



***Triskelionia*, a new African genus of the Celaenorrhinini (Lepidoptera: Hesperiiidae) and the promotion of *T. compacta* to species-status.**

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Abstract

Triskelionia is defined and described as a new genus for the Afrotropical skipper known as *Sarangesa tricerata* (Mabille, 1891) (Hesperiiidae, Pyrginae, Celaenorrhinini). Its subspecies *S. tricerata compacta* Evans, 1937 is raised to species rank. The host plant is *Dalbergia armata* (Fabaceae) and it is the only known member of the African Celaenorrhinini that does not have Acanthaceae as host-plant and the pupa is the only one known without a free proboscis sheath.

Key words: Hesperiiidae, Pyrginae, Celaenorrhinini, *Triskelionia* **gen. nov.**, *Sarangesa tricerata* comb. nov., *compacta* stat. rev. comb. nov., larval host-plant, Fabaceae

Introduction

Sarangesa tricerata (Mabille, 1891) always seemed an odd-man-out in the genus *Sarangesa*. The spot in the forewing cell, with three prongs, is quite different from any other member of this or related genera. Evans (1937) noted that the species “was aberrant in having longer palpi and a more arcuate antennal club, showing an approach to *Calleagris Aurivillius*, 1925”. In his arrangement of the collections of the Royal Africa Museum, Tervuren (MRAC), Berger removed it to *Calleagris* (Larsen 2005), evidently following Evans’ vague clue, and agreeing that it did not fit in *Sarangesa*. The species is a member of the tribe Celaenorrhinini in the subfamily Pyrginae (*sensu* Warren *et al.* 2009).

When examining the genitalia of *Sarangesa tricerata* and comparing them with those of its subspecies *compacta* Evans, 1951, it became clear that two closely related, distinct species were involved, as already suggested by their superficial features and the strong distributional disjunction: *S. tricerata* is found from Guinea to central parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo, while *S. compacta* is limited to the Tanzanian coastal forests near the border with Mozambique, where it will certainly also occur. However, the genitalia of the two are still so similar that their congenerity is certain.

The genitalia somewhat resemble those of the genus *Celaenorrhinus* Hübner with their typical strongly chitinized gnathos, the ventral edges of which are conjoined and forming a forward projection, the whole structure bearing a multitude of small spines or ribs. However, the gnathos is proportionally larger than in any *Celaenorrhinus* and more squared off. The general shape of the valve with its dorsal projection is not unlike certain members of the *Celaenorrhinus galenus*-group (e.g. *intermixtus*).

These two species certainly do not belong in the genus *Sarangesa* Moore. Despite the genitalia, the small size and somewhat irregular wing-shape make their placement in *Celaenorrhinus* impossible. The *Calleagris* are much larger species with characteristic genitalia that differ strongly from both *Celaenorrhinus* and *Sarangesa*. The wing shape is similar to the genus *Eretis* Mabille, 1891—less so in *compacta* than in *tricerata*—but most other aspects differ strongly, not least the genitalia, which have no similarity with *Eretis* at all.

In the paper by Cock & Congdon (*in press*), it is shown that *compacta* is the only member of the African Celaenorrhinini (currently in *Celaenorrhinus*, *Eretis*, *Sarangesa*, and *Alenia*) that does not feed on Acanthaceae. The ovum resembles those of *Eretis* and *Sarangesa*, but not *Celaenorrhinus*. The caterpillar is not a close match to