



A new genus of Stygninae from a relictual rainforest in Ceará, northeastern Brazil (Opiliones, Laniatores, Stygnidae)

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Abstract

Ricstygnus quineti **gen. nov. sp. nov.** (Stygninae) is described from a "brejo de altitude" in Ceará state, northeastern Brazil, this being the first record of the family Stygnidae from the state. The new genus is characterized by the paired scutal armature in the form of acuminate tubercles increasing in size from area III to posterior margin of scutum, free tergite I with a pair of robust acuminate spiniform apophyses that are by far the stoutest of those on the dorsum, subtrapezoid scutum widest posteriorly with long carapace, and several unique genital features, as for example the presence of dorso-basal hollow in ventral plate containing a multiply folded haematodocha.

Key words: Arachnida, harvestmen, Grassatores, Neotropics, Caatinga, montane forests

Introduction

The small, Neotropical family Stygnidae includes harvestmen without a common ocularium, with a subrectangular dorsal scutum and usually with elongate pedipalps provided with a strong raptorial tibia + tarsus (Pinto-da-Rocha, 2007). The known species are mainly distributed in the Andes/Amazonia, also reaching the Lesser Antilles and Central and Northeastern Brazil (Kury 2003). On the Brazilian Atlantic coast they occur in Pará state and then in a continuum through Paraíba, Pernambuco and Bahia states, reaching as far south as northern Espírito Santo state, not crossing the River Doce (Kury 2003; Kury & Pinto-da-Rocha 2008). There are no previous records of Stygnidae from Ceará State.

The relictual rainforests in the Caatinga biome, known as "brejos de altitude", are isolated moist montane forest enclaves that occur above 500 m on the slopes and tops of plateaus and highlands of the semiarid Brazilian Caatinga. These forests have been regarded as refuges responsive to isolation and fragmentation (Vanzolini 1981; Andrade-Lima 1982). A semi-popular account of the "brejos de altitude" is provided by Cavalcante (2005). The opilionid fauna of these forests is largely unknown, and it is likely to reveal a wealth of new species when better studied.

In the present paper, a new species of Stygninae is described from one such "brejos de altitude" in Ceará. An impressive set of unique features indicates that it should be assigned to a new genus, closest to *Stygnus* Perty, 1833 and *Sickesia* H. Soares, 1979, which is described below.

The material studied here is deposited in the Museu Nacional, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (MNRJ). All measurements are in mm. Abbreviations: AL, abdominal scutum length from scutal groove to posterior border of scutum; AW, abdominal scutum maximum width; CL, carapace length down to scutal groove; CW, carapace maximum width.