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A NEW SPECIES OF THE GENUS *METACHEYLETIA* FAIN, 1972 (ACARI: CHEYLETIDAE) PARASITIZING *SERINUS MOZAMBICUS* (PASSERIFORMES: FRINGILLIDAE) IN CENTRAL AFRICA

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ABSTRACT - A new mite species, *Metacheyletia degenerata* n. sp. (Acari: Cheyletidae), is described from the quills of *Serinus mozambicus* (Fringillidae) from Central Africa.

Key words - Acari, Cheyletidae, parasites, parrots, systematics, *Metacheyletia*, *Serinus mozambicus*, Central Africa.

INTRODUCTION

The genus *Metacheyletia* Fain, 1972 included two species both described from quills of parrots (Psittaciformes: Psittacidae): *Metacheyletia obesa* Fain, 1972 from *Psittacula* sp. and *M. longisetosa* Atyeo *et al.*, 1984 from *Amazona finschi* (Fain, 1972, 1980; Atyeo *et al.*, 1984).

We describe in this paper a new species of *Metacheyletia* found in quill of *Serinus mozambicus* from Central Africa. The mites were collected by the junior author from an ethanol preserved *S. mozambicus*. This parrot died in the Antwerp Zoo during quarantine and was sent to the laboratory of Prof. Fain (Institut royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique, Bruxelles) for parasite examination. The bird, possibly, came from Tanzania.

Mites for this study, using light microscope, were mounted on slides in Hoyer's medium. The idiosomal setal designation follows Fain (1979).

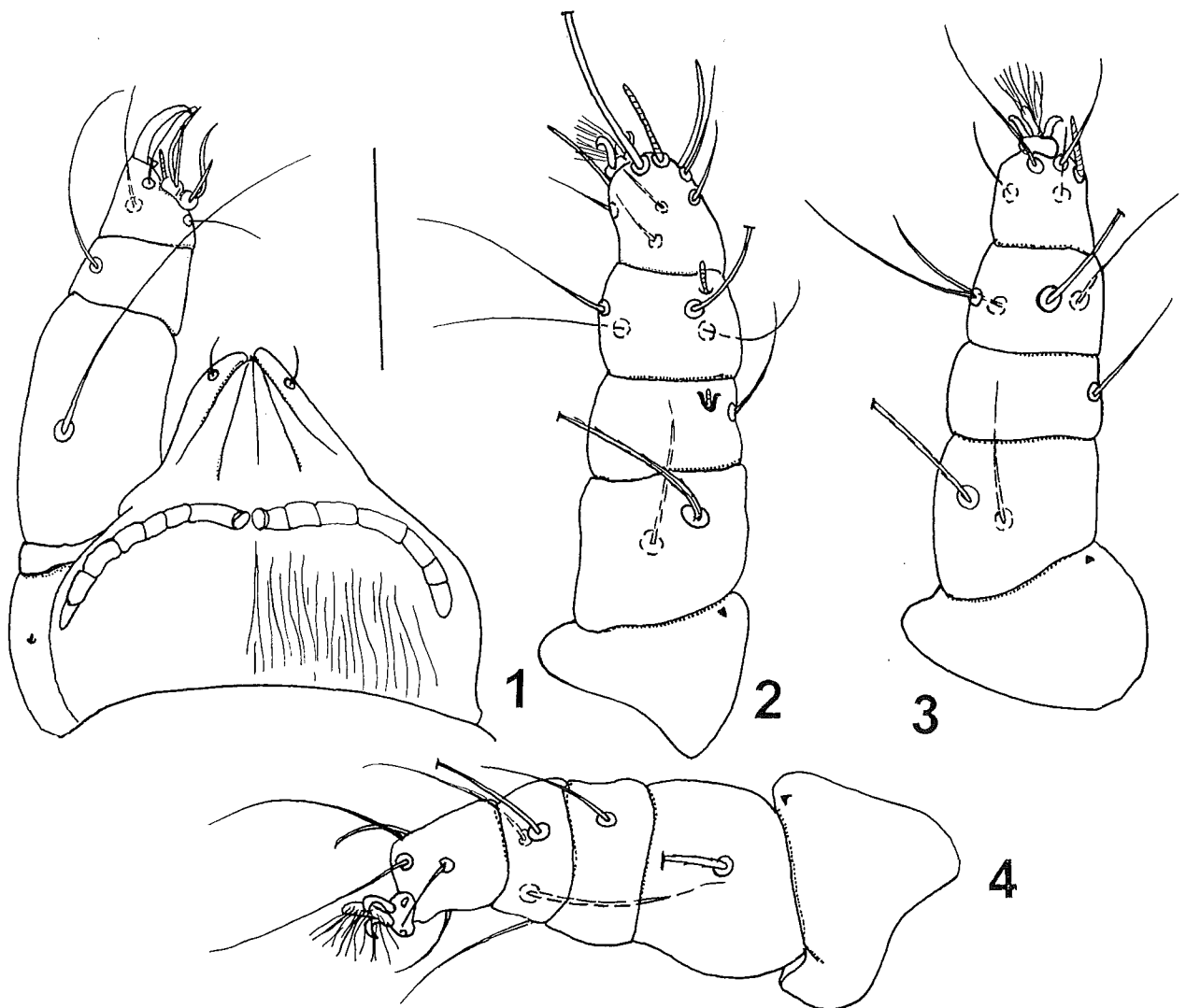
Genus *Metacheyletia* Fain, 1972

Metacheyletia degenerata n. sp.
(Figs. 1-6)

FEMALE (Holotype) - *Gnathosoma*: 75 µm long and 85 µm wide. All gnathosomal setae smooth (Fig. 1). Palpal femur 45 µm long, with a single dorsal seta; palpal genu with a dorsal seta; palpal tibia with 3 setae: dorsal,

ventral and inner lateral; palpal tarsus with 4 simple setae and a solenidion. Rostrum with 2 pairs of aboral setae, *ao1* and *ao2*; subcapitular setae *pm* absent. Claw of palpal tibia with a basal tooth. Peritremes archlike, with 7 pairs of segments. *Idiosoma*: Ellipselike, 390 µm long and 285 µm wide maximally. Propodosomal shield lacking (Fig. 5), dorsal idiosomal surface striated, without any sclerites. All idiosomal setae thin and smooth. Vulvar region (Fig. 6) with 17 setae: 3 pairs of paragenital setae (*pg1-pg3*), 1 additional *pg* on one side, 2 pairs of anal setae *a* and 3 pairs of genital setae *g*. Length of setae: *vi* 28 µm, *ve* 33 µm, *sci* 36 µm, *sce* 40 µm, *h* 90 µm, *d1* 65 µm, *d2* 60 µm, *l3* 50 µm, *l4* 55 µm, *l5* 95 µm, *pg1-pg3* about 25 µm, *a1-a3* about 19 µm, *g1* and *g2* about 23 µm. Cupules not observed. *Legs*: Cuticular vestiges of legs IV completely lacking. Coxae of legs I-III sclerotized. All leg setae smooth (Figs. 2-4), except serrate *dFI-dFIII*. Leg chaetotaxy (coxa-tarsus): I 1-0-2-1 (+σ)-4 (+φ)-8 (+ω), II 0-0-2-1-4-5 (+ω) and III 0-0-1-1-4-5. All tarsi bear 2 small claws and a rayed empodium.

Differential diagnosis - The female of this new species differs from the other 2 known species of this genus by the absence of the prodorsal shield and the presence of setae *pg3*. It differs from *M. obesa* Fain by the absence of the cuticular vestiges of legs IV. In addition, it differs from *M. longisetosa* Atyeo *et al.* by the shorter dorsal setae of idiosoma and by the smaller number of peritremal segments (7). According to the original de-



Figs. 1-4. *Metacheyletia degenerata* n. sp. (Holotype female) - 1. Gnathosoma, dorsal view; 2-4. legs I-III, respectively in dorsal view (scale line 50 μ m).

description (Ateyo *et al.*, 1984) of *M. longisetosa*, the setae measure: *vi* 100 μ m, *ve* and *sci* 106 μ m, *sce*, *d1* and *h* 110 μ m, *d2* 128 μ m, *l3-15* and *d5* 130 μ m long; and number of peritremal segments are 10-11.

Host and locality - Female holotype and paratype nymph from the quill of remige-feathers of *Serinus mozambicus* (Passeriformes: Fringillidae), Central Africa (possibly western Tanzania), May 2001, Coll. A. Bochkov. The holotype and paratype are deposited in the Institut royal des Sciences naturelles, Bruxelles, Belgium.

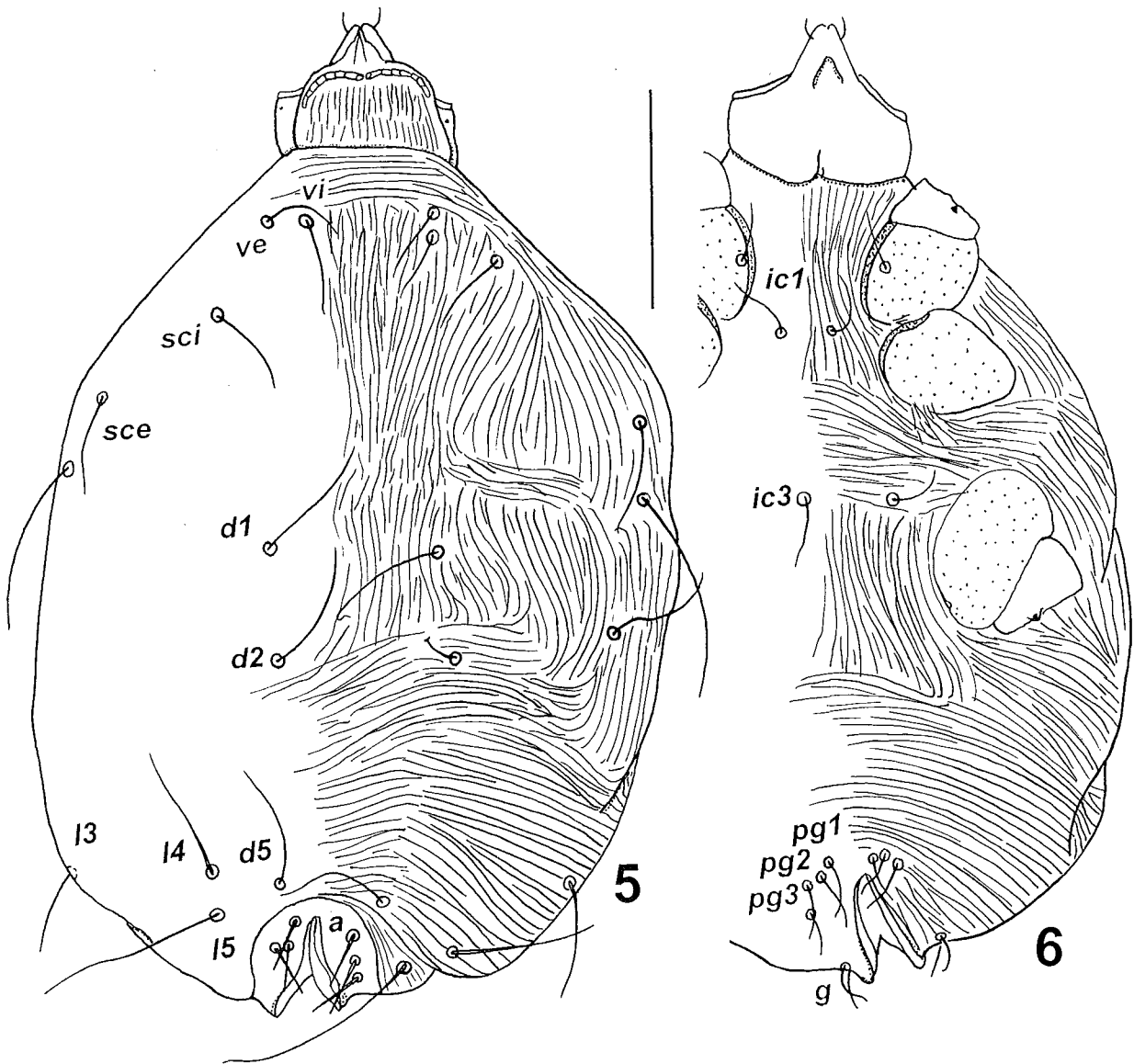
Remarks - (1) Seta *pg3* of the holotype is duplicated on the left side. (2) This is the first record of *Metacheyletia* species on passeriform birds. The 2 specimens of *M. degenerata* have been collected from a quill of host together with numerous syringophilid mites (Syringophilidae: *Syringophiloides* sp.).

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Figs. 5-6. *Metacheyletia degenerata* n. sp. (Holotype female) - 5. Dorsal view; 6. ventral view (scale line 50 μ m).

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