



New species of Elachistinae (Lepidoptera: Elachistidae) from Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo

VIRGINIJUS SRUOGA¹ & JURATE DE PRINS²

¹Department of Zoology, Vilnius Pedagogical University, Studentu 39, LT-08106 Vilnius, Lithuania. E-mail: virginijus.sruoga@vpu.lt.

²Royal Museum for Central Africa, Leuvensesteenweg 13, B-3080 Tervuren, Belgium. E-mail: jurate.de.prins@africanmuseum.be. Corresponding author.

Abstract

No Elachistinae have ever been recorded from Cameroon and only one species (*Eretmograptis coniodoxa*) was described by Meyrick in 1938 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Here, we present ten new species of the subfamily Elachistinae from Central Africa: *Elachista cordata* sp. n., *Urodeta absidata* sp. n., *U. aculeata* sp. n., *U. crenata* sp. n., *U. cuspidis* sp. n., *U. faro* sp. n., *U. tortuosa* sp. n. from Cameroon and *U. acerba* sp. n., *U. bucera* sp. n., *U. talea* sp. n. from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The new species are diagnosed and illustrated with photographs of the adults and genitalia.

Key words: Lepidoptera, Elachistidae, Elachistinae, *Elachista*, *Urodeta*, new species, Afrotropical, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Introduction

The micromoth subfamily Elachistinae (Elachistidae) is globally distributed and contains more than 600 described and about 200 discovered, yet unnamed species (Kaila & Ståhls 2006). The moths are small, often cryptic, with a wingspan usually between 5 and 14 mm. The head is smooth-scaled with a weakly raised neck tuft, and a short, basally scaled haustellum. The antenna extends to about 2/3 of the forewing. The forewing pattern consists either of a white fascia and spots on a dark background or fuscous marks on a light background; or the moths can be unicolorous (white, yellowish or cream). The moths rest in a very characteristic posture: the antennae are directed backwards along the costal margin of the forewing and the tornal area of the forewing is produced above the dorsum. The male genitalia are symmetrical, usually with a spinose distal knob of gnathos and a bilobed uncus. Larvae of Elachistinae are obligate leaf miners, species belonging to *Elachista*, which comprise the great majority of Elachistinae, feed on monocots, however, the closely related genera *Perittia* and *Urodeta* are recorded from dicotyledonous plants (Traugott-Olsen & Schmidt Nielsen 1977; Parenti & Valda 1994; Kaila & Sugisima 2011; Joel Minet pers. corr.).

The Elachistinae of Sub-Saharan Africa are still rather poorly explored. In the most recent checklist of the Elachistinae of the Afrotropical Region and the Palaearctic transitional area 33 species were listed (De Prins & De Prins 2011) and the majority of these are from South Africa and Kenya (Vári *et al.* 2002; Sruoga & De Prins 2009). However, no data on Elachistinae from Cameroon were hitherto published and only one species, *Eretmograptis coniodoxa*, was described by Meyrick (1938) from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The aim of this paper is to contribute to the knowledge of the Elachistinae in the Afrotropical region by presenting the descriptions, diagnoses, and illustrations of newly discovered species from Cameroon and the DRC.

Methods

Sampling. During 2003–2007 the Elachistinae specimens were collected by the second author using a 12V mercury vapour light and 25 W actinic blue light placed in front of a white vertical screen. The captured specimens of