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A NEW CUNAXID MITE *PULAEUS ZAHERII* SP. N.
FROM RAT BURROWS IN EGYPT
(CTINETIDIDA : CUNAXIDAE)

BY S. M. EL-BISHLAWY ¹ and M. A. RAKHA ²

**INTRODUCTION**

Members of the family Cunaxidae are predators associated with scale insects and spider mites on plants or small arthropods in debris, top soil layer and organic manure. Although different species were recorded all over the world (MEYER & RYKE, 1959 ; MUMA, 1960, 1965 ; HUGHES, 1961 and SMILEY, 1975), yet in Egypt scattered works were carried out concerning its occurrence (ZAHER et al., 1970 and RASMY et al., 1972). DEN HEYER (1980 a) described a new genus and species *Pulaeus glebulentus* from soil ; he mentioned a classification system for the family Cunaxidae (1980 b).

This paper deals with the description of the new cunaxid mite *Pulaeus zaherii* collected from rat burrows in Egypt.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Debris and organic matter were collected from twenty rat burrows in different areas in Kalubelia region during winter 1980, and kept in modified Tullgren funnel for 24 hours. Mites were cleared with Nesbitt’s solution for 24 hours prior to mounting in Hoyer’s medium on glass microscopic slides for identification.

Genus *Pulaeus* Den Heyer, 1980

Dorsal plate covering idiosoma, small platelets carrying setae, may occur posteriorly to dorsal plate. Setae *dl* 6 and *de* 6 usually situated close to anal valves. Genital valves are demarcated to a varying extent and bear four pairs of genital setae. Anal region with one pair of anal and one pair of para-anal setae. Tarsi I and II with dorsoterminal seta and antennate solenidion (*dtasl*). Setal formula for basifemora in both sexes 4(3)-6-3-1 or 2.

**Pulaeus zaherii** n. sp.

Diagnosis : This species is characterized by having eight pairs of simple dorsal setae. Some


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opisthosomal setae on platelets. Venter of idiosoma with six pairs of simple setae adjacent to lateral and genital plates. Gnathosoma reticulated ventrally in two layers of polygonal cells. Tibiotarsus with two pairs of simple setae and one mushroom-shaped seta.

**Female**: (Fig. 1 A, B, C); Body oval reddish, 449.5 μm long and 182.9 μm wide. Palp with three segments; chaetotaxy of palp: trochanter, none, femur with 3 dorsal and 3 ventral setae, tibiotarsus with two lateral and one median setae, inner lateral surface with one basal tooth, one simple seta and a mushroom-shaped seta; medially small tooth terminating with short strong claw. Chelicerae elongate, attenuate distally, fixed digit absent, movable digit with one lateral simple seta. Ventrum of gnathosoma with three

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**FIG. 1**: *Pulœus zaherii*, sp. n. — A) Dorsum; B) Ventrum; C) Palpus, side view.
pairs of marginal and one pair of medial setae and reticulated in two polygonal cell shaped layers posteriorly (120.9 \mu m in length). Idiosoma with one dorsal shield; its anterior portion with two pairs of barbed sensory setae and two pairs of simple setae; posteriorly one pair of lateral and three pairs of dorsal setae present. Dorsal shield surrounded with fine striae. Opisthosoma with four pairs of simple setae appearing in two rows and located on two pairs of small platelets except one pair of setae in the second row. One pair of anal setae present. Ventral of idiosomal anterior portion, divided medially, forming two distinct plates with coxae I-II. Coxae III-IV coalesced, forming two separate, elongate lateral plates one on each side. Anteroventral and lateral plates each with seven and six pairs of simple setae respectively. Four pairs of setae adjacent to lateral plate. Genital plate with four pairs of genital setae and two pairs of genital discs; two pairs of paragenital and postgenital setae present. All leg segments punctated; length of legs I-IV: 170.5 \mu m, 161.2 \mu m, 193.8 \mu m and 217.0 \mu m respectively.

**Holotype**: one female was collected from rat burrow in Kalubeia region, December 1980 and kept in the collection of Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University.

**Allotype**: male unknown.

**Paratypes**: Several females were collected with the same data.

**REFERENCES**


*Paru en décembre 1983.*