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A New Species of *Aconurella RIBAUT* on Maize from Mozambique

Homoptera, Cicadelloidea

With 12 Figures

M. S. K. G H A U R I

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Abstract. A new and fifth species of African *Aconurella* is described from maize, from Mozambique. A key to separate the five African species is given and comparative figures of *A. shaba* sp. n. and *A. compta* (NAUDÉ), its nearest relative, are included.

Amongst a small collection of leafhoppers and planthoppers, some of which are known vectors of plant diseases, submitted by the F. A. O. representative in Mozambique for identification, was found a male specimen of a new species belonging to the genus *Aconurella* RIBAUT. As this genus is hitherto represented in Africa only by four species, it was considered worthwhile to add a fifth by describing the new species, illustrating it and incorporating it in a key based on the five species of African *Aconurella*. The first African species of the genus *Aconurella*, *A. prolixa* (LETHIERRY), was recorded from Sudan by LINDBERG (1927). After a long time since then, THERON (1970 & 1975) redescribed and illustrated types of *Athysanus aethiopica* COGAN (1916) and *Aconura compta* NAUDÉ (1926) as *Aconurella aethiopica* (COGAN) and *Aconurella compta* (NAUDÉ) respectively, from South Africa. At present, description of a fourth species of *Aconurella* from Aldabra by WEBB (1980) is in press. *Aconurella shaba* sp. n., described here, is the fifth, adding to the meagre representation of this genus in Africa.

Aconurella RIBAUT

RIBAUT, 1948, 57 Type-species, *Thamnotettix prolixus* LETHIERRY, 1885, 102.

***Aconurella shaba* sp. n.**

Colour Dorsal surface of body dirty yellow with dark smoky markings, ventral surface black, vertex with a central elongate egg-shaped apical spot, base of vertex with two inverted coma-shaped markings between eyes, each on either side of median black line, anterior margin of vertex with five ill-defined smoky markings on yellowish fascia extended on curve to margin of frons; eyes dark brown, ocelli black surrounded by spot next to eye; pronotum with somewhat irregular markings, three small spots at anterior margin in middle, one larger posterior to them on middle line, one "Z"-shaped posterior to internal half width of eye, one submarginal joined to narrow line at anterior margin; scutellum – anterolateral corners with smoky triangular, three ill-defined spots at middle of anterior margin, disc with black cross line, apex with three ill-defined smoky spots, tegminal veins broadly smoky, femora black, tibiae with black streaks, all dorsal spots ill-defined (cf. head markings of *A. compta* (NAUDÉ) vide THERON, 1975, fig. 19).

Measurements (mm) Length of vertex in middle 0.31, its width at base between

eyes 0.22, width of head across eyes 0.67, width of pronotum 0.62, its median length 0.29, width of scutellum at base 0.38, its median length 0.24; total body length 2.09.

Structure Vertex much longer in middle than width between eyes (1.4:1); pronotum shorter than vertex (29:31), pronotum narrower than head.

Male genitalia Pygofer with 3 large and 6 smaller macrosetae at postero-dorsal corner, here margin with teeth weakly developed, pygofer process well developed, almost at right-angle to ventral margin of pygofer, process widest at almost middle of its length, with only its posterior margin toothed, subgenital plate with wide posterior part with macrosetae, especially the last four submarginal to discal in location; paramere (style) external claw longer than internal claw not thickened at base, basal plate (connective) Y-shaped; aedeagus — shaft gently curved dorsally.

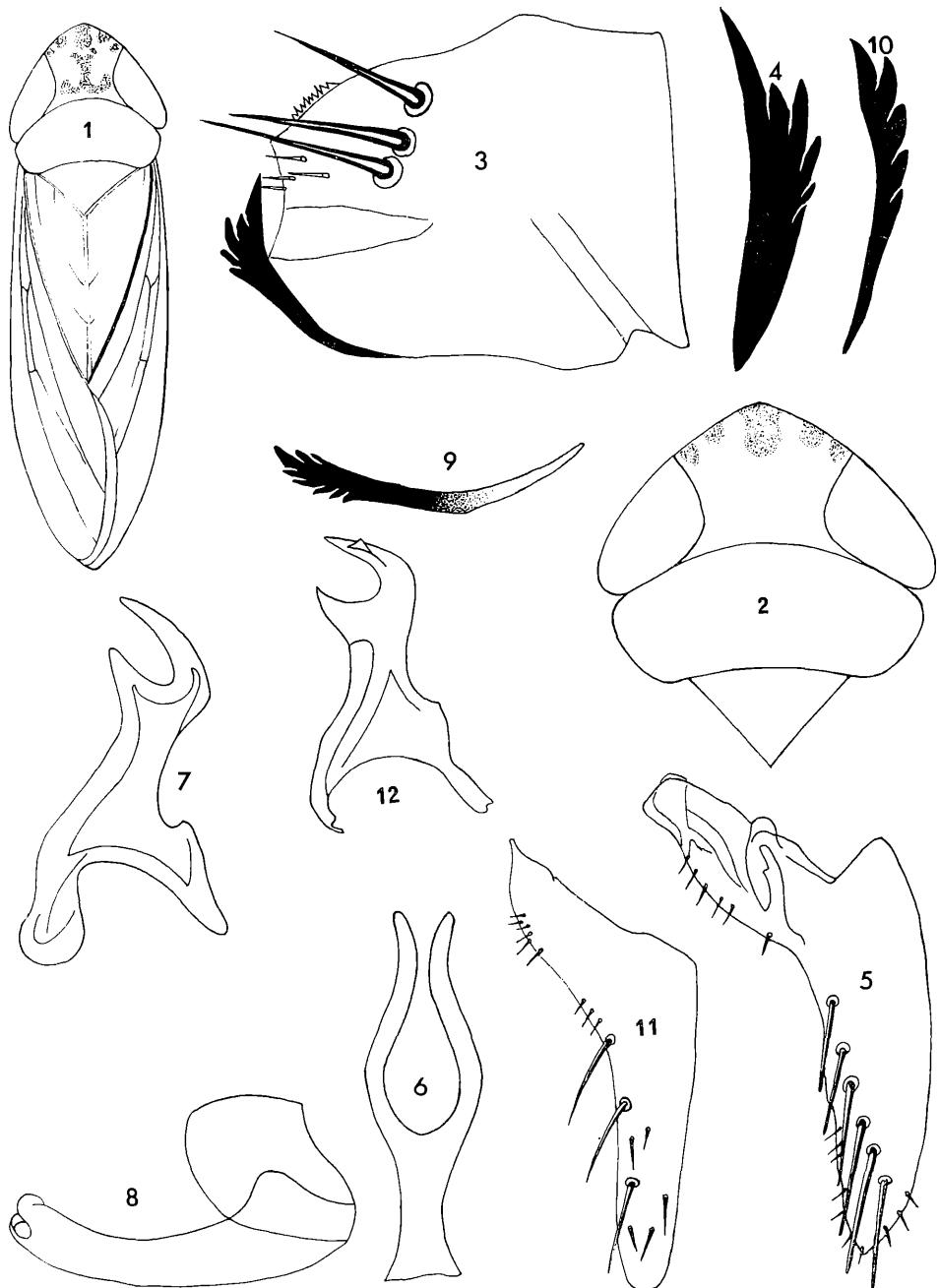
Holotype ♂, Mozambique, Umbeluzi, xi. 79 — ii. 80 (Nabil Abd El-Hadi), No. 10, C. I. E. A. 12186, on maize. Deposited in B. M. (N. H.) London.

Remarks The new species is closely related to *A. compta* (NAUDÉ) from South Africa with which it could easily be confused in view of the fact that according to THERON (1975) specimens of *A. compta* are not always of dark coloration. However, side-by-side comparison, of head, much narrower vertex in the new species in relation to its median length, pygofer process almost upright and thickest in middle compared to subhorizontal and thickest near apex of *A. compta*, discal location of macrosetae of subgenital plate in comparison with marginal macrosetae of *A. compta*, longer external and slimmer internal claw of paramere of the new species compared with external equal to thick based internal claw of the old species (vide figs. 3, 9; 4, 10; 5, 11 and 7, 12), will differentiate them.

So far known to the writer five species of *Aconurella* have been described, including the present new species, from Africa. Of these *A. compta* and *A. shaba* sp. n. form a close-knit group. These can be separated by the following key:

Key to the African species of *Aconurella* RIB.

- 1 Dark markings on head and pronotum very bold and extensive; pygofer process large, black and widest near its apex, subhorizontal to ventral margin of pygofer (Figs. 9 & 10); external claw of paramere not longer than internal claw which is thick at base (Fig. 12). ***A. compta* (NAUDÉ)**
- Markings on head and pronotum not black, bold or extensive; pygofer process small, but if large, then vertical to ventral margin of pygofer; size of external and internal claws of paramere various. 2
- 2 Vertex not longer in middle than space between eyes at base of vertex. 3
- Vertex pointed, longer in middle than space between eyes at base of vertex. 4
- 3 External and internal claws of paramere of equal length; pygofer process subvertical to ventral margin of pygofer, thickest (widest) near its base. ***A. aethiopica* (COGAN)**
- External claw longer than internal claw of paramere; pygofer process vertical to ventral margin of pygofer, thickest (widest) near its apex. ***A. prolixa* (LETHIERRY)**
- 4 Pygofer process small, reaching to middle of truncate posterior margin of pygofer. ***A. africia* WEBB**
- Pygofer process long, reaching almost to upper limit of truncate posterior margin of pygofer. ***A. shaba* sp. n.**



Figs. 1-8. *Aconurella shaba* sp. n. 1 Dorsal view of body, semidiagrammatic – 2 Head and thorax – 3: Pygofers, lateral view, anal tube omitted – 4: Pygofers process – 5: Subgenital plate, ventral view – 6: Basal plate (connective) – 7 Paramere – 8: Aedeagus, lateral view.

Figs. 9-12. *Aconurella compta* (NAUDÉ). 9: Ventral margin of pygofers – 10: Pygofers process – 11: Subgenital plate, ventral view – 12: Paramere.

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Address of the author:

M. S. K. Ghauri, Commonwealth Institute of Entomology, c/o British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD; England

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