

ACRAEINAE RESEARCH

N° 1



ABRI

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Acraeinae research N° 1

This publication series has several objectives.

The first one is to bring to the knowledge of lepidopterists the descriptions of new taxa in the sub-family of Afrotropical Acraeinae.

It also aims at : exposing the unresolved taxonomical issues, relating relevant field studies, describing early stages previously unknown, delivering results from the sequencing of taxa, and generally bringing any information which could enable us to better understand this sub-family of butterflies.

Several independent articles will be published, all having in common the study of Afrotropical Acraeinae.

These publications will be open to any person wishing to publish scientific articles on this sub-family.

The first publication follows the studies carried out by D. Bernaud on the ABRI collection in Nairobi (Kenya) in August 2021. After examining the vast section dedicated to Afrotropical Acraeinae, containing long series by regions as well as the results of numerous breedings, it became essential to describe new taxa and to rehabilitate some subspecies previously synonymized, in particular by Pierre & Bernaud in their 2014 catalogue (Pierre, J. & Bernaud, D., 2014. *Le genre Acraea Fabricius, 1807, Liste systématique, synonymique, et liste des noms infrasubspécifiques*, Supplément, Keltern, Goecke & Evers), but also by previous authors.

We are particularly grateful to Steve Collins for providing full access to the ABRI collection and for communicating a lot of vital information regarding populations and early stages.

We also thank Jean-Pierre Lequeux for translating the text in English and for his constant supervision and corrections



From left to right : J-P Lequeux, D. Bernaud, S. Collins at ABRI August 2021

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***Acraea bakundu* Bernaud, 2021 and *Acraea dimonika* Bernaud, 2021,
New species
(Lepidoptera, Nymphalidae)
Bernaud**

In the 90s the author collected on the Rumpi Hills a female of the *epaea* group which he could not identify. He only noticed that she was close to certain specimens of *consanguinea* (f. *intermedia*). Later on he collected a male on Mount Batcha which showed a habitus perfectly similar to that female. During a study of the D. Knoop collection, another female from the Obudu Plateau was found. Recently, during an examination of the ABRI collection, 4 identical females were marked undescribed from Mts Koupé and Bakossi, which S. Collins had considered to be a new species but was waiting to see a male for confirmation. The author has consequently decided to describe this new species.

The author also realized recently that he had in his collection a female collected by D. Camiade in the Dimonika forest reserve in the Republic of Congo. This female, although not resembling any known species, curiously seems to have something in common with the females of the new Cameroonian species mentioned above. Having no indication of any subspecific relation, the author has chosen to describe it as a species, exposing this new taxon publicly in the hope that some other collectors might provide supplementary information.

Description of *Acraea bakundu* Bernaud, sp. nov.

The male of this new species shows on its forewings a dark brown basal area with the wide ochreous-yellow subapical band having a peculiar external outline which, although reminding certain variations of *consanguinea*, is definitely different.



Acraea bakundu

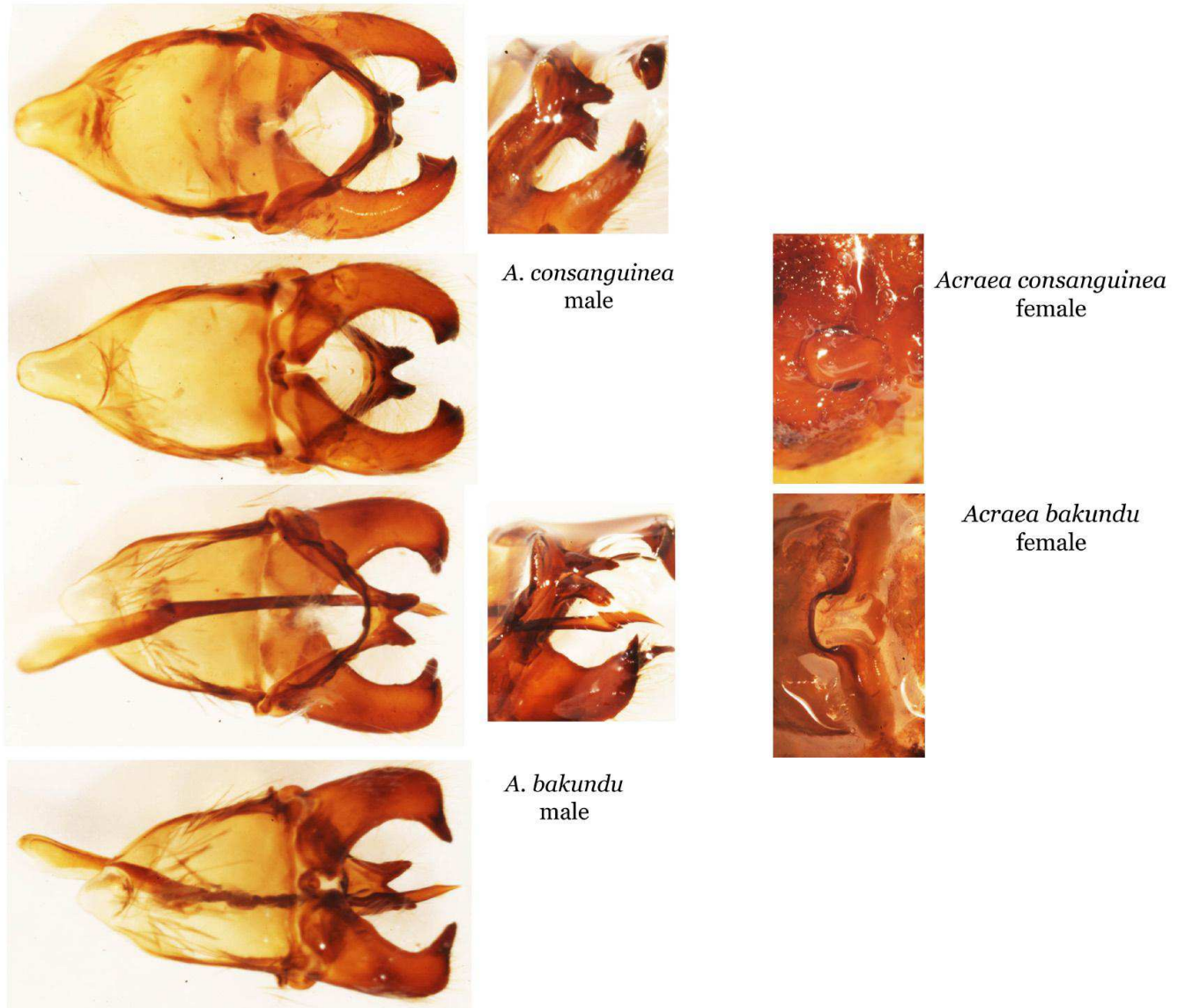
Acraea consanguinea

The light subapical band is more inwards in *bakundu* than in *consanguinea*, resulting in reaching the inner margin nearer to the base which is wider and shows a peculiar inner outline with a conspicuous recess in space 1. The dark brown basal area does not show any lightening towards the inner margin whilst it is always the case in *consanguinea*. The hindwings are very similar. Those characters also appear on the verso.

The female shows the same pattern as the male. It is much bigger and the wings are much rounder. The pattern of both the subapical band and the dark basal area is exactly the same in the 6 females known so far.

Due to the proximity of this new species with *consanguinea*, the author has dissected both male and female genitalia for comparison. We show hereunder the comparative plate of the male genitalia. The bifid uncus of *consanguinea* shows two crenated points having a very abrupt posterior right edge (see enlargement of the uncus, lateral view). *A. bakundu*'s uncus is less open and shows more rounded and much less crenated points.

The valves of *consanguinea* show at their posterior end two points curved backwards but remaining on the same level. *A. bakundu*'s valves are also curved backwards but they are not orientated on the same level. Moreover the valves of *bakundu* are thicker than *consanguinea* and its saccus looks stockier and shorter.



The sterigma of the *consanguinea* female forms a very characteristic regular oval. The one of *bakundu* has a totally different square shape.

The above genitalia photos do not leave any doubt as far as the specificity of *bakundu* is concerned.

The name of this new taxon has been chosen in reference to the ethnical group living in its distribution area.

Description of *Acraea dimonika* Bernaud, sp. nov.

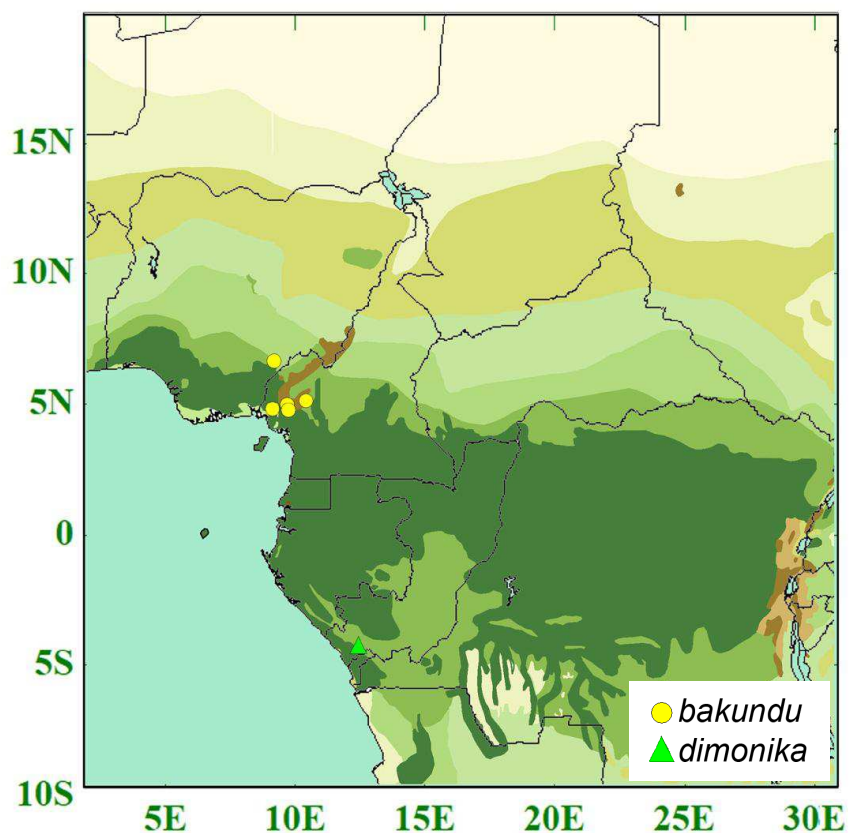
The only known specimen of this new species shows forewings reminding the ones of *bakundu*, the dark brown basal area and the subapical band having the same outlines. The difference is mainly the whitish colour of the subapical band in *dimonika*.

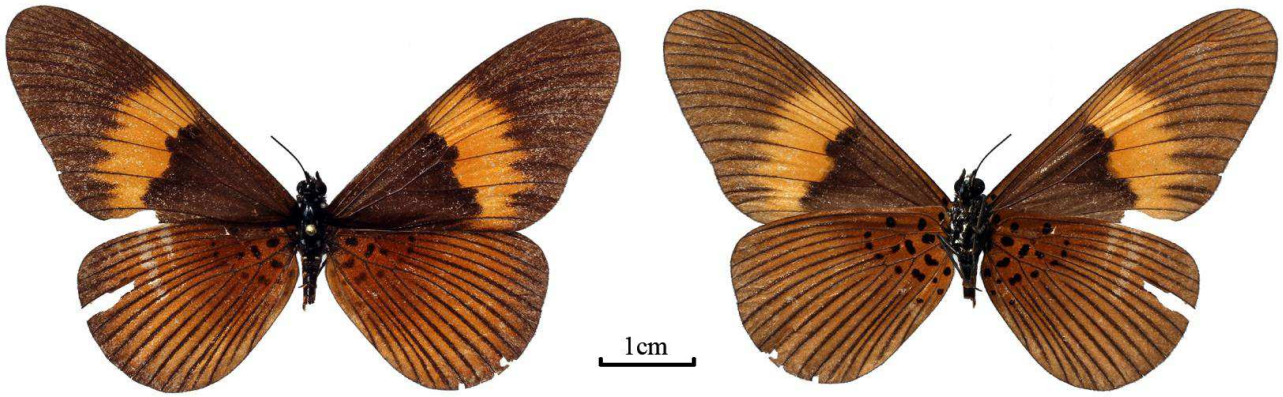
The hindwings also show a whitish discal area, with veins highlighted in brown and thick brown inter-veins going up to the cell. The brown margin is much wider than in *bakundu* females.

This specimen cannot be associated with any known species today.

If species *bakundu* seems to be a montane species, all the captures having been made above an altitude of 1,000 m, on the other hand species *dimonika* is a lowland species

Opposite distribution map
of *bakundu* and *dimonika*



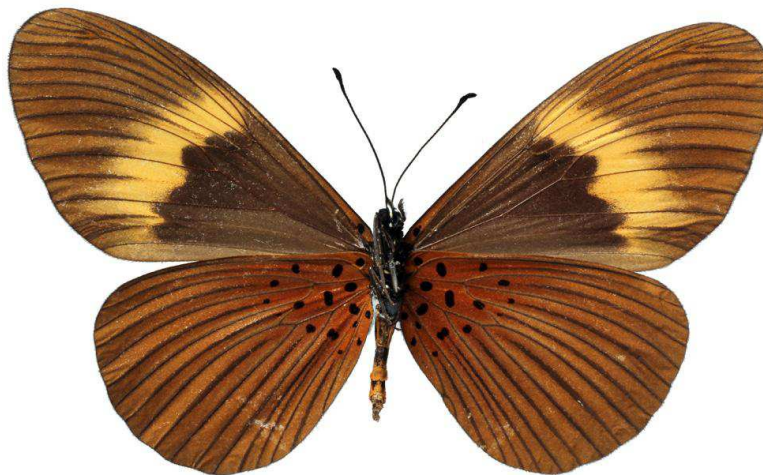


bakundu ♂ holotype Bana Cameroon D249 recto CB

bakundu ♂ holotype Bana Cameroon D249 verso CB



bakundu ♀ allotype Rumpi Cameroon recto CB



bakundu ♀ allotype Rumpi Cameroon verso CB

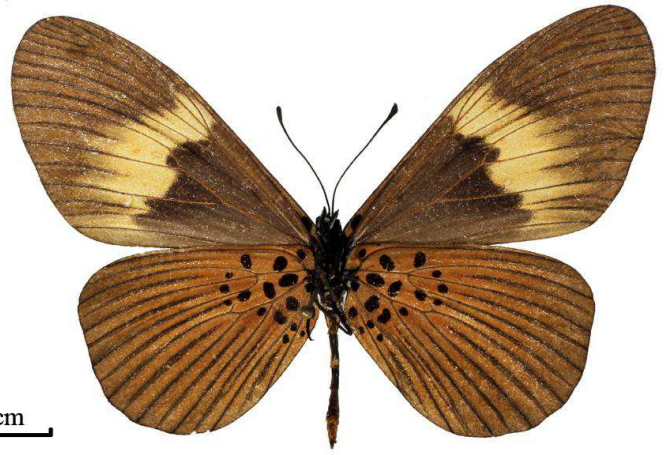
Here above the type specimens ♂ and ♀ collected by D. Bernaud (in collection Bernaud). The female was collected on the Rumpi Hills (04° 55' N, 09° 13' East, near Dikome Balue). The male was collected on Mount Bana (or Batcha, 05° 06' N, 10° 19' East).

We saw another female from the Obudu Plateau in Nigeria in the D. Knoop collection.

In the ABRI collection there are 4 females (paratypes), 2 from Mount Koupé (04° 48' N, 09° 41' East) and 2 from Mount Bakossi (05° 03' N, 09° 32' East).



bakundu ♀ paratype Bakossi Cameroon recto
ABRI-2021-00499



bakundu ♀ paratype Bakossi Cameroon verso
ABRI-2021-00499



bakundu ♀ paratype Kupe Cameroon recto ABRI-2021-00497



bakundu ♀ paratype Kupe Cameroon recto ABRI-2021-00500

We show here 3 of the paratype females in the ABRI collection.
Their size is quite variable, one specimen measuring 70 mm whilst the bigger one reaches 92 mm.