

## On the new genus *Tropizodium* (Araneae: Zodariidae), representing the femoral organ clade in Australia and the Pacific

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### Abstract

*Tropizodium*, a new genus of the spider family Zodariidae belonging to the “femoral organ clade”, is described. It contains three species all known from both sexes: *T. peregrinum* n. sp., the type species from northern Australia, and *T. molokai* n. sp. and *T. trispinosum* (Suman) n. comb., both from Hawaii. It is characterized by somatic characters such as the small intercheliceral triangle and the very small secondary eyes, and by a palp with a straight short embolus and an epigyne with extremely short entrance ducts. The genus is so far known only from the Hawaiian archipelago and northern Australia, extending the distribution of the clade and generating questions regarding its capacity for dispersal.

**Keywords:** Hawaii, Molokai, Northern Territory, taxonomy

### Introduction

Australia has a rich biogeographical history, and the diverse spider fauna still has many of its own stories to tell, from relict species within temperate zones or on mountain tops, through to more recently speciated groups in the semi-arid regions. Of the latter, the discovery of new taxa within families such as the Zodariidae, is important, as they provide information at a scale that can also be useful to land management (Churchill & Ludwig 2004). The distribution and composition of the Australian Zodariidae is a textbook example of a continental fauna with a double origin (Jocqué 1993): most Australian taxa radiated in the course of the Tertiary (see revisions of Baehr and Jocqué summarized in Baehr 2004), whereas invasions of a few taxa occurred from Asia during the recent ice ages. These Asian taxa, *Mallinella* Strand, 1906 and *Asceua* Thorell, 1887 now occur along the northern margin of the continent.