



Two new chigger mites of the genus *Lacertacarus* (Acari: Prostigmata, Trombiculidae)

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Abstract

Two new chigger mites, *Lacertacarus graecus* **sp. nov.** and *Lacertacarus turcicus* **sp. nov.** (Acari: Prostigmata, Trombiculidae) are described from Greece and Turkey. The mites described come from pastures and meadows in mountain areas of Central Greece (Pindos Mts.), Peloponez Peninsula (Taigetos Mts.) and Southeast Turkey, respectively. A key to species of *Lacertacarus* is provided.

Key words: chiggers, Greece, Turkey, mites, new species, parasites

Introduction

Most chiggers (Acari: Trombiculidae) parasitise mammals, with most of the others attacking lizards. The genus *Lacertacarus* Schluger & Vasilieva, 1977 was erected on the basis of taxonomic features of the type species *Trombicula callosa* Schluger, 1966 and later Russian chigger researchers have accepted the validity of this genus (Kudryashova 1979; Mulyarskaya & Cikhistavi 1981). Up to the present the three species of the genus *Lacertacarus* — *Lacertacarus callosus* (Schluger 1966), *Lacertacarus latus* Schluger & Vasilieva (1977) and *Lacertacarus similis* Schluger & Vasilieva (1977) — were known from the East Palearctic only. The geographic distribution of these species includes nearby areas to the north and east from the Black Sea. According to Kudryashova (1998) the chiggers of the genus *Lacertacarus* occur in Russia, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Up to the present time, representatives of *Lacertacarus* were not known from the Mediterranean areas of Southeast Europe and Turkey.

Material and methods

The mites were captured using plastic pitfall traps with a small amount of monoethylenglycol, then collected from the bottom of these traps, and preserved in 70% ethylalcohol. Separated chiggers were mounted onto slides using Swann's medium, then microscopically identified and described. The drawings were produced using standard light microscopy and then enhanced with computer infrasctructure (Photoshop). All measurements in the paper (stated in micrometers – μm) were made with a standardized microscopy ocular micrometer. Abbreviation of the leg segments: Cx—coxa, Tr—trochanter, Bf—basifemur, Tf—telofemur, G—genu, Ti—tibia, Ta—tarsus, MTa—nude mastitarsala. The measurements, abbreviations and other symbols follows Kudryashova (1998). Measurements of the type material are stated in μm (where not specified) as Range (Mean +/- Standars Deviation). The scale in each figure is stated in μm . The geographic data were obtained using free computer application Google Earth from the server kh.google.com.