



## Two new species from South Africa, with remarks on generic diagnosis of *Licnodamaeolus* Covarrubias, 1998 and taxonomic status of *Nacunansella* Fernandez & Cleva, 1998 (Acari: Oribatida: Licnodamaeidae)

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### Abstract

Two new species of oribatid mites of the family Licnodamaeidae, *Licnodamaeolus asetosus* **sp. nov.** and *L. erfenisdamensis* **sp. nov.**, are described from clay soil in grassland vegetation in Erfenis Dam Nature Reserve (central South Africa). These represent the first finding of *Licnodamaeolus* Covarrubias, 1998 in the African continent. *Nacunansella* Fernandez & Cleva, 1998 is recognized as a junior synonym of *Licnodamaeolus*. A new generic diagnosis of *Licnodamaeolus* is presented. A comparative analysis of all known species of *Licnodamaeolus* is given.

**Key words:** oribatid mites, Licnodamaeidae, *Licnodamaeolus*, *Nacunansella*, new species, new diagnosis, taxonomic status, synonym, South Africa

### Introduction

Plateremaeoidea is a large superfamily of the oribatid mites, comprising more than 130 species that collectively have a cosmopolitan distribution (Subías 2004; online version 2011). The plateremaeoid mites of South Africa are poorly studied and only three species have hitherto been described, namely: *Pheroliodes longiceps* Balogh & Mahunka, 1966 (Pheroliodidae), *Pedrocortesella africana* Pletzen, 1963 and *P. parva* Pletzen, 1963 (Licnodamaeidae).

In the course of faunistic studies of oribatid mites from Erfenis Dam Nature Reserve (central South Africa) we discovered two new species of the genus *Licnodamaeolus* Covarrubias, 1998 (family Licnodamaeidae). Till now, this genus was monotypic, and it was proposed by Covarrubias (1998) with *Licnodamaeolus travei* Covarrubias, 1998 from Chile, as type species.

Describing the new species, we also discuss the taxonomic status of the genus *Nacunansella*, which was described by Fernandez & Cleva (1998) with a type species, *Nacunansella diminuta* Fernandez & Cleva, 1998 from Argentine. Fernandez & Cleva (1998) considered *Nacunansella* to represent the new family – Nacunansellidae.

### Material and methods

**Material:** The locality and habitat data for the new species are given below (see *Material examined* sections).

Specimens were mounted in lactic acid on temporary cavity slides for measurement and illustration. All body measurements are presented in micrometers. Body length was measured in lateral view, from the tip of the rostrum to the posterior edge of the ventral plate, to avoid discrepancies caused by different degrees of notogastral distortion. Notogastral width refers to the maximum width in dorsal aspect. Lengths of body setae were measured in lateral aspect.