



Neotype designation for *Cunaxa setirostris* (Hermann, 1804) (Acari: Prostigmata: Cunaxidae)

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Abstract

A neotype is designated for *Cunaxa setirostris* (Hermann, 1804). A full motivation, description and drawings of both sexes are provided.

Key words: Bdelloidea, Cunaxinae, neotype designation

Introduction

The authors are convinced that the true characteristics of this species are not known since the type material is regarded as lost. The senior author (Den Heyer 1978), after having studied the Berlese Collection during 1975, has endeavoured to indicate that the genus *Cunaxa* **in toto** should be based on the six or seven species of this genus as they are represented in the Berlese collection; as far as we are aware of the oldest collection that contains any representatives and worthwhile specimens of the family Cunaxidae.

A number of taxonomists mention the latter species to occur in their specific research area. Den Heyer (1979a, b) described 12 *Cunaxa* species from the African Continent. None of the new species described by him are conspecific with any of the six or seven species present in the Berlese Collection in Florence, Italy. This means that between the two collections (Berlese and Den Heyer) 18 to 19 different species of *Cunaxa* are represented. The senior author has never mentioned having found representatives of *C. setirostris* after his visit to the Berlese Collection because he came to the conclusion that any one *Cunaxa* sp. present in the Berlese collection might truly represent *Cunaxa setirostris* although none of these species can be specifically indicated as such. In his paper on *Rubroscirus* (Den Heyer 1978) this aspect is clearly explained.

The authors have now reached a point where a neotype designation for *Scirus setirostris* Hermann 1804(= *Cunaxa setirostris* [Von Heyden, 1826]) is regarded as more than warranted; it is regarded a necessity for the stability of cunaxid systematics since this species is the type species for the whole family. When the senior author started his cunaxid studies in the beginning of the early 1970s one of the earliest problems he was confronted with was: How did *Cunaxa setirostris* look like and is there any type material still left in tact? During a visit in 1974–1975 to Europe to compare South African cunaxid material with European equivalents, consultation with committee members (at that time Drs R.V. Melville and D. Macfarlane) of the ICZN (International Code of Zoological Nomenclature) led to the conclusion, supported by the said members, that material on the relevant species is to be regarded as non-existent due to destruction by several wars in the type locality and place of collection.

The authors wish to comply with the rules of Art. 75 of the ICZN to the fullest. One clause of that article, viz, 75.3.6., however, has in the past been “allowed” without observable comment from the ICZN. The paper