

ON THE TAXONOMIC POSITION OF THE GENUS *MEZRANOBIA* (ACARI, TETRANYCHIDAE)

J. Gutierrez

Centre ORSTOM c/o I.A.M., 3191 route de Mende 34060 Montpellier-Cedex, FRANCE

ABSTRACT — The genus *Mezranobia*, which most authors classify in the tribe of Petrobiini, in fact belongs to the tribe of Bryobiini, in a position near the genus *Septobia*.

INTRODUCTION

An examination of the syntypes of *Mezranobia vannatum* Athias-Henriot, 1961, kindly loaned by the National Museum of Natural History in Paris, has led me to rectify the systematic position of this monospecific genus of Bryobiinae Berlese, which in recent years has been mistakenly classified in the tribe of Petrobiini Reck (Tuttle and Baker, 1968; Smith Meyer, 1974; Jeppson *et al.*, 1975; Gutierrez, 1985).

DISCUSSION

The genus *Mezranobia* was initially placed by its author in the tribe of Monoceronychini Wainstein 1959, based only on the ratio of the distances between the setae forming the dorsal pairs D₁ and D₄. When Tuttle and Baker (1968) redefined the tribes of Bryobiinae using the morphology of the ambulacrum as the criterion, they eliminated the tribe of Monoceronychini and reclassified the genus *Mezranobia* in the tribe of Petrobiini. The original description of the genus *Mezranobia* stresses its systematic proximity to the genus *Monoceronychus* McGregor, and gives no clear details about the ambulacrum except for a single drawing, which lends itself to confusion. Nevertheless, Tuttle and Baker considered they could assert that: "the true claws are padlike; the empodia are uncinata". In fact, microscopic examination of two female syntypes shows that the true claws are uncinata and the empodia are padlike.

According to the current concept in which the Bryobiinae are divided into three tribes, *Mezranobia* has to be classified in the tribe of the Bryobiini Reck.

It is logically placed near the genus *Septobia* Zaher *et al.* 1982, which was also collected in North Africa, and has the same characteristic feature of seven setae on the prodorsum, exceptional in the family of Tetranychidae. The distinction between the two genera is the fact that *Septobia* has 12 pairs of setae on the opisthosoma, whereas *Mezranobia* has only 10.

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