



***Laelius* Ashmead (Hymenoptera, Bethyridae) from Madagascar, with description of two new species**

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Abstract

Laelius is recorded from the Afrotropical region for the first time, and two new species are described and illustrated. *Laelius mekes* **sp. nov.** is characterized by having the propodeal disc with seven carinae and the fore wing with long radial vein, and *Laelius akares* **sp. nov.** by having the propodeal disc with five carinae and the fore wing with short radial vein. A key to the species of Madagascar are also provided.

Key words: Epyrinae, new characters, key

Introduction

Laelius Ashmead, 1893 is represented by 28 species, with 20 being recorded from Palaearctic region, six from the Nearctic region, and two from the Oriental region. This genus is recognized as belonging to Epyrini by the presence of projected clypeal median lobe and antennae with 13 segments (Evans 1964). Ashmead (1893) described this genus to include four Nearctic species, which had fore wing with two basal closed cells and radial vein short, but distinct.

Most of the keys to the Epyrini genera (see Evans 1964, Terayama 2003, Azevedo 2006) use the presence of a short radial vein in the fore wing as the main character for *Laelius*. However, only Evans' key uses presence of black setae on the body surface and in the main veins of wings to separate *Laelius* from the other genera. Here *Laelius* also is treated as those Epyrini with thick black setae.

As far as we know, *Laelius* attacks larvae of some genera of Dermestidae (Evans 1964, 1978). Large literature has been published on host records (e.g. Al-Kirshi *et al.* 1996) and application on biological control (e.g. Mayhew & Heitmans 2000).

The main goal of the present paper is to describe the first two species recorded from the Afrotropical region (Madagascar).

Materials and methods

The material examined was provided by California Academy of Science - CASC - USA. (Robert Zuparko). It was collected for "Madagascar Arthropod Inventory" project, grant #BSI 0072713, coordinated by Brian Fisher.

Terms of body structures generally follows Evans (1964) and Azevedo (1999), but those related to the mesopleural characters follow Lanes & Azevedo (2008). Those related to the integument follow Harris (1979). The abbreviations used in the text are as follows: LH, length of head measured dorsally; WH, width of head measured dorsally; WF, width of frons measured dorsally; HE, height of eye measured laterally; OOL,