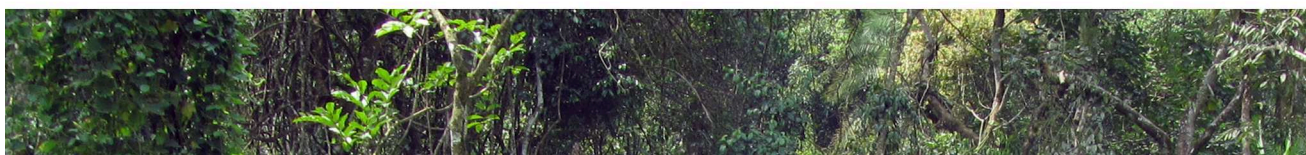




ACRAEINAE OF UGANDA

(Lepidoptera, Nymphalidae)

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this work is multifold :

- First to bring together all the present knowledge about *Acraea* species flying in Uganda, confirmed by captures, or simply mentioned but without captures to confirm them.
- Then to offer the amateur entomologists interested in that family of Lepidoptera a visual identification key enabling them to identify their captures easily.
- And last but not least to show the incredible richness of the Uganda fauna. Uganda is at the crossroads of different ecological zones (the Sudanese along the northern border, the Kenya along the eastern border, the Tanzania along the southern border and the Kivu (Congolese) along the western border). This strategic geographical position, together with Uganda's own ecological zone in the centre of the country, the diversity of its climatic zones and the various isolated mountains in the North and the East are the reasons for this great biodiversity. A simple statistic will speak for itself : Uganda represents 1% of the total area of sub-saharan Africa and it contains ca. 37% of all known *Acraea* taxa from Africa. No other African country can to-day claim such a record. In the future perhaps the Democratic Republic of Congo, considering its vast area, will show a higher number of species once it has been thoroughly surveyed.

We divided the book in 5 parts :

- **Part I** is a chronological analysis of all existing publications dealing with Uganda *Acraea*, starting from the earliest ones at the end of the 19th century to the most recent ones. Each citation is analyzed and cross-referenced according to the present taxonomical status of the species belonging to this family. An updated list of *Acraea* species of Uganda is published in phylogenetic order.
- **Part II** not only mentioning all known localities of capture in Uganda but also placing them on maps. The ones surveyed by the authors are illustrated by numerous photos of biotopes.
- **Part III** is the visual identification key for all species mentioned in this book. This will enable any entomologist not particularly familiar with this family of butterflies to identify easily at least 90% of his captures.
- **Part IV** is the most important section of this work. For each taxon there is a general consideration on the species, information and photos on their early stages (for species bred), a list of all known foodplants, a plate displaying photos of specimens showing possible variations and a map showing the distribution of the taxa in Uganda. We have divided it into 2 sections, the first one dealing with taxa belonging to the subgenus *Actinote*, the second one with taxa of the subgenus *Acraea*.
- **Part V** deals with the bibliography of reference and the index gives the page number(s) for each species and/or subspecies.

Group A

Group A : The margin is transparent, grey, smoky or coloured and shows no ocelli and no interveins. We have two possibilities : the margin is coloured (**A1**) or the margin is either transparent, grey or smoky (**A2**).

A1 : only **2 species** fit in this group : *asboloplintha* and *insignis*.

We opted to place *eltringhami*, which is very close to *insignis*, in group **C** (with ocelli) because the similar black margin contains triangles looking like black ocelli on a light background.



asboloplintha



insignis

Acraea asboloplintha has a light orange margin strongly contrasting with the reddish discal area.

Acraea insignis has a black or dark brown margin bordered in red on its inner edge.

A2 : this group consists of **10 species** : *hamata*, *humilis*, *unimaculata*, *iturina*, *kalinzu*, *orestia*, *quirinalis*, *cerita*, *kraka*, *quirina*. Due to their variability, *iturina*, *quirinalis* and *orestia* will also appear in Group **B** as we will see later because some specimens will show faint interveins.



hamata



humilis



unimaculata



iturina



kalinzu

This group can be divided in 2 sub-groups : **A21** with no submarginal spots and **A22** with submarginal spots.



orestia



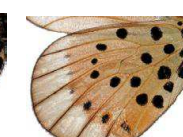
quirinalis



cerita



kraka



quirina

A21 : includes *hamata*, *humilis*, *unimaculata*, *iturina*, *kalinzu*, *orestia*, *quirinalis*. Again this group can be divided in 2 sub-groups depending on whether they have discal spots (**A212**) or not (**A211**).

A211 : *hamata*, *humilis*, *unimaculata* do not have any discal spots.



hamata

The case of *hamata* is particular, the basal spots are very large and more or less merged (which is also the case with its close species *insignis* and *eltringhami*). But they are not discal spots.



humilis

Acraea humilis is nearly entirely transparent which clearly separates it from most *orestia* specimens. Veins 6 and 7 are stalked.

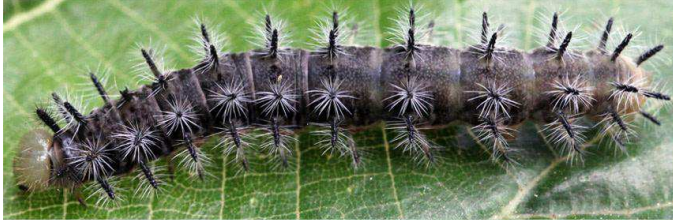


unimaculata

Acraea unimaculata has no punctuation whatsoever but both discal and basal areas are invaded with an orange or ochreous colour.

Groupe **A212** : *iturina*, *kalinzu*, *orestia*, *quirinalis* have discal spots.

The case of *Acraea kalinzu* is particular, the row of discal spots has shifted outwards and is close to the margin. But this cannot be considered a row of submarginal spots replicating the discal ones in every space.



Acraea penelope

Acraea (Actinote) penelope Staudinger, 1896, Iris, 9: 195, "oberen Congo-Gebiet, Mocquerys (Kuilu)".

Acraea Penelope is a very common species occupying the whole of central Africa from continental Cameroon to Kenya all the way to the south of the D. R. Congo. It is less common in West Africa and along the Cameroon coastline where subspecies *derubescens* Eltringham, 1912, flies. We remind the reader that Pierre & Bernaud consider subspecies *translucida* Eltringham, 1912, synonymous with *derubescens*; *translucida* is described from Lagos (Eltringham treatise page 285) whilst *derubescens* is described from Togo (page 284 of the same publication and therefore having priority).

In the same 1912 treatise Eltringham describes as well subspecies *vitrea* from Kenya which is also considered a synonym of *penelope* by Pierre & Bernaud. *Acraea pomponia* Grose-Smith, 1900 is considered a synonym of *penelope* by Eltringham (1912).

Some of the females of this species are identical to the males whilst others look very different. We see here a strong polymorphism.

From Uganda, Eltringham described several female forms :

Acraea penelope female form *argentea* from Entebbe, which shows a more silvery margin on the hindwing verso.

Acraea penelope female form *exalbescens* from Kampala, which is the white form ("yellowish white").

Acraea penelope female form *penella* from Kitanwa in which the translucent areas of the forewings are wider and the hindwing margin less dark and somehow radiated.

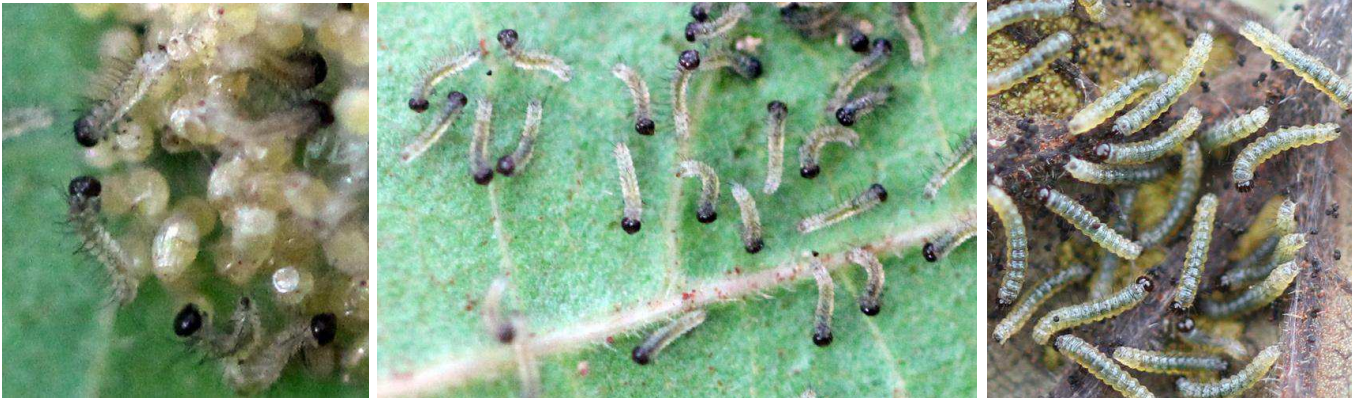
We find it unnecessary to describe female forms of *penelope* considering the magnitude of their variations. Eltringham's descriptions are far from exhaustive, even for Uganda only. In fact Aurivillius in 1913 adds the yellow female aberration *sulphurescens* from the Ssesse islands, Le Doux in 1928 adds form *laeticolor* (both sexes with reduced basal spots) from Mulange in Uganda, and Jackson in 1951 adds female form *joseffa* for specimens from Mbale. This last description specifies that form *joseffa* is very close to form *penella* and is distinguished only by a few minor details.

We show on our plates female specimens which have not been described, such as the melanistic forms or the strongly reddish forms, where the hindwing margin is not distinct from the rest of the wing.

The females can vary in many different ways :

- the shape of the dark interveins on the hindwing upperside which are sometimes very conspicuous due to the margin itself being lighter, whilst at times the margin is so dark it does not allow the lines to appear.
- the width and the colour of the hindwing underside which can go from silvery white to dark brown with all the yellow and orange intermediates.
- the ground colour of the hindwing which can vary from pure white to yellow, orange, reddish and smoky grey.
- the colour of the basal area of the hindwing which can be dark brown or the same as the ground colour allowing then the basal spots to show.
- the importance of the translucent zone of the forewing which can be reduced to the subapical area only (the median area being then white, orange or reddish) or occupying the whole of the median area.

We could go on like this forever and describe dozens of new forms as it has been done for *ansorgei*.



Soon after, the caterpillars hide themselves inside the leaves to avoid predators. During the early stages the head is black.



During the later stages, the head becomes brick-red with tiny black spots, the mandibles being darker. A fine black line subsists between the head and the first segment.



The dorsal and latero-dorsal spines are black whilst the lateral spines remain always white.



The mature caterpillar displays a ground colour varying from ashy grey to dark brown with a smoky area on the side of the thoracic segments. The base of each row of spines is enclosed within a light yellow band which is divided by a dark median band, not always clearly visible. Like in other species of the group, a small dark plate appears behind the head, divided here in four compartments. It is not known what the purpose of this plate is. A thin white line separates the dorsal part from the abdominal one. Both true and prolegs are white.

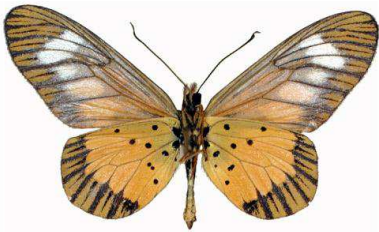




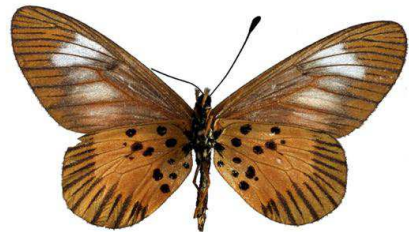
penelope ♂ r Katera



penelope ♀ r Katera



penelope ♂ v Katera



penelope ♀ v Katera



penelope ♂ r Katera



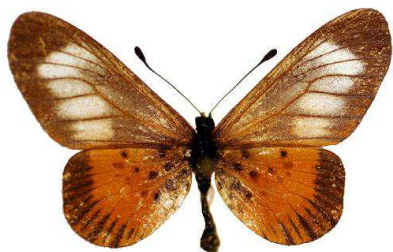
penelope ♀ r Kalinzu



penelope ♂ r Kalinzu



penelope ♀ r Mpanga



penelope ♀r Kalinzu



penelope ♀r Kisubi



penelope ♀r Semuliki



penelope ♀v Kisubi



penelope ♀r Bugalla



penelope ♀r Bugalla



penelope ♀r Bugalla



penelope ♀v Kerenge