

*Myocoptes rattus* sp. n.  
from *Rattus norvegicus*  
(Acarina: Astigmata)

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We describe here a new species of *Myocoptes*, collected on *Rattus norvegicus* in South Africa.

This new species resembles superficially *Myocoptes ondatrae* Lukoschus and Rouwet 1968, described from *Ondatra zibethica* in W. Germany. It is however clearly distinguished from that species, in both sexes by the much smaller size of the body, in the female by the greater size of the opisthogastric field of scales which extends until the lateral surface of the body, the presence of 12 rows of scales behind the dorsal shield, the presence of a 3 to 4 scales on the coxae III and the pitted aspect of the dorsal shield. In the male by the pitted aspect of the dorsal field; the much smaller length of the legs IV and of the setae *l*2 and *l*3, the rounded and shorter aspect of the median scale between the *sci* setae; the different shape of the genital sclerite whose median part is relatively shorter and the presence of scales on coxae II.

This new species is also close to *Myocoptes malacomys* Fain 1970, and *M. hybomys* Fain, 1970. It is distinguished from these species by the pitted aspect of the dorsal shield. In addition it differs from *M. malacomys* in the female by the greater length of the dorsal setae (in *malacomys* the *d* 1 to *d* 3 and *l* 2 to *l* 3 are 7 to 11  $\mu$  long), the smaller number of rows of scales behind the dorsal shield (12 instead of 18-20); in the male by the presence of two large scales on coxa II,

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the greater length of some dorsal setae (*d* 3, etc.), the smaller length of the posterior membranous lobes of the body which are less deeply incised and much more rounded. From the female of *M. hybomys* it differs mainly by the presence of 12 rows of scales behind the dorsal shield (in *hybomys* there are only a few (5 to 10) poorly-formed scales behind this shield), and by the presence of scales on coxae II and III (absence of scales in *hybomys*).

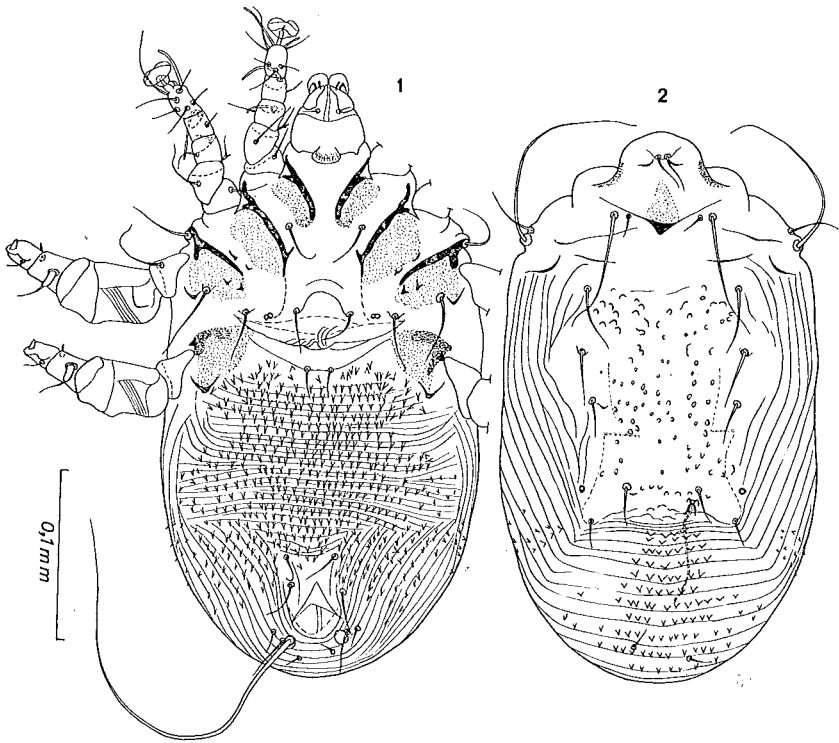


Fig. 1-2. — *Myocoptes rattus* sp. n. - Holotype female in ventral (fig. 1) and dorsal view (fig. 2).

***Myocoptes rattus* sp. nov.**

Female (fig. 1-2): The idiosoma, in the holotype, is 318  $\mu$  long and 180  $\mu$  wide: Total length, gnathosoma included, 345  $\mu$ . *Dorsum*: with a rectangular pitted shield poorly sclerotized. There is a large conical median scale between the *sc i* setae. Setae *d* 1, *d* 2, *d* 3, 12 and 13 are 33, 27, 18, 21 and 12  $\mu$  long respectively. There are 12 rows of trian-

gular scales behind the dorsal shield. *Venter*: opisthogaster covered with numerous small triangular and very thin scales. Coxae II to IV with 2 pairs, 3 pairs and 1 pair of scales respectively. The *ai* are close to the *ae* setae. The *a3* are  $9\ \mu$ , the *l4* are  $18\ \mu$  long.

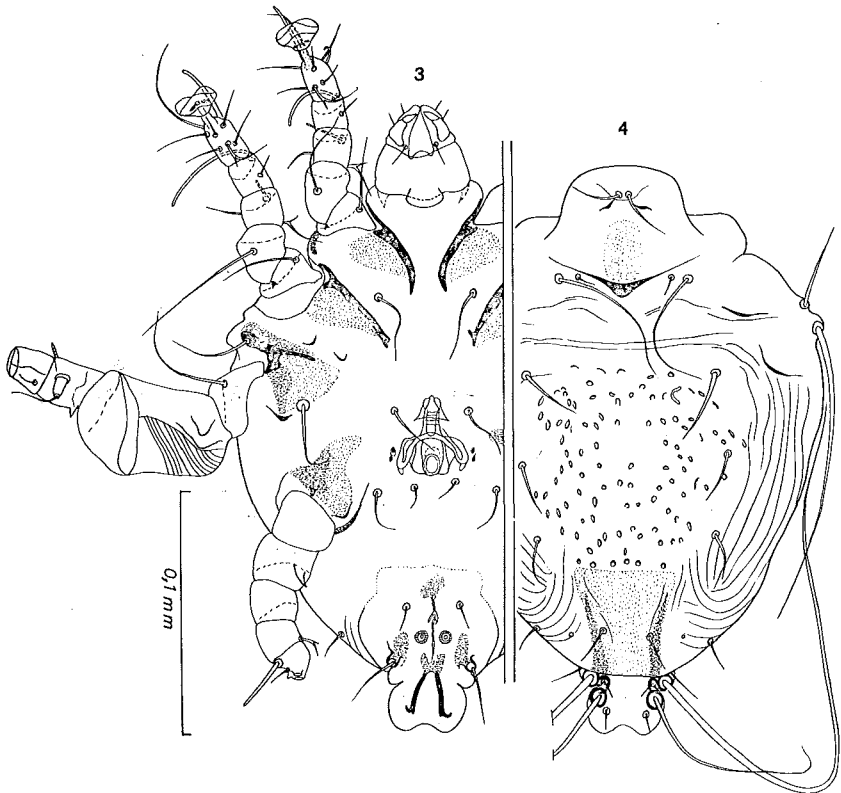


Fig. 3-4. — *Myocoptes rattus* sp. n. - Allotype male in ventral (fig. 3) and dorsal view (fig. 4).

Male (fig. 3-4): Idiosoma in the allotype is  $225\ \mu$  long,  $159\ \mu$  wide. Total length  $249\ \mu$ . *Dorsum*: dorsal shield and large scale between *sc i* setae as in the female. Posterior extremity membranous with two short and rounded lobes. The *l2* are  $18\ \mu$  long, the *d3* are  $9\ \mu$  long.

*Host and locality*:

On the body of *Rattus norvegicus* Berkenhout, Stellenbosch, Cape

Province, South Africa, 28.II.1977. Holotype (MRAC 148745) and 5 paratypes female, allotype and 3 paratypes male (Coll. Dr Ingolf Zumpt).

Types in the Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, Tervuren. Paratypes in the South African Institute for Medical Research and in the collections of the authors.

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