

ACRAEA RESEARCH

No. 4



Acraea cerasa, Zimbabwe - J. Francis, 2024



Acraea kraka, Cameroon - D. Bernaud, 1993.

***Acraea* research No. 4**

This new edition of *Acraea* research is extremely grateful to Alan Gardiner, Jonathan Francis and Shabani Ndarama for their precious collaboration. The new subspecies *francisi* of *aganice* from Angola, the synonymy between *ambigua* and *bellona*, the identification of *indentata* thanks to the sequencing of two specimens from Angola, and the distinction between *anemosa* and *welwitschii*, are all the results of the collections made by Alan Gardiner in Angola.

Recent breedings by J. Francis have made it possible to discover interesting early stages.

We also thank all the entomologists with whom we share information, and more particularly S. Collins and J. Dobson.

Moreover the thorough studies of the specimens collected by D. Bernaud in Cameroon between 1986 and 1994, meant to appear in a monograph of the *Acraea* of this country, have made it possible to bring to light *Acraea latefasciata*, pro-species of *moforsa* (ex. *macarista*) and to provide updates on the description of *peneleos pelasgius*.

We are grateful to the Berlin Museum (MNB) for allowing us to study the types of their historical collections, which allowed J. Pierre and D. Bernaud to review the nomenclature exposed in their 2014 catalogue. This work, which was published in french in the journal *Lambillonea* during the first trimester of 2025, been translated into english and is incorporated herein so as to allow our english speaking readers to easily access these data.

Thanks to the results of the sequencings carried out by J. Pierre and D. Bernaud for several years in collaboration with BOLDSYSTEMS, we have identified two different species within the populations of what used to be called *A. bonasia*. Similarly *neluska* has been classified as a distinct species from *caldarena*.

Thanks to The Wilderness Project, they are organizing bioblitz's to study the biodiversity in the water catchment areas of northern Zambia. From one of their expeditions, to the Northern Province we found species rarely found in Zambia.

We would like to thank the Wild Bird Trust and National Geographic Okavango Wilderness Project which made the expedition to the Okavango head waters possible in 2022 (Declaracao N. 08/PNY. INBAC.MINAMB/2024), especially the ground crew, in particular Rob Taylor, who made sure all logistics was in place, and allowed us to could carry out our field activities safely with the guidance of the Hazardous Area Life-support Organiza on (HALO Trust).

We remind our readers that they can propose the publication of early stages of *Acraea* for the next issue of the series *Acraea* research, The purpose is to identify as many caterpillars and hostplants as possible, as this information allows the verification of the classification of species.

For the sake of simplification, the bibliography of all the articles is presented at the end of the journal, except for the one regarding the article published in *Lambillonea* which has been translated in this edition.

An index of the names mentioned in the articles is also presented.

D. Bernaud, 08/12/2025

**Modifications of the nomenclature of afrotropical *Acraea*
resulting from the analysis of the type specimens in the Berlin Museum
(Lepidoptera Nymphalidae)
J. Pierre & D. Bernaud**

Summary : A recent review of the type specimens of afrotropical *Acraea* in the Berlin Museum (Museum für Naturkunde Berlin), leads the authors to revise certain names and/or positions of the present nomenclature. The species which had wrongly been named *dewitzi* becomes *Acraea simulator* Ackery, 1995 (*nov. stat.*).

Keywords : *Acraeini*, *Acraea ansorgei acuta*, *Acraea silvicola*, *Acraea polis*, *Acraea pentapolis*, *Acraea thelestis*, *Acraea dondoensis*, *Acraea nohara ochracea*, *Acraea caecilia liacea*, *Acraea lyci*, *Acraea rabbaiae*, *Acraea rabbaiae perlucida*, *Acraea mombasae*, *Acraea formosa moforsa*, *Acraea bana*, *Acraea formosa angulata*, *Acraea formosa latefasciata*, *Acraea macarista*, *Acraea dewitzi*, *Acraea simulata*, *Acraea simulator*.

Remark : this article has been published in French in the Journal Lambillionea CXXV 1, 2025 : 8-17. In order to make this important article regarding nomenclature accessible to as many entomologists as possible, it was translated into English and incorporated in this edition of *Acraea Research*. Certain points have been developed in separate articles, such as the one regarding *Acraea latefasciata*.

Abbreviations

MNB = Museum für Naturkunde Berlin.
NHMUK = British Museum of Natural History.
MNHN = Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle Paris
DRC – Democratic Republic of Congo
CAR – Central African Republic

Introduction

One of the authors (D. Bernaud) recently (September 2024) examined all the afrotropical type specimens of the Berlin Museum. Photos of the types have been taken and a detailed analysis of their nomenclatural positions has been made. It became obvious that the names of several taxa must be reviewed, meaning that some descriptions will be synonymized.

The Berlin Museum hosts the second collection of *Acraea* in the world, including types which number ca. 253 specimens. This collection is historical, containing some or all the types from the following authors : (in alphabetical order) : Aurivillius, Boisduval, Dewitz, Gaede, Grünberg, Hering, Hopffer, Karsch, Keferstein, Lanz, Le Doux, Mabille, Oberthür, Ribbe, Richelmann, Schultze, Staudinger, Strand and Wichgraf.

We must review the cladistic and synonymic list published by Pierre J. & Bernaud D. in 2014. We are aware that these modifications will perturb entomologists but this exercise must be done as per the Code of Nomenclature.

Modifications in cladistic order

The modified taxa, in cladistic order, are the following : *acuta*, *polis* and *thelestis*, *dondoensis*, *lyci*, *perlucida* and *mombasae*, *dewitzi*, *bana* and *macarista*.

Some of these taxa are well known by entomologists and their modification will involve the re-positioning of all the subspecies, forms and other descriptions which are associated with them.

***Acraea silvicola* Richelmann, 1913 = *Acraea acuta* Howarth, 1969, nov. syn. (figs 1-2)**

Richelmann in 1913 described a new species named *Acraea silvicola* from the Usambara Mts in Tanzania. This description was hardly ever referred to. The first author who mentions *silvicola* is Carpenter in 1932, declaring : "In 1913 Richelmann described a new species, *Acraea silvicola*, a female specimen which still remains unique, coming from Usambara. It is a form of *johnstoni*, and as the original description is not generally accessible, and the specimen of such great interest, the description is here quoted in full". At the time, no specimen of the species later named *acuta* by Howarth was known. And naturally, as the specimen was unique, an experienced author such as Carpenter tried to associate it with a known taxon. The only other mention of *silvicola* is in Ackery's work in 1995 who agrees with Carpenter's position. Yet the illustration of *silvicola* in the original description is accurate, although in black and white only.

Acraea acuta females are indeed occasionally brick-red and such specimens are present in many collections where they are associated with black and white (or sometimes cream) males, such as the one selected by Howarth for the description of *Acraea acuta*.

We are compelled to synonymize *Acraea acuta* Howarth, 1969 (who was not aware of the previous description) with *Acraea silvicola* Richelmann, 1913. The numerous taxa, subspecies and forms associated with *acuta* are now re-positioned under *silvicola* : *alba*, *australis*, *chrysippina*, *cottreli*, *flava*, *handmani*, *radiata*, *reducta*, *rubrobasalis*, *ngorongoro* and *nigromaculata*.

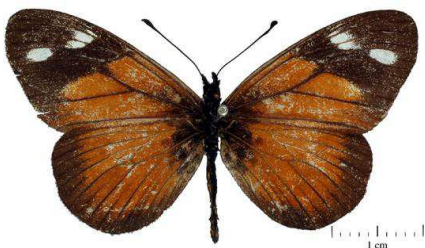


Fig. 1 : *Acraea silvicola* ♀ type recto, MNB.

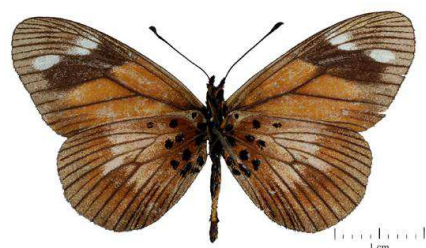


Fig. 2 : *Acraea silvicola* ♀ type verso, MNB.

***Acraea pentapolis* Ward, 1871 = *Acraea polis* Pierre, 1999, nov. syn. (figs 3-4) ; *Acraea thelestis* Oberthür, 1893, nov. stat., valid species (figs 5-6)**

Ward described *Acraea pentapolis* from Cameroon (Cameroons) in 1871. This species was the subject of a study by Pierre & Bernaud in 1999, following breedings carried out in Cameroon (Mont Cameroun). It is indicated: "La description originale est assez laconique et tient en six lignes, mais en 1873 Ward la complète d'un dessin coloré assez précis qui suggère que nous sommes en présence d'un spécimen du centre du Cameroun. Le type, nécessaire pour la présente étude, reste introuvable. Un néotype est donc désigné : ♂, Cameroun, Mont Fébé, V.1985, Michel Libert, au Muséum d'Histoire naturelle, Paris (fig. 2)".

and Magazine of Natural History, 6 (3) : 121-137.

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Staudinger O., 1896. - Neue exotischer Tagfalter. *Deutsche Entomologische Zeitschrift, Iris*, 8 : 366-379.

Stevenson R.H.R., 1934. - New South African butterflies. *Occasional Papers of the Rhodesia Museum*, 1 (3) : 10-17.

Suffert E., 1904. - Neue Tagfalter aus Deutsch-Ost-Africa. *Deutsche Entomologische Zeitschrift, Iris*, 17 : 124-132.

Ward C. 1871. - Description of new species of African diurnal lepidoptera. *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine*, 8 : 34-36, 58-60, 81-82, 118-122.

Ward C., 1873. - Descriptions of new species of African lepidoptera. *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine*, 10 : 151-152.

**Corrigendum regarding the designation of holotypes
in the publication *Acraeinae* research N° 1, 2021**

In the publication entitled *Acraeinae* research N° 1, the designation of 3 holotypes was not expressed as per the rules of the Code of Nomenclature and therefore require to be corrected.

Acraea oncaea shimba, page 14. The designation of the holotype male from the Shimba Hills in Kenya, specimen ABRI-2021-03119 (ABRI collection), was mentioned as *shimba* ♂ type. We rectify this and we indicate *shimba* holotype ♂ under the recto and verso photos of the concerned specimen.

Acraea oncaea idjwi, page 15. The designation of the holotype male from Idjwi Island (DRC), specimen ABRI-2021-03127 (ABRI collection), was mentioned as *idjwi* ♂ type. We rectify this and we indicate *idjwi* holotype ♂ under the recto and verso photos of the concerned specimen.

Acraea bankoides, page 20. The designation of the holotype male from Masha in Ethiopia, specimen ABRI-2021-03159 (ABRI collection), was mentioned as *bankoides* ♂ type. We rectify this and we indicate *bankoides* holotype ♂ under the recto and verso photos of the concerned specimen

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Corrigendum written by the authors S. Collins & D. Bernaud

**The synonymy of *Acraea bella* Weymer
and *Acraea bellona* Weymer with *Acraea ambigua* Trimen
(Lepidoptera Nymphalidae)
A. Gardiner & D. Bernaud**

Summary : The type specimens of *Acraea ambigua*, *A. bella* and *A. bellona* in the Berlin Museum (Germany) and the Iziko Museum (Cape Town, South Africa) were examined. This together with field research in Angola (A. Gardiner) has resulted in the synonymy of *Acraea bella* Weymer, 1901 and *Acraea bellona* Weymer, 1908, with *Acraea ambigua* Trimen, 1891.

Keywords : *Acraea ambigua*, *A. bella*, *A. bellona*.

Main authors mentioneds : Trimen, Weymer, Eltringham, Le Doux, Pierre.

***Acraea ambigua* Trimen, 1891**

On butterflies collected in tropical south-western Africa by Mr A.W. Eriksson. *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London* : 59-107.

Trimen specified that this species is allied with *Acraea acrita*. The description is based on a pair captured by E.W. Eriksson during his travels in northern Namibia and southern Angola. Trimen indicates his movement between latitudes 15° 15'S to 20° 45'S and longitude 15°E to 21° 20'E. Trimen provides the localities Ehanda (15° 50'S 16° 00'E, Dean, W.R.J. 2000 *The birds of Angola : an annotated check list*, Tring, Herts, UK : British Ornithologists' Union) although this is likely not to be a precise locality, it is in the vicinity of Cuando-Cubango and Cuanavale, and other species captured by Eriksson such *Acraea buettneri* and *Eriksonnia acraeaina* have their south western most distribution in this area and not in Namibia as earlier work suggested (also see Gardiner & Terblanche 2010, *Taxonomy, biology, biogeography, evolution and conservation of the genus Eriksonnia Trimen [Lepidoptera Lycaenidae]* as an exemple. *African Entomology* 18 (1) : 171-191).

Trimen's 1891 description is accompanied by a drawing of the female, and we illustrate the two type specimens, from the Iziko Museum, South Africa (Fig. 1). Trimen also cites the capture of a male specimen by Selous at the junction of the Chobe and Zambezi rivers. The two Eriksson specimens fall very much within the variation of *A. bellona*.

***Acraea bella* Weymer, 1901**

Beitrag zur Lepidopterenfauna von Angola. *Entomologische Zeitschrift*. Frankfurt a. M. 15 : 61-64 ; 65-67 ; 69-70.

Weymer (1901) described his variation *bella* on the basis of three specimens from Angola: "*Ufer des Kunene bei Hartebeestpfanne, am Onschingue, unweit des Kuito*" (Fig. 2-4). Eltringham (1912) considered *bella* as a form of *ambigua* (Eltringham, 1912), and Le Doux who worked on the Berlin collection indicated synonymy on the labels. As with *Acraea ambigua* these specimens also fall into the variation of what has been known as "*bellona*" from Angola and are very similar to specimens captured recently near Kuito, having similar spotting and the same white areas as the *ambigua* types.