Platysetosus occultus gen. nov., sp. nov., a new genus and species of mite from Tasmania (Acari: Uropodina)

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Abstract

A new endemic Australian genus Platysetosus gen. nov. (Acari: Uropodina: Uropodoidea) from Tasmania and its type species Platysetosus occultus sp. nov. are described and figured. Platysetosus is very distinctive, and its relationship to other genera of Uropodina is not clear.

Key words: Acari, Uropodina, Platysetosus, Tasmania, endemism

Introduction

Uropodine mites are very abundant and diverse in Australia, especially in rainforest, but the fauna is very poorly known, and has never been studied in a systematic way. This paper is part of a series that is intended to address that deficiency in knowledge. Previous papers in the series have confirmed the existence of distinctive taxa in the Australian Uropodina, clarified or corrected the taxonomic placement of known taxa, and described new genera and species where necessary to draw attention to this little-known fauna (Athias-Binche & Błoszyk, 1988; Błoszyk & Halliday, 1995, 2000; Błoszyk et al., 2005).

Within the Australian region, Tasmania is particularly interesting from a faunistic and zoogeographical point of view, as fragments of rainforests have remained there undisturbed. In this type of habitat, one can expect many endemic taxa of invertebrates, including mites. This has been confirmed by earlier observations (Banks, 1916; Wiśniewski & Hirschmann, 1993; Błoszyk & Halliday, 1995, 2000). The distinctive nature of the Tasmanian uropodine fauna is emphasised by the fact that no species known from Tasmania has been recorded on the Australian mainland.