the designation and description of a neotype for *Pediculaster mesembrinae* in order to rectify the many misidentifications and to describe new species. In this paper, the neotype, a phoretic female, collected from a mushroom farm in Terlizzi (South Italy, Europe), is designated. Phoretic females of this collection are assumed to be conspecific with laboratory-cultured phoretic females of Kaliszewski from Alabama, USA. The assumption is tested by statistical analysis of the sizes of 39 traditionally used morphological characters. Subsequently the normal female, male and larva found in Kaliszewski's collection, are described.

Key words - Acari, Siteroptidae, *Pediculaster mesembrinae* (Canestrini, 1881), neotype, female dimorphism, life cycle stages.

Abstract #5

Internat. J. Acarol. 32(1): 45-67.