



Life history and larval chaetotaxy of *Ahmetia achaja* (Lepidoptera, Lycaenidae, Lycaeninae, Theclini, Cheritrina)

GREGORY R. BALLMER¹ & DAVID M. WRIGHT²

¹Department of Entomology, University of California, Riverside, CA, USA 92521

²100 Medical Campus Drive, Lansdale, PA, USA 19446

Abstract

Aspects of the life history of *Ahmetia achaja* (Fruhstorfer) and a description of the immature stages are presented. Larval chaetotaxy and morphological features of the eggs and pupae suggest a close phylogenetic relationship with some other members of the subtribe Cheritrina.

Key words: *Acacia megaladena* var. *indo-chinensis*, *Cheritra*, *Cowania*, *Drupadia*, *Horaga*, larval chaetotaxy, setal nomenclature, Siamese onyx

Introduction

The species originally described as *Horaga achaja* by Fruhstorfer (1912) was reassigned to the monotypic genus *Cowania* by Eliot in 1973. At the same time, the man in whose honor Eliot named the new genus was in the process of transferring the same insect to *Drupadia* Moore, 1884 (Cowan, 1974), while noting that it “will probably merit a separate genus”. Eliot was unaware that the name *Cowania* was preoccupied by *Cowania* Reinhard, 1952 (Diptera: Tachinidae). The genus name *Ahmetia* was introduced by Özdikmen (2008) as a replacement for *Cowania* Eliot.

Eliot (1973) placed *Ahmetia achaja* (as *Cowania achaja*) in the tribe Cheritrini [later reduced to subtribe Cheritrina due to his inclusion of Riodininae within the Lycaenidae (Eliot, 1992)], largely on the basis of similarities in wing venation and male genitalia to *Drupadia* Moore, 1884. Eliot (1973) also described features of the larval and pupal stages of the Cheritrini, based on descriptions known to him only for *Cheritra* Moore, 1881, and *Drupadia*. These notably include: “larva shaped as in Horagini, but bearing only six dorsal triangular protuberances; pupa without girdle, head uppermost in *Cheritra*”. Eliot was not familiar with the immature stages of *A. achaja*, nor apparently of *Drupadia theda* (C. & R. Felder, 1862), both of which similarly depart from the features he deemed characteristic of the tribe (or subtribe) into which he placed them.

Here, we describe the immature stages of *A. achaja* in order to facilitate comparison with other lycaenids and particularly with other members of the Cheritrina. We also re-examine some aspects of lycaenid first instar setal nomenclature and discuss setal homologies, particularly as the condition in *A. achaja* relates to other lycaenids and to the Lepidoptera in general.

Methods

Eggs and larvae of *A. achaja* were collected in the field and reared in captivity. Immature stages were preserved by injection with (3rd and 4th instars) or immersion for 48 hours in (1st and 2nd instars) 10 % acetic acid