

# The morphology of juvenile stages of *Platynothrus altimontanus* Hammer, 1958 (Acari: Oribatida: Camisiidae) with redescription of adult

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## Abstract

Morphology of the ontogenetic stages of the Neotropical oribatid mite *Platynothrus altimontanus* Hammer, [1958. Investigation on the Oribatid fauna of the Andes Mountains. I. The Argentina and Bolivia. Biol. Skr. Dan. Vid. Selsk. 10(1), 121] is described and illustrated based on specimens from Ecuador and compared with specimens from Venezuela, which is a new record of its distribution. Moreover it is compared with type material and holotype of the most similar species *Platynothrus major* Hammer, [1966. Investigations on the oribatid fauna of New Zealand. Teil 1. Biol. Skr. Dan. Vid. Selsk. 15(2), 108]. On the basis of present studies there is a possibility that *P. major* is a junior synonym of *P. altimontanus* or its sibling species.

Specimens were found in samples of moss, soil, litter and detritus from forest patch, below trees, near riverbank and of decomposing tree stump, from very wet accumulated litter at the rocks, under paramo grass and pillow-plants. All samples were collected from Ecuador (provinces Pichincha, Illiniza and Cotopaxi, at 2750–4200 m.a.s.l.) and Venezuela.

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**Keywords:** *Platynothrus altimontanus* Hammer, 1958; *Platynothrus major* Hammer, 1966; Acari; Oribatida; Camisiidae; Morphology; Juvenile stages; Ecuador; Venezuela; Neotropical region

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## 1. Introduction

The present paper is part of the study on the crotonioid mite fauna of Ecuador. Studies on Ecuadorian oribatid fauna are based on the results of the circumtropical collecting program launched in 1963 by Prof. J. Balogh (Balogh 1988, 1989; Kutyl 2005, 2006a, b) and results of expeditions in the Galápagos Island carried out by Prof. H. Schatz (Schatz 1998).

The distribution of the oribatid mite genus *Platynothrus* Berlese, 1913 (Camisiidae, originally a subgenus of *Heminothrus* Berlese, 1913) is semicosmopolitical. The Neotropical region is represented by eight species: *Platynothrus altimontanus* Hammer, 1958, *Platynothrus biangulatus* Hammer, 1962, *Platynothrus bicarinatus* (Jacot, 1938), *Platynothrus castaneus* Hammer, 1961, *Platynothrus peltifer* (C.L. Koch, 1839), *Platynothrus quadristriatus* Hammer, 1958, *Platynothrus robustior* (Berlese, 1916) and *Platynothrus skoettbergi* Trägårdh, 1931. Most of these are known only from the adult instar.

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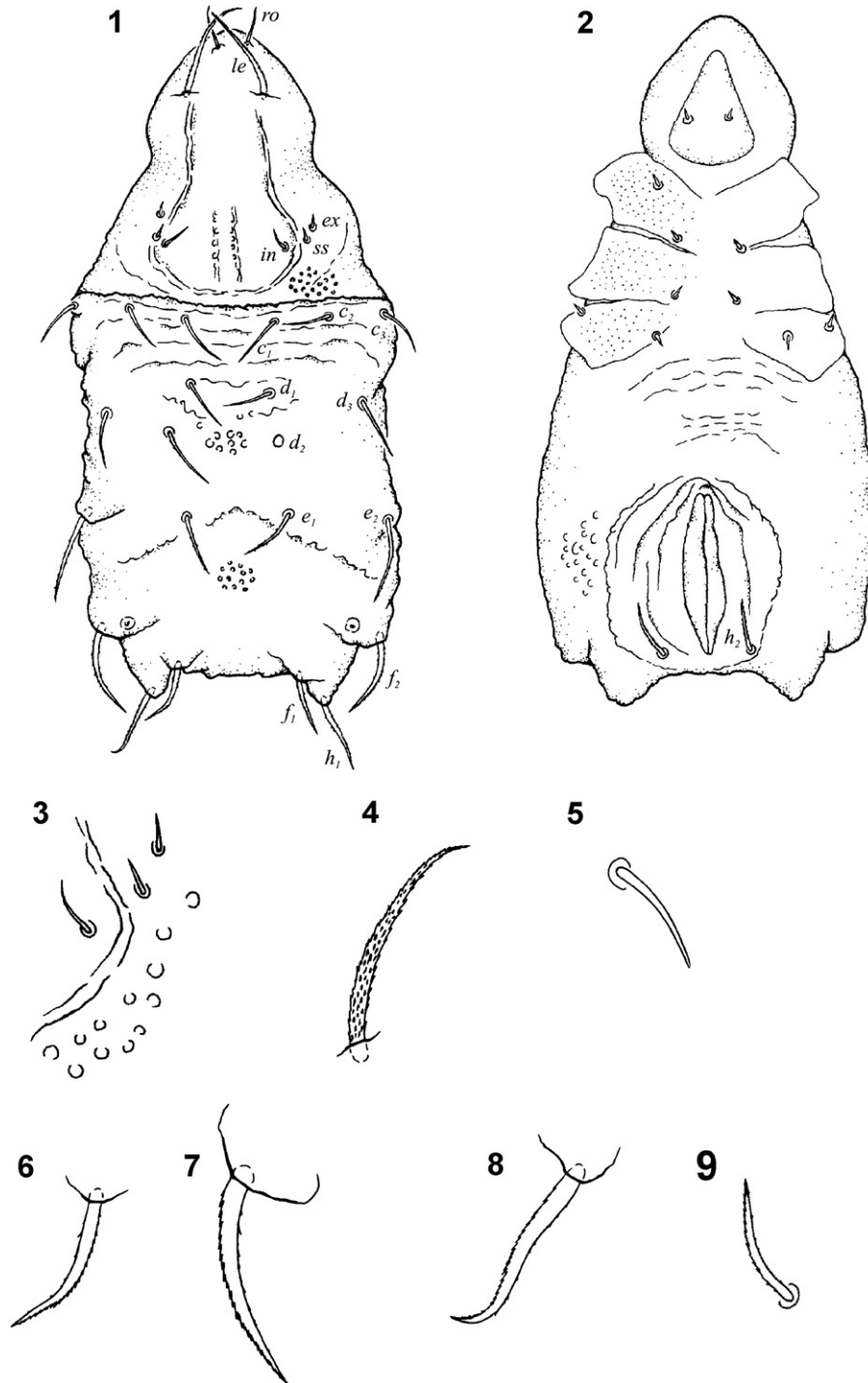
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Our purpose is to describe the juvenile stages of *P. altimontanus*, a species originally found in Bolivia, and to redescribe the adult. We also compare this with the most similar species *Platynothrus major* (Hammer, 1966) from New Zealand. Moreover we noticed a new record of *P. altimontanus* distribution – Venezuela.

## 2. Materials and methods

The description presented is based on the material collected from Ecuadorian province Cotopaxi in 2005 by Xavier Barriga-Bedoya, on the material borrowed from the Basle Natural History Museum, Switzerland (samples collected by Prof. A. Zicsi and Dr. I. Loksa



**Plate 1.** *Platynothrus altimontanus*, larva. 1. Dorsal view. 2. Ventral view. 3. Enlarged part of prodorsum. 4. Seta *le*. 5. Seta *c*<sub>3</sub>. 6. Seta *f*<sub>1</sub>. 7. Seta *f*<sub>2</sub>. 8. Seta *h*<sub>1</sub>. 9. Seta *h*<sub>2</sub>.

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