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Observations on the biology of Afro–tropical Hesperiidae (Lepidoptera) principally from Kenya. Part 2. Pyrginae: Tagiadini

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Abstract

Partial life histories for 13 Afro–tropical Tagiadini (Hesperiidae: Pyrginae) are described and illustrated: *Eagris sabadius astoria* Holland, *E. s. andracne* (Boisduval), *E. lucetia* (Hewitson), *E. decastigma purpura* Evans, *Tagiades flesus* (Fabricius), *Caprona pillaana* Wallengren, *Netrobalane canopus* (Trimen), *Abantis arctomarginata* Lathy, *A. bamptoni* Collins & Larsen, *A. zambesiaca* (Westwood), *A. paradisea* (Butler), *A. meru* Evans and *A. venosa* Trimen. Generalisations are made for the tribe in Africa. Three African groups are recognised based on early stages. The *Tagiades* group includes *Tagiades* and *Eagris*, and is characterised by the hair-like covering of the eggs, the absence of noticeable hairs on the caterpillar, the chordate head of the caterpillar, possibly the red colouring of young caterpillars, the presence of white waxy patches on the pupae, and the small frontal projection on the pupa. The *Abantis* group includes *Caprona*, *Netrobalane* and *Abantis*, and we assume *Leucochitonea*, and is characterised by the scale covering of the eggs, the rounded caterpillar head covered with branching and sub-branching hairs; the stalked stellate hairs covering the body, the pale hairless pupae with black markings, and the strong upturned bifurcate frontal projection of the pupae. The two remaining African genera, *Procampta* and *Calleagris*, appear to form a third group, characterised by no anal wool and no covering to the eggs. The *Abantis* group is considered to merit at least tribal status. Although all African genera include Malvaceae (including former families Bombacaceae, Sterculiaceae and Tiliaceae) amongst their food plants, the range of families is diverse: Anacardiaceae, ?Cannabaceae, Erythroxylaceae, ?Lauraceae, Malvaceae, Rhamnaceae, ?Rosaceae, Sapindaceae and Violaceae (*Eagris* spp.), Dioscoreaceae, Malvaceae, ?Rutaceae (*Tagiades flesus*), Malvaceae (*Caprona pillaana* and *Netrobalane canopus*), and Annonaceae, Euphorbiaceae, Fabaceae, Malvaceae, Phyllanthaceae, and Sapindaceae (*Abantis* spp.).

Key words: *Eagris*, *Tagiades*, *Caprona*, *Netrobalane*, *Abantis*, food plant, life history, leaf shelter, parasitoid