

***Macrobotus rigidus* sp. nov., new species of eutardigrade from New Zealand**

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Abstract

Macrobotus rigidus **sp. nov.** is a new species of eutardigrade from New Zealand very similar to *M. coronatus* de Barros, 1942. It is characterized by having a smooth cuticle, lacking eye spots, having three macroplacoids and a microplacoid, and eggs with conical processes (with reticular sculpture and an evident ring of basal digitations) and egg shell with dots that seem to continue the basal digitations.

Key words: Tardigrada, *Macrobotus rigidus* **sp. nov.**, New Zealand

Introduction

Macrobotus coronatus de Barros, 1942 (described as a subspecies of *M. harmsworthi* Murray, 1907) is recorded from many geographical areas (South America, North America, Europe, China, Andaman Islands, New Zealand, Antarctica (Ramazzotti & Maucci, 1983; McInnes, 1994). Pilato *et al.* (2000) studied material from South America and Europe having egg processes with a ring of basal dots (considered as the main characteristic of *M. harmsworthi coronatus*), and proposed to raise the subspecies to the rank of species; they also wrote: "*Macrobotus coronatus* is surely present in South America; its presence in other geographical areas, in our opinion needs to be confirmed".

Horning *et al.* (1978) attributed to *M. harmsworthi coronatus* specimens and eggs collected in many localities of New Zealand, but probably they do not all belong to the same species. Horning *et al.* 1978, page 245, wrote: "Eggs differ between localities in the number and spacing of the processes, but we do not have sufficient information to assess the significance of the observed differences". These authors also specified that a population of Cape Pelliser is notably different from the others regarding certain