Xenosellidae, a new family of Janiroidea (Asellota: Isopoda: Crustacea), for Xenosella coxospinosa gen. nov., sp. nov., from the marine bathyal of eastern Australia

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ABSTRACT

A new genus and species of janiroidean Asellota, Xenosella coxospinosa, is described from the mid-bathyal slope off the coast of south-eastern Australia. Following a comparison of the new species to several families of broadly similar body shape, with emphasis on monotypic Pleurocopidae, a new family, Xenosellidae, is proposed for the new species. In the course of comparing relevant taxa, the current placements of Prethura Kensley in the Santiidae and Salvatiella Müller in the Munnidae are rejected. The two genera are considered to be incertae sedis within the Asellota superfamily Janiroidea pending further studies.

Key words. Isopoda, Asellota, Xenosellidae, Xenosella, eastern Australia

INTRODUCTION

Exploration of the slope benthos off south-eastern Australia towards the Tasman Sea over the past two decades by Museum Victoria, Melbourne, and the Australian Museum, Sydney, has revealed a high level of diversity and novelty of Isopoda (Poore & Wilson 1993; Poore et al, 1994). Works on several families or parts of families of janiroidean Asellota have been published (Brandt 1994, Cohen 1998, Just 1990, 2001a, 2001b, 2003, Just & Wilson 2004, Merrin 2004, Merrin & Poore 2003), and several more are in progress. In this paper a new genus and species, Xenosella coxospinosa, is described from the same collections. This species is of considerable interest because it does not fit into existing janiroidean families.