

***Biramitelomerus*, a new genus of the millipede family Odontopygidae to accommodate an old species from Ethiopia (Diplopoda: Spirostreptida)**

***Biramitelomerus*, новый род диплопод семейства Odontopygidae, чтобы принять старый вид из Эфиопии (Diplopoda: Spirostreptida)**

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KEY WORDS: taxonomy, iconography, Ethiopia, Afrotropics.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: таксономия, иконография, Эфиопия, Афротропики.

ABSTRACT. Based on fresh strictly topotypic material from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the previously poorly documented millipede *Odontopyge terebrum* (Ribaut, 1907) could not only be properly described and illustrated, but is also shown to deserve promotion to a new monospecific genus, *Biramitelomerus* gen.n., that differs from all other known Odontopygidae – Archeptyginae – Prionopetalini in a number of such important characters, mainly gonopodal, as the metaplica being devoid of a subapical spine, the torsotop compact, the telopodite showing neither pretorsal nor torsal spines, but a clear-cut posttorsal narrowing devoid of spines present, the division of the telopodite into a solenomere and a telomere immediately distal to the posttorsal narrowing evident and simple, the solenomere originating near the base of the telomere being exceptionally long, flagelliform, directed mesad, usually spiraling, more seldom spini- to unciform, devoid of an accessory spine, and the telomere simple, biramous and deeply split distally into two membranous branches.

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РЕЗЮМЕ. По свежему строго топотипическому материалу из Аддис-Абебы (Эфиопия) диплоподу прежде плохо документированного вида *Odontopyge terebrum* (Ribaut, 1907) удалось не только хорошо переописать и проиллюстрировать, но и показать, что она заслуживает выделения в новый монотипический род *Biramitelomerus* gen.n., отличающийся от остальных известных Odontopygidae – Archeptyginae – Prionopetalini целым рядом таких признаков, прежде всего гоноподов, как метаплика, лишенная субапикального шипа, компактным торсотопом, телоподитом без преторсального и торсального шипов, телоподи-

том, явственно и просто разделенным на соленомер и теломер сразу дистальнее постторсального сужения, исключительно длинным, жгутиковидным, направленным внутрь, обычно спиральным, реже шипо- или крюковидным и лишенным дополнительного шипа соленомером, возникающим близ основания теломера, и простого теломера, двуветвистого и глубоко разделенного дистально на две мембранные ветви.

Introduction

The Spirostreptida, the second largest order of the millipede class Diplopoda following the Polydesmida, presently comprises three suborders, nine families, ca 200 genera and more than 1,000 species [Enghoff *et al.*, 2015]. The distribution of Spirostreptida is mainly tropical to subtropical, while the largest, taxonomically diverse families are Spirostreptidae and Odontopygidae. Currently, the Spirostreptidae includes 60+ genera and ca 370 species, showing a disjunct pattern: most occur in tropical to subtropical Africa, including Madagascar, Zanzibar, the Comoros and the Seychelles, marginally also North Africa and the Near East, whereas perhaps an only slightly lesser centre of diversification lies in the Neotropics, ranging marginally from the southern U.S.A. in the north, via entire Central America, to most of South America, including northern Chile and Argentina in the south [Golovatch *et al.*, 2026]. With its ca 40 genera and ca 400 species, the family Odontopygidae is purely Afrotropical, restricted to sub-Saharan Africa, including Zanzibar, but absent from Madagascar, the Comoros and the Seychelles [Enghoff *et al.*, 2015; Enghoff, 2022].

The present contribution has been prompted by the recovery in Ethiopia of an old species of Odontopygidae that seems to warrant a new genus for its accommodation. Ethiopia is currently known to support only about 40 species of Diplopoda, surprisingly few for such a vast and ecologically highly varied Afrotropical country, including 11 species in about five genera that represent

the Odontopygidae [Golovatch *et al.*, 2026]. Six of these remain formally assigned to *Odontopyge* Brandt, 1841, even though only *O. kollarii* (Brandt, 1841), the type species of *Odontopyge*, is actually the sole valid combination to accept [Hoffman, 1991]. The vast majority of formal *Odontopyge* species, several dozen in fact, still remain orphaned or dubious, thus requiring transfers to other genera [Enghoff, 2016]. One such orphan is *Odontopyge terebrum* Ribaut, 1907, originally described from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia [Ribaut, 1907] and never recorded since. Its abundant fresh topotypic material allows for its detailed redescription and modern identity to be revealed.

The Odontopygidae is currently divided into several subfamilies or tribes, based mostly on certain gonopodal characters: Odontopyginae Attems, 1909, Perodontopyginae/-ni Attems, 1914, Lissopyginae Attems, 1909, and Archepyginae Manfredi, 1939 with Archepygini Manfredi, 1939, Ctenoiulini Hoffman, 1980, and Prionopetalini Hoffman, 1991 [Hoffman, 1991; Frederiksen, Enghoff 2012; Enghoff, 2022]. This classification, however, is far from satisfactory, as still too many species, despite two excellent monographic treatments [Kraus, 1960, 1966], remain dubious and/or improperly assigned [Enghoff, 2014].

The present contributions sorts out an old species of Prionopetalini that has so far remained orphaned since the identities of *Odontopyge* and its type species *O. kollarii* have been clarified [Hoffman, 1991]. A new genus is proposed below to accommodate solely that old species from Ethiopia.

Material and methods

The samples treated in this paper have been shared between the collections of the Zoological Museum of the Moscow State University (ZMUM) and the Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg (ZISP), Russia. They are still preserved in 75% ethanol.

The pictures of fixed material were taken at the Paleontological Institute, Russian Academy of Sciences (PIN), Moscow, using a Flexacam C1 camera mounted on a Leica M165C stereo microscope with built-in LasX software. SEM samples were coated with gold and SEM micrographs were obtained using a Tescan Vega 2 or Tescan Vega 3 electron scanning microscope (Brno, Czech Republic). Final image processing was performed with Adobe Photoshop CC.

The terminology to nominate the meaningful gonopodal structures largely follows that by Hoffman [2008], Frederiksen & Enghoff [2012], and Enghoff [2014, 2016, 2022].

Abbreviations for morphological terms used in the descriptions and on illustrations

ba — basomere; *cx* — coxite; *sg* — efferent, or seminal, groove; *lp* — lateral coxal process (= paracoxite); *mp* — metaplica; *pn* — posttarsal narrowing; *pp* — proplica; *sl* — solenomere; *st* — sternum; *tb1*, *tb2* — telomerous branches; *tln* — telomere; *tt* — torsotop.

Results

Class Diplopoda Blainville in Gervais, 1844 Order Spirostreptida Brandt, 1833

Family Odontopygidae Attems, 1909 Subfamily Archepyginae Manfredi, 1939 Tribe Prionopeltini Hoffman, 1991

Biramitelomerus gen.n.

DIAGNOSIS. Metaplica devoid of a subapical spine; torsotop compact; telopodite showing neither pretarsal nor tarsal spines, but a clear-cut posttarsal narrowing devoid of spines present; division of the telopodite into a solenomere and a telomere immediately distal to the posttarsal narrowing evident and simple; the solenomere originating near the base of the telomere exceptionally long, flagelliform, directed mesad, usually spiraling, more seldom spiniform to unciform, devoid of an accessory spine; and the telomere simple, biramous and deeply split distally into two membranous branches.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION. A genus of Odontopygidae characterized by: (1) each anal valve (= paraproct) with a well-developed dorsal spine and three setae near ventral margin (Fig. 1B, C), but devoid both of a ventral spine and strongly protruding setiferous tubercles; (2) male body ring 7 incrassate, with large ventral lobes (Fig. 1A); (3) limbus narrow, with a simple denticulate margin (Fig. 1D); (4) ventral postfemoral and tibial pads on most male legs present (Fig. 1C); (5) mandibular gena a prominent finger directed anteriorly (Fig. 2C); (6) gnathochilarium with a centrally excavate and flattened mentum, this latter also being bordered ventrally (Fig. 2C); (7) palpi on lamellae linguales missing (Fig. 2C); (8) male prefemora 1 modified into flattened transverse disks on anterior face (Fig. 2E, F); (9) sternum (*st*) between gonopods prominent and saddle-shaped (Fig. 3); (10) gonopod coxite (*cx*) large and rather simple, irregularly shaped, subtriangular distally, composed of a usual, smaller anterior proplica (*pp*), a larger posterior metaplica (*mp*) devoid of a subapical spine, and a finger-shaped lateral coxal process (*lp*), or paracoxite (Fig. 3); (11) gonopod telopodite with a compact torsotop (*tt*) (Figs 4A, C, 5A, B); (12) neither pretarsal nor tarsal spines (Fig. 6A, E, F); (13) a clear-cut posttarsal narrowing (*pn*) simple and devoid of spines (Fig. 6A, E, F); (14) division of telopodite into a solenomere (*sl*) and a telomere (*tln*) immediately distal to posttarsal narrowing evident (Fig. 5A); (15) solenomere (*sl*) originating near base of telomere (*tln*), exceptionally long, flagelliform, directed mesad, usually spiraling, more seldom spiniform to unciform, devoid of an accessory spine (Fig. 3); (16) telomere (*tln*) simple, biramous and deeply split distally into two membranous branches, *tb1* and *tb2* (Figs 3–6).

Type species: *Biramitelomerus terebrum* (Ribaut, 1907), **comb.n.** ex *Odontopyge* Brandt, 1841. Masculine gender. No other species included.

Biramitelomerus terebrum (Ribaut, 1907), **comb.n.**

Figs 1–6.

Odontopyge terebrum Ribaut, 1907: 509, figs 6 & 7 (original description).

Odontopyge terebrum — Attems, 1914: 183 (key), 189 (listing); Kraus, 1960: 50 (key) and 61 (listing).

MATERIAL EXAMINED. 6 ♂♂, 4 ♀♀ (ZMUM), 2 ♂♂ (ZISP), Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, Gullele (= Gullele) Botanical Garden, (8°59'N, 38°43'E), pitfall trapping, 12–20.XI.2024, A. Gromov leg.

DESCRIPTION. Size. Length ca 32–40 mm (male) or 40–45 mm (female), diameter 2.5–3.0 mm (male) or 3.1–3.2 mm (female), 55–65 podous rings, no apodous rings in front of telson; vs 48 mm, 2.5 mm and 61 podous rings in both male syntypes as given in the original description [Ribaut, 1907].

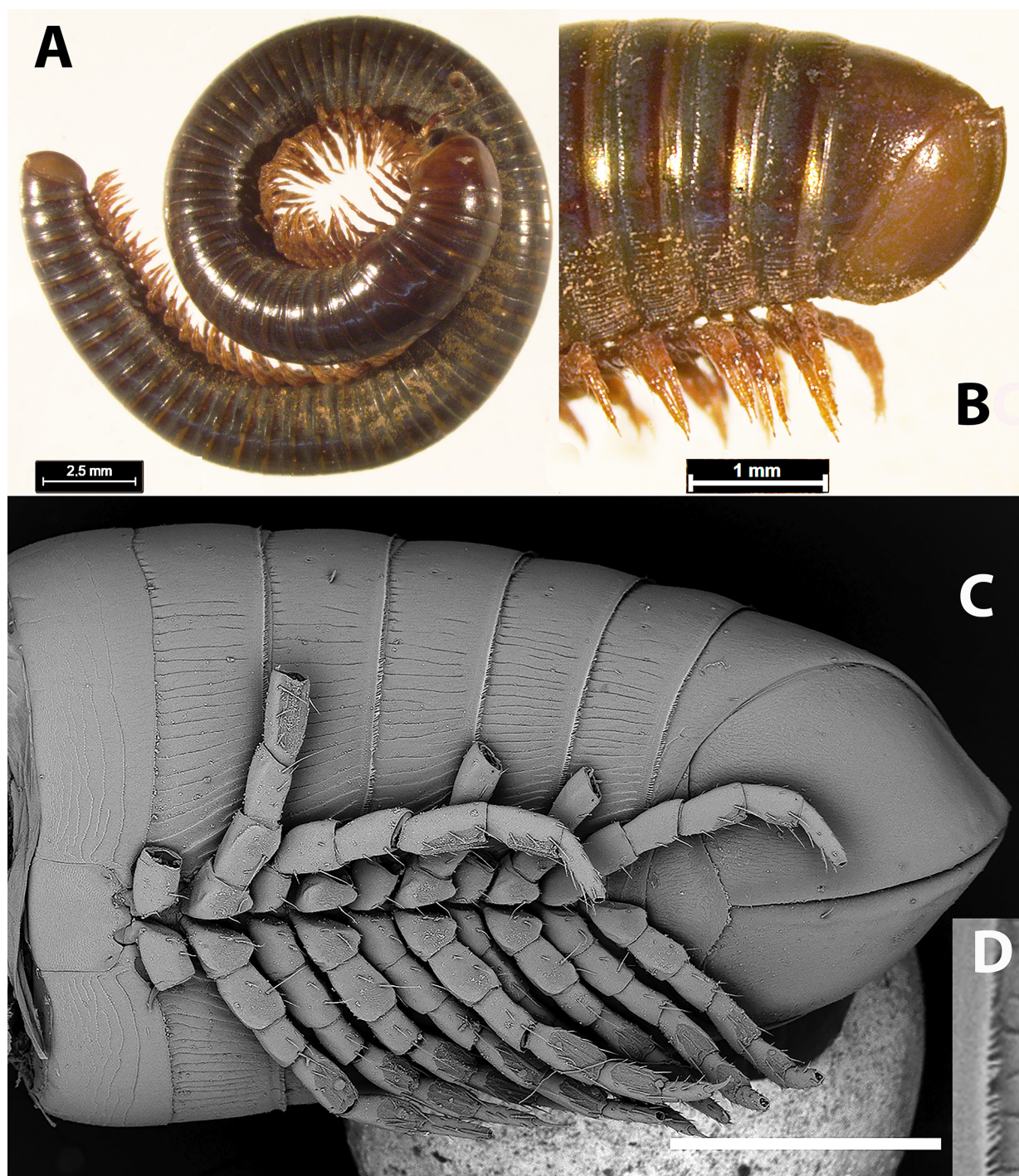


Fig. 1. *Biramitelomerus terebrum* (Ribaut, 1907), ♂♂. A — habitus, lateral view; B & C — posterior part of body, lateral and ventrolateral views, respectively; D — limbus. Scale bars: 2.5 mm (A), 1.0 mm (B, C), and zoomed not to scale (D).

Рис. 1. *Biramitelomerus terebrum* (Ribaut, 1907), ♂♂. А — общий вид, сбоку; В и С — задняя часть тела, соответственно сбоку и одновременно снизу и сбоку; D — лимбус. Масштаб: 2,5 мм (А), 1,0 мм (В, С), и увеличено без масштаба (D).

Colour. Rather uniformly olive brown (Fig. 1A) to cingulate, mostly dark grey, brown or blackish mesozona (Fig. 1B); telson usually lighter (Fig. 1B), anterior part of body brighter (Fig. 12A).

Head. Without peculiarities, nearly bare, shining and smooth; supra-labral setae 3+3, labral ones 5–6+5–6; eyes dark brown to blackish, ca 45–50 only slightly convex ocelli per

eye, arranged in 6 arched vertical rows (Fig. 2A). Mandibular genae (g) prominent, finger-shaped, slightly subtending a flat gnathochilarium plate laterally (Fig. 2B, C); stipites (s) and lamellae linguales (ll) more densely setose basally, lamellae linguales devoid of palpi; mentum (m) subtrapeziform, mostly slightly excavate, but rather narrowly elevated basally (Fig. 2B, C). Antennae rather short and only slightly clavate, anten-

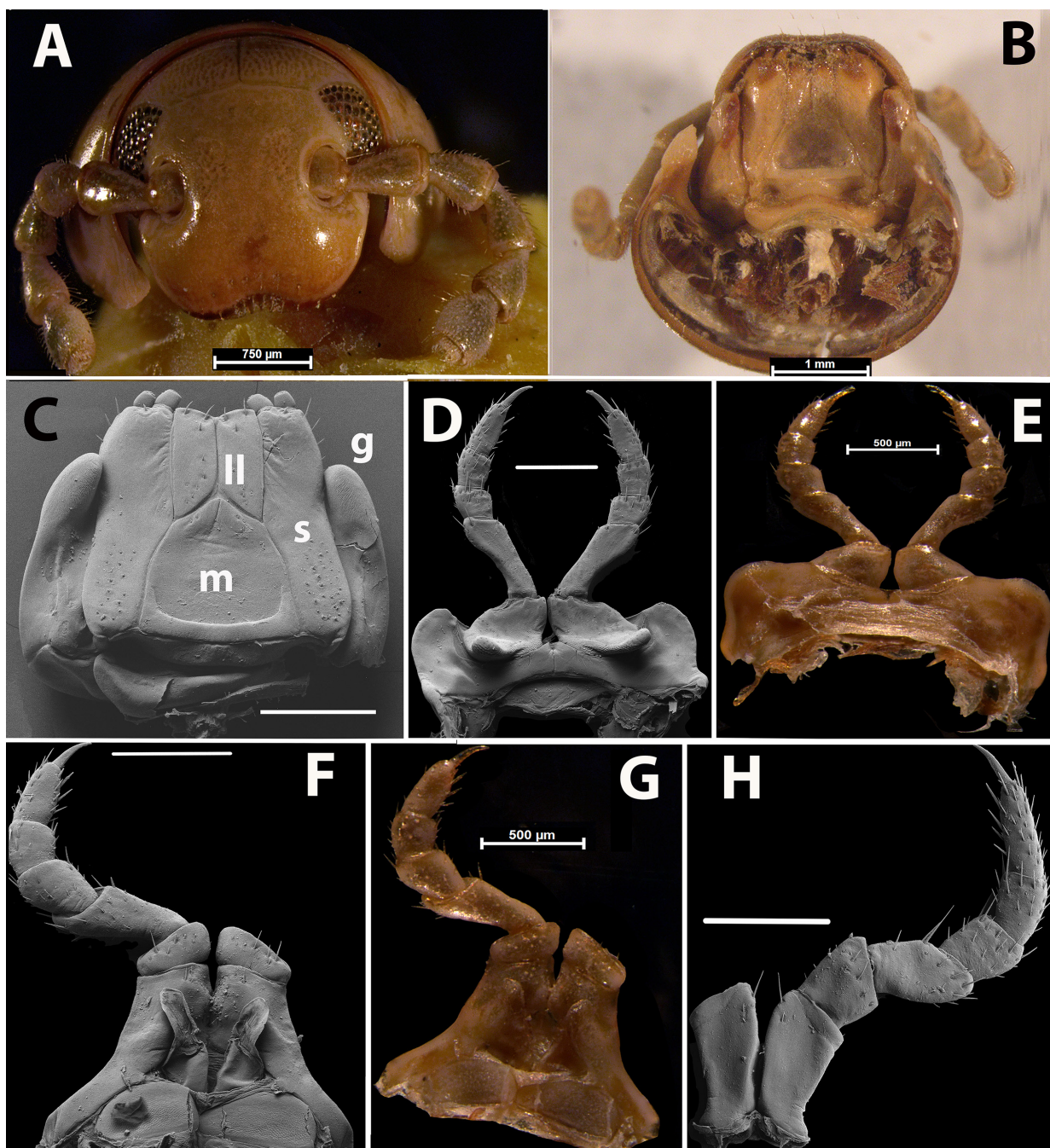


Fig. 2. *Biramitelomerus terebrum* (Ribaut, 1907), ♂. A & B — anterior end of body, anterior and ventral views, respectively; C — gnathochilarium, ventral view; D & E — leg-pair 1, anterior and posterior views, respectively; F & G — leg-pair 2 with penes, posterior view; H — leg-pair 3, anterior view. Scale bars: 1.0 mm (B, C), 0.75 mm (A) and 0.5 mm (D–H).

Рис. 2. *Biramitelomerus terebrum* (Ribaut, 1907), ♂. А и В — передняя часть тела, соответственно спереди и снизу; С — гнатохилярий, снизу; D и E — пара ног 1, соответственно спереди и сзади; F и G — пара ног 2 с пенисами, сзади; H — пара ног 3, спереди. Масштаб: 1,0 мм (B, C), 0,75 мм (A) и 0,5 мм (D–H).

nomeres 2 and 6 longest, but only slightly longer than others; interantennal isthmus about twice as large as diameter of antennal socket (Fig. 2A).

Collum. Squarish ventrally in male, with a marginal and ~3 submarginal furrows (Fig. 1A).

Body rings. Almost perfect cylinders, smooth and shining, not vaulted; suture straight; ozopores about three diameters

behind suture. Striations on metazona longitudinal and clearer ventrad, present only below ozopores, not reaching the caudal margin; very faint and vertical on prozona (Fig. 1A–C). Limbus very dense, fine and spiniform filaments (Fig. 1C, D).

Anal valves, or paraprocts (Fig. 1B, C). Surface smooth, each valve with a small and sharp dorsal tooth and three setae; marginal rim not elevated.

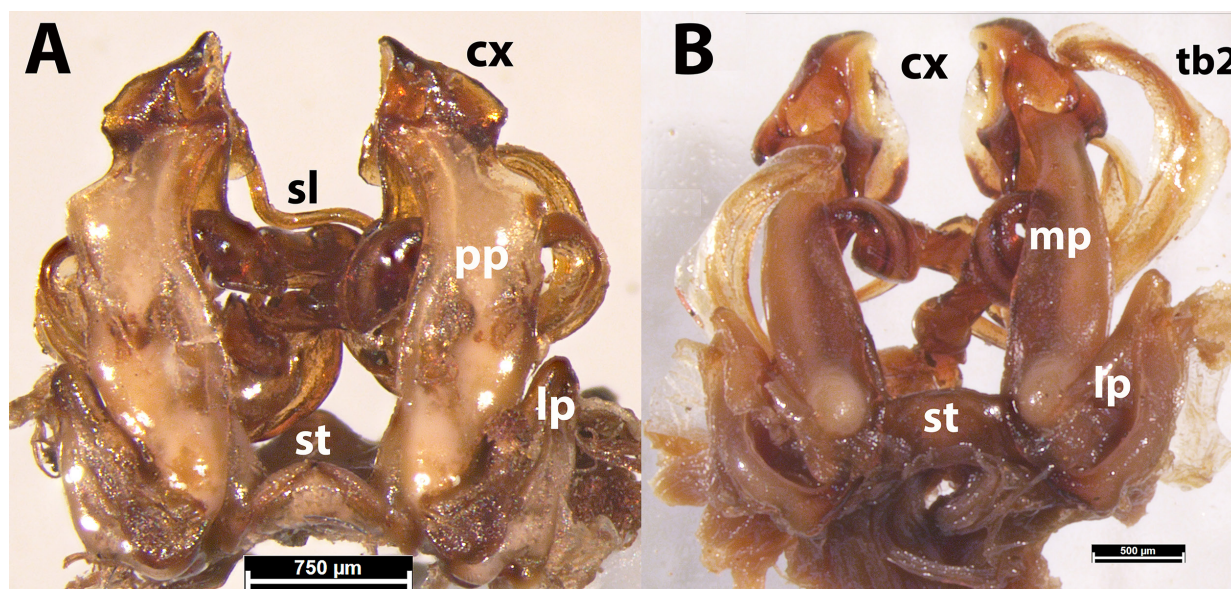


Fig. 3. *Biramitelomerus terebrum* (Ribaut, 1907), ♂. A & B — both gonopods, anterior and posterior views, respectively. Abbreviations: cx — coxa; lp — lateral process; mp — metaplica; pp — proplica; sl — solenomere; st — sternum; tb2 — telomeral branch 2. Scale bars: 0.75 mm (A) and 0.5 mm (B).

Рис. 3. *Biramitelomerus terebrum* (Ribaut, 1907), ♂. А и В — оба гонопода, соответственно спереди и сзади. Обозначения: cx — тазик; lp — боковой отросток тазика; mp — метаплика; pp — проплика; sl — соленомер; st — стернит; tb2 — ветвь 2 теломера. Масштаб: 0,75 мм (А) и 0,5 мм (В).

Ozopores. Starting from ring 6.

Male legs. With postfemoral and tibial ventral pads over most of body, including caudalmost legs, but except for first few leg-pairs (Fig. 1C). Legs 1 with conspicuous, rounded, tongue-shaped, transverse disks on anterior face of prefemora (Fig. 2D, E). Legs 2 with remarkably short prefemora and a paramedian pair of flat, rather small and apically rounded penes behind coxae (Fig. 2F, G). Legs 3 with slender and elongate coxae (Fig. 2H).

Body ring 7 (Fig. 1A). With large ventral lobes.

Sernum (st) between gonopods prominent and saddle-shaped (Fig. 3). Gonopod coxite (cx) large and rather simple, irregularly shaped, subtriangular distally, composed of a usual, smaller anterior proplica (pp), a larger posterior metaplica (mp), subtriangular distally and devoid of a subapical spine, and a finger-shaped lateral coxal process (lp) (Fig. 3). Gonopod telopodite with a compact torsotope (tt) (Figs 4A, C, 5A, B), but with neither pretorsal nor torsal spines (Fig. 6A, E, F). An evident posttorsal narrowing (pn) devoid of spines (Fig. 6A, E, F). Division of telopodite into a solenomere (sl) and a telomere (tlm) immediately distal to posttorsal narrowing evident (Fig. 5A). Solenomere (sl) originating near base of telomere (tlm), remarkably long, flagelliform, directed mesad, usually spiraling, more seldom spini- to unciform, devoid of an accessory spine (Fig. 3). Telomere (tlm) simple, biramous and deeply split distally into two membranous branches, a shorter and distally scoop-shaped tb1 and a longer and slenderer tb2 (Figs 3–6).

The above material actually represents strict topotypes [Ribaut, 1907], allowing for the description to be refined and properly illustrated.

REMARKS. Although several other species of Odontopygidae from East Africa are known to show biramous gonopodal telopodites, e.g. *Odontopyge severini* Silvestri, 1897, from many places in Eritrea [Silvestri, 1897; Brölemann, 1901, 1903], none seems to be especially close to *Biramitelomerus terebrum* (cf.

Kraus [1960, 1966]). Using the latest key to Odontopygidae [Kraus, 1960], *B. terebrum* comes out the closest to “*Odontopyge*” *tumidens* Karsch, 1881, from South Sudan [Attems, 1914], but the latter species is much larger (diameter 5.5 mm, vs 2.5–3.2 mm) and differs especially considerably in the shapes and composition of several gonopodal divisions.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Ethical approval: No ethical issues were raised during our research.

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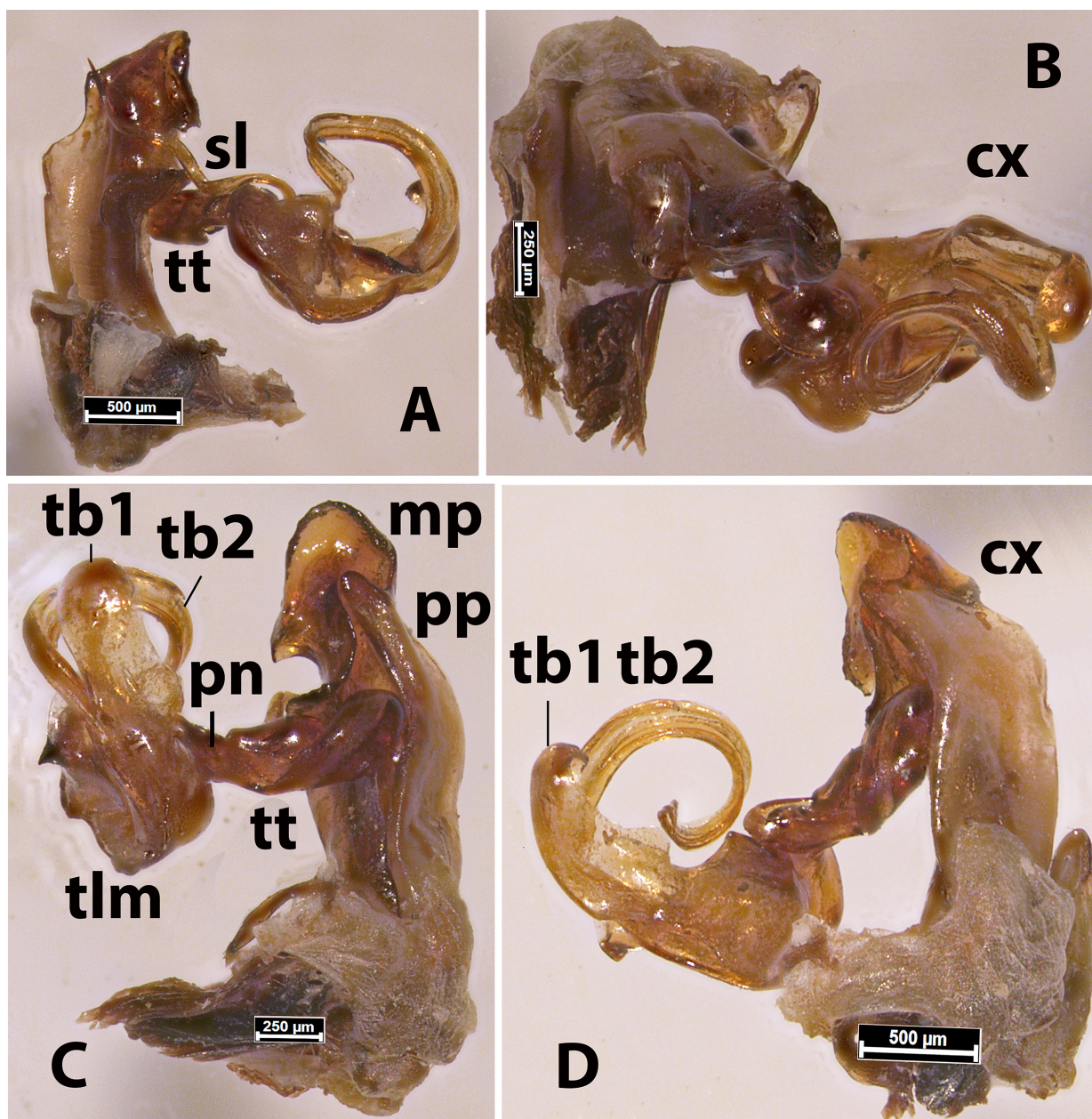


Fig. 4. *Biramitelomerus terebrum* (Ribaut, 1907), ♂. A–D — left gonopod, posterior, ventral, anterior and anterolateral views, respectively. Abbreviations: cx — coxa; mp — metaplica; pn — posttarsal narrowing; pp — proplica; sl — solenomere; tb1, tb2 — telomeral branches; tlm — telomere; tt — torsiotope. Scale bars: 0.5 mm (A, D) and 0.25 mm (B, C).

Рис. 4. *Biramitelomerus terebrum* (Ribaut, 1907), ♂. A–D — левый гонопод, соответственно сзади, снизу, спереди и одновременно спереди и сбоку. Обозначения: cx — тазик; mp — метаплика; pn — постторсальное сужение; pp — проплика; sl — соленомер; tb1, tb2 — ветви 1 и 2 теломера; tlm — теломер; tt — торсотоп. Масштаб: 0,5 мм (A, D) и 0,25 мм (B, C).

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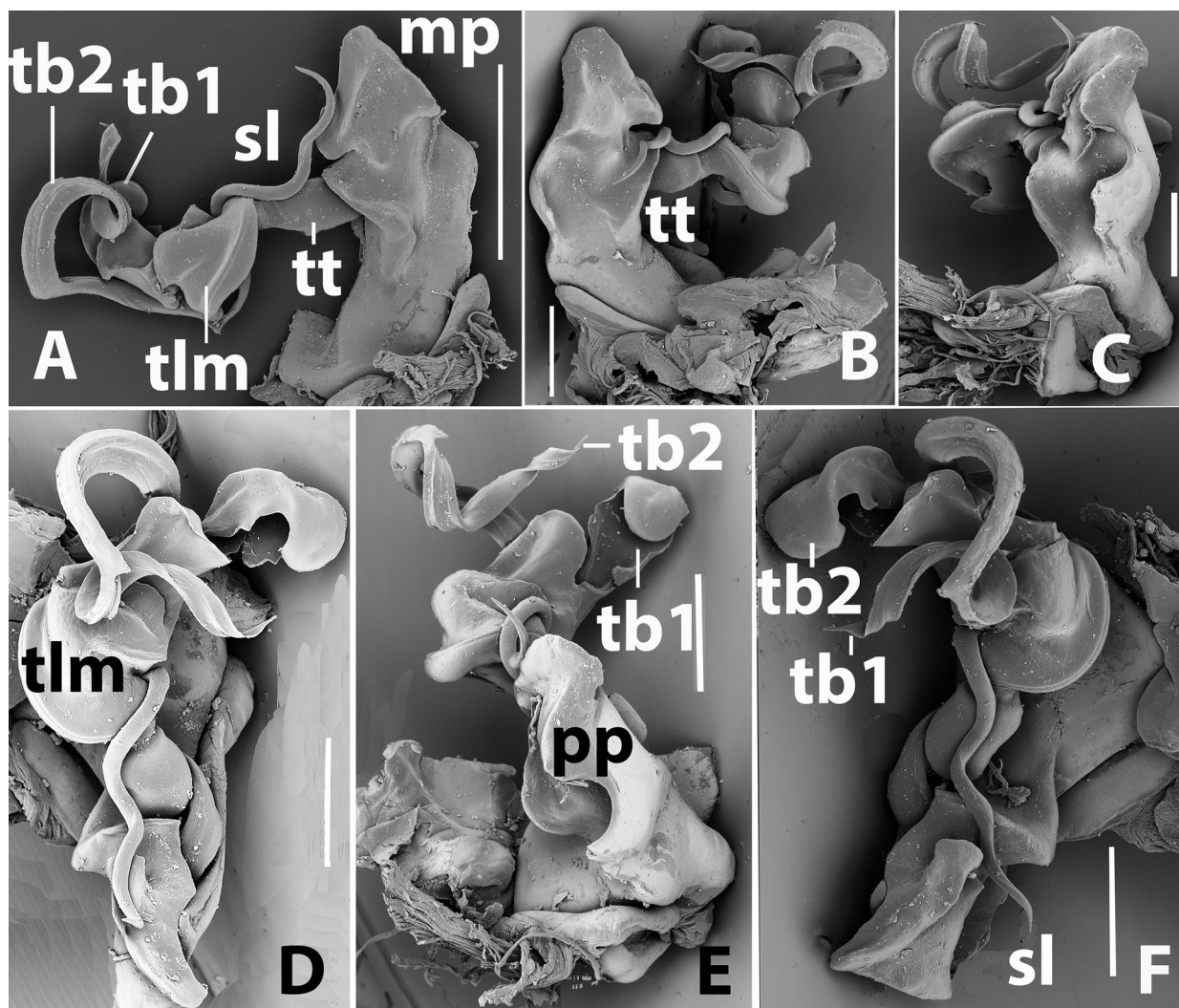


Fig. 5. *Biramitelomerus terebrum* (Ribaut, 1907), ♂. A-F — right gonopod, posterior, anterolateral, posterolateral, ventral, subventral and ventromesal views, respectively. Abbreviations: mp — metaplica; pp — proplica; sl — solenomere; tb1, tb2 — telomer branches; tlm — telomere; tt — torsotop. Scale bars: 0.5 mm (A, D) and 0.25 mm (B, C).

Рис. 5. *Biramitelomerus terebrum* (Ribaut, 1907), ♂. A-F — правый гонопод, соответственно сзади, одновременно спереди и сбоку, одновременно сзади и сбоку, снизу, почти снизу и одновременно спереди и снизу. Обозначения: mp — метаплика; pp — проплика; sl — соленомер; tb1, tb2 — ветви теломера; tlm — теломер; tt — торсотоп. Масштаб: 0,5 мм (A, D) и 0,25 мм (B, C).

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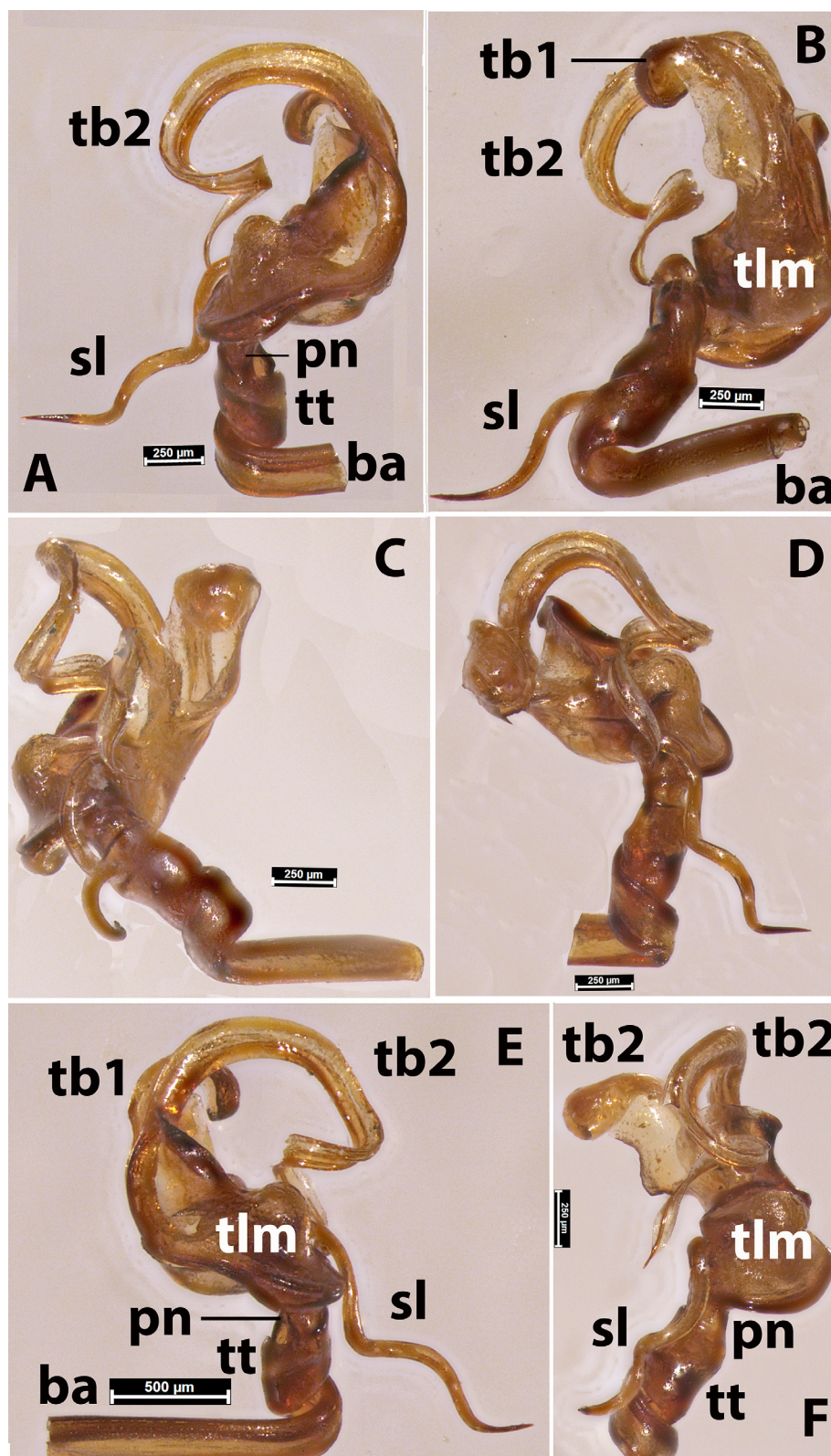


Fig. 6. *Biramitelomerus terebrum* (Ribaut, 1907), ♂. A–F — gonopod telopodites, posterior, anterior, subdorsal, subventrolateral, subposterior and ventral views, respectively. Abbreviations: ba — basomere; pn — posttarsal narrowing; sl — solenomere; tb1, tb2 — telomer branches; tlm — telomere; tt — torsotope. Scale bars: 0.5 mm (E) and 0.25 mm (A–D, F).

Рис. 6. *Biramitelomerus terebrum* (Ribaut, 1907), ♂. A–F — телоподиты гонопода, соответственно сзади, спереди, почти сверху, одновременно примерно снизу и сбоку, почти сзади и снизу. Обозначения: ba — базомер; pn — постторсальное сужение; sl — соленомер; tb1, tb2 — ветви теломера; tlm — теломер; tt — торсотоп. Масштаб: 0,5 мм (E) и 0,25 мм (A–D, F).