

Article

Two new species of oribatid mites (Acari: Oribatida) from Ethiopia, including a key to species of *Pilobatella*

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Abstract

Two new oribatid mite species, *Austrocarabodes (Uluguroides) klutzi* Ermilov, Winchester, Lowman & Wassie **sp. nov.** (Carabodidae) and *Pilobatella lowmanae* Ermilov, Winchester & Wassie **sp. nov.** (Haplozetidae), are described from Afro-montane forests in the northern highlands of Ethiopia. An identification key to all known species of *Pilobatella* is given. An annotated checklist of identified oribatid mite taxa sampled in this study is presented. Fourteen species, six genera and three families are recorded for the first time from Ethiopia.

Key words: oribatid mites, *Austrocarabodes (Uluguroides)*, *Pilobatella*, new species, key, checklist, Ethiopia

Introduction

The oribatid mite fauna of Ethiopia is poorly known and until recently, only 39 species had been recorded (Berlese 1916; Aoki 1971; Mahunka 1982, 1983, 1984; Bernini 1988; Niedbała 2008). During the last three years oribatid mites have been more intensively studied (Ermilov *et al.* 2010a–c, 2011a–c) and, at present, 128 species have been documented (Ermilov *et al.* 2012). They are often the dominant microarthropod group in forest soil-litter habitats and it is expected that continued research on the Ethiopian oribatid mite fauna will significantly augment the recorded species diversity for the country.

In the course of taxonomic identification of oribatid mites (see *Checklist of identified oribatid mites*) collected in Afro-montane forests in the northern highlands of Ethiopia, we found representatives of two new species, one belonging to the genus *Austrocarabodes* Hammer, 1966 (subgenus *Uluguroides* Mahunka, 1983) (Carabodidae) and the other to *Pilobatella* Balogh and Mahunka, 1967 (Haplozetidae).

Austrocarabodes (Uluguroides) is a small subgenus that was proposed by Mahunka (1983) as a genus with *Uluguroides trichosus* Mahunka, 1983 as the type species. Currently, the subgenus comprises seven species and one subspecies, which are distributed in the Ethiopian region (Subías 2004, online version 2011). Earlier, two species were recorded from Ethiopia (see Ermilov *et al.*