Description of the morphology of the first Ethiopian
Achipteria Berlese, 1885
(Acari: Oribatida)

SERGEY G. ERMILOV¹, LEONID B. RYBALOV² & ALI A. KEMAL³
¹Phytosanitary Department, Nizhniy Novgorod Referral Center of the Federal service for Veterinary and
Phytosanitary Inspection, Nizhniy Novgorod, Russia; e-mail: ermilovacari@yandex.ru
²Laboratory for Soil Zoology and General Entomology, Institute of Ecological and Evolutionary
Problems, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russia; e-mail: lrybalov52@mail.ru
³Plant Protection Research Center, Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research, Ambo, Ethiopia; e-mail:
harari.2033@gmail.com

ABSTRACT. A new oribatid mite of the genus Achipteria from southern Ethiopia is
described and illustrated in detail. Specimens of A. baleensis sp. n. were collected in soil and
moss from trees from Harenna Forest of Bale Mountains National Park. The new species is
similar to the Achipteria species-group (name of the species group must not be formed with
a genus name) with the presence of point lateral cusp on lamella, long notogastral setae and
long sensilli. However, it selectively differs from other species by the body size, morphology
of sensilli and tutoria, body surface, length of interlamellar and notogastral setae. The new
species is the first and only record for Achipteria in the Ethiopian region.

Key words: acarology, taxonomy, oribatid mites, new species, Achipteria Berlese, 1885,
Ethiopia.

INTRODUCTION

The oribatid mite of the family Achipteriidae THOR, 1929 comprises 89 species from
eight genera (SUBIÁS 2004, online version 2011): Achipteria Berlese, 1885, Anachip-
teria Grandjean, 1932, Campachipteria Aoki, 1995, Cerachipteria Grandjean, 1935,
Cubachipteria Balogh & Mahunka, 1979, Dentachipteria Nevin, 1974, Parachipteria
Hammen, 1952, Plakoribates Popp, 1960. All listed taxa collectively distribute in the
Holarctic, Oriental and Neotropical regions.
Achipteria is the most species-rich genus of Achipteriidae family, which currently comprises 32 species (SUBÍAS 2004, online version 2011). In the course of taxonomic studies of the oribatid fauna of southern part of Ethiopia we recorded the new species of Achipteria, which is also the first note of it in Ethiopia. The new species is described below as Achipteria baleensis sp. n.

At present, juvenile stages have been described for some species of Achipteria, in particular: A. acuta Berlese, 1908 (see SENICZAK 1978; CHISTYAKOV 1988), A. coleoptrata (LINNAEUS, 1758) (see SENICZAK 1978), A. italica (Oudemans, 1914) (see CHISTYAKOV 1994). Unfortunately, we have not found juvenile stages of the new species, and therefore we do not describe them in the paper.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Specimens were studied in lactic acid, mounted in temporary cavity slides for the duration of the study and then stored in 70% alcohol in tubes. All body measurements are presented in micrometres. Body length was measured in lateral view, from the tip of the rostrum to the posterior edge of the ventral plate, to avoid discrepancies caused by different degrees of notogastral distension. Notogastral width refers to the maximum width in dorsal view. Length of body setae was measured in lateral view. Formulae of leg setation are given in parentheses according to sequence of trochanter–femur–genu–tibia–tarsus (famulus included). Formulae of leg solenidia are given in square brackets according to sequence of genu–tibia–tarsus.

DESCRIPTION OF NEW SPECIES

Achipteria baleensis sp. n.

(Figs. 1-23)

Diagnosis

New species is distinguished by the following combination of character states: body size 647-697 × 448-464; surface of notogaster, anogenital region and anal plates foveolae; lamellae with point lateral tooth; interlamellar setae not reaching distal parts of lamellae; sensilli clavate, with long stalk and oblong, barbed head; notogastral setae long; tutoriua reaching rostral border.

Description

Measurements – Body length 647 (holotype), 647-697 (average 677, five paratypes); body width 448 (holotype), 448-464 (average 461, five paratypes).

Integument – Body colour: brown - black. Notogaster, anogenital region and anal plates with very small foveolae (sometimes hardly visible).

Prodorsum (Figs. 1, 3-9) – Rostrum rounded. Lamellae broad, separate medially, only in the middle fused shortly, extending far beyond the tip of the rostrum. Distal parts of lamellae rounded apically in dorsal view; with pointed lateral tooth in dorso-anterior
view. Rostral, lamellar (both 73-82) and interlamellar (151-172) setae setiform, slightly barbed. Interlamellar setae not reaching distal parts of lamellae. Sensilli (94–110) clavate, with long stalk and oblong, barbed head.

Notogaster (Figs. 1, 10–12) – Dorsosejugal suture convex medially. Pteromorphs strongly curved ventrally. Lenticulus large, with indistinct margins. Ten pairs of setiform, smooth notogastral setae; c and la longest (65-69), p1–p3 shortest (28-36), others of

1–5. Achipteria baleensis sp. n.: 1 – Dorsal view; 2 – Ventral view (without gnathosoma and legs); 3 – Medio-distal part of lamellae, antero-dorsal view; 4 – Distal parts of lamellae and lamellar setae, dorsal view; 5 – Tutorium. Scale bar 1, 2: 200 μm, scale bar 3–5: 50 μm
medium size (41-45). Sacculi Sa oblonged, well developed; S1, S2, S3 rounded, very small, hardly visible. Opisthosomal gland openings and lyrifissures weakly visible, developed in typical arrangement for genus.

Lateral part of body (Fig. 5). Exobothridial setae not observed. Tutoria (tu) long, reaching rostral border, with free tip.

Anogenital region (Figs. 2, 13-15) – Six pairs of genital setae (g1–g6, 36-41); one pair of aggenital setae (ag, 20); two pairs of anal (an1, an2, 8) and three pairs of adanal setae (ad1–ad3, 8). All setae setiform, smooth. Ovipositor: length of lobes 69-73, length of cylindrical distal part (bDp) 73-82, width of cylindrical distal part 49-57. All setae of ovipositor setiform, smooth. Lobe setae $\psi_1 \approx \tau_3$ (28–32) longer than $\psi_2 \approx \tau_a \approx \tau_b \approx \tau_c$ (73-82). Six coronal setae k short (8-10) present.

Epimeral region (Figs. 2, 16) – The shape of the apodemes and epimeral borders typical for the genus. Custodium (cus) thorn-like. Epimeral setal formula 2–1–3–3. Setae 1c not observed. Setae setiform, smooth; medial setae 1a, 1b, 2a, 3a (12-16) shorter than others (32-61). Setae 3c and 4c inserted laterally.

Gnathosoma (Figs. 17-19) – Subcapitulum longer than wide: 143-147 × 118-127. Hypostomal setae h absent, only alveoli present; setae a (28-32) and m (36-41) seti-

**Legs (Figs. 20–23)** — Formulae of leg setation and solenidia: I (1–5–3–4–20) [1–2–2], II (1–5–3–4–15) [1–1–2], III (2–3–1–3–15) [1–1–0], IV (1–2–2–3–12) [0–1–0]; homology of setae and solenidia indicated in Table 1. Almost all setae slightly barbed (except, in particular, setae p, ft’’ on leg I). Famulus short, blunt-ended. Seta s of tarsi II thick, with strong spines unilaterally. Ventral setae of femora I short (these setae on other legs very long). Solenidia ω₁ and ω₂ on tarsi II rod-like, other solenidia setiform.

**Material examined**

Six specimens were obtained from the southern Ethiopia, Bale Mountains National Park, Harenna Forest (*Hagenia abissinica* forming the canopy), collected by L. B. Rybalov, 23.11.2009. Holotype and four paratypes obtained from: 6º38’N, 39º43’E, 1883 m.a.s.l. in soil; one paratype obtained from: 6º42’N, 39º43’E, 2249 m.a.s.l. in mosses on trees.

**Type deposition** — The holotype is deposited in the collection of Zoological Institute of Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, Russia; three paratypes are deposited in the collection of Siberian Zoological Museum, Novosibirsk, Russia; two paratypes are in the personal collection of S.G.ERMILOV.

**Etymology**

The new species is named after the Ethiopian Bale Mountains National Park.

**Distribution**

At present, this species is only known from Ethiopia.

Table 1. Leg setation and solenidia of *Achipteria baleensis* sp. n.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leg</th>
<th>Trochanter</th>
<th>Femur</th>
<th>Genu</th>
<th>Tibia</th>
<th>Tarsus</th>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>v’</td>
<td>d, (l), bv”, v”</td>
<td>(l), v’, σ</td>
<td>(l), (v), ϕ, ϕ₂</td>
<td>(ft), (tc), (tt), (p), (a), (a), s, (pv), v’, (pl), l”, e, ω₂, ω₂</td>
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<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>v’</td>
<td>d, (l), bv”, v”</td>
<td>(l), v’, σ</td>
<td>(l), (v), ϕ</td>
<td>(ft), (tc), (tt), (p), (a), (a), s, (pv), ω₂, ω₂</td>
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<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>l’, v’</td>
<td>d, l’, ev’</td>
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<td>(ft), (tc), (tt), (p), (a), (a), s, (pv)</td>
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<td>IV</td>
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<td>d, l’</td>
<td>l’, (v), ϕ</td>
<td>ft”, (tc), (p), (a), (a), s, (pv)</td>
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* Roman letters refer to normal setae, e to famulus, Greek letters to solenidia. Single prime (’) marks setae on anterior and double prime (’’) setae on posterior side of the given leg segment. Parentheses refer to a pair of setae.
Remarks

Achipteria baleensis sp. n. can be included in the Achipteria species-group because of the presence of point lateral cusp on lamella, long notogastral setae and long sensilli. The most similar species are: A. acuta Berlese, 1908 from the Holarctic region, A. holomonensis Cancela da Fonseca and Stamou, 1987 from Greece, A. italicca (Oudemans, 1914) from Europe, A. longisetosus Weigmann and Murvanidze, 2003 from Caucasus (see accordingly Berlese 1908; Cancela da Fonseca & Stamou 1987; Oudemans 1927;
Weigmann & Murvanidze 2003). Achipteria baleensis sp. n. differs from A. acuta by the interlamellar setae more short (shorter than lamella in new species; longer than lamella in A. acuta), sensilli barbed (smooth in A. acuta), surface of notogaster and anogenital region foveolate (not foveolate in A. acuta); from A. holomonensis and A. italica by the larger body length (647-697 vs. 512-556 in A. holomonensis, 483-546 in A. italica), sensilli barbed (smooth in A. holomonensis and A. italica), surface of notogaster and

20–23. Achipteria baleensis sp. n.; 20 – Leg I, left, antiaxial view; 21 – Tarsus and tibia of leg II, left, antiaxial view; 22 – Femur of leg II, left, antiaxial view; 23 – Leg IV, right, antiaxial view. Scale bar 100 μm
anogenital region foveolate (not foveolate in *A. holomonensis* and *A. italica*); from *A. longisetosus* by the larger body length (647-697 vs. 450-475 in *A. longisetosus*),
tutoria long, reaching rostral border (very short, not reaching rostral border in *A. longisetosus*), surface of notogaster and anogenital region foveolate (not foveolate in *A. longisetosus*); dorsal notogastral setae shorter (seta *lm* not reaching *lp*, seta *h*3 not reaching *h*2 in new species; *lm* reaching *lp*, *h*3 reaching *h*2 in *A. longisetosus*).

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**References**