



## Three new species of *Austrocarabodes* (Oribatida: Carabodidae) from South Africa

ELIZABETH A. HUGO

National Museum, PO Box 266, Bloemfontein, 9300, South Africa. E-mail: Lhugo@nasmus.co.za

### Abstract

Three new species of oribatid mites of the genus *Austrocarabodes* (Carabodidae), *A. hendriksi* sp. nov., *A. vernoncrookensis* sp. nov. and *A. luciensis* sp. nov. from various localities and biomes in South Africa are described. Comparisons are made between these new species and other known species.

**Key words:** Carabodoidea, taxonomy, tegumental ornamentation, notogastral seta, leg setation

### Introduction

The genus *Austrocarabodes* (family Carabodidae) occurs worldwide, except in boreal regions. It consists of three subgenera with 68 species and two subspecies, of which five are sp. inq. (Subias 2004). The subgenera are *Austrocarabodes* Hammer, 1966 (61 species, one subspecies), *Baloghodes* Mahunka, 1986 (two species) and *Uluguroides* Mahunka, 1983 (five species and one subspecies). Species of the subgenus *Uluguroides* have six pairs of genital setae (Mahunka 1983) whereas members of *Austrocarabodes* and *Baloghodes* have only four pairs of genital setae (Mahunka 1986a). In the subgenus *Baloghodes* five pairs of postero-marginal notogastral setae are short and curved, while the rest of the setae (nine pairs) are long and setiform (Mahunka 1986a). In contrast, all notogastral setae of species in the subgenus *Austrocarabodes* are of the same type (mostly phylliform) and of similar length.

Only *Austrocarabodes* (*Austrocarabodes*) is considered here. *Austrocarabodes* is widely distributed across the Ethiopian region, with 16 species described from Tanzania, Kenya, Angola, Ethiopia and South Africa (Subias 2004). However, until now this genus was poorly studied in South Africa and only one species, *Austrocarabodes pinnatus* Mahunka, 1986, has been described from here (Mahunka 1986b).

The characteristics of *Austrocarabodes* are difficult to distinguish and the tegumental ornamentation and form of notogastral setae are the most important features of this genus. Descriptions of three new *Austrocarabodes* (*Austrocarabodes*) species from South Africa are given here.

### Generic diagnosis

*Austrocarabodes* (*Austrocarabodes*) Hammer, 1966, p. 59; additional description by Mahunka, 1986b, p. 109.

**Type species:** *Carabodes ensifer* Sellnick, 1931. Type locality – Greece.

**Prodorsum:** Lamella without cuspis, attenuating distally before the insertion of the lamellar seta; lamellar seta inserted on the distal lateral surface of lamella; rostral seta reaching beyond tip of rostrum; interlamellar seta originates close to inner margin of lamella; prodorsal setae phylliform; tutorium present.