

FURTHER NOTES ON *BRACHYSCHENDYLA DENTATA* BROLEMANN & RIBAUT, 1911 (CHILOPODA, GEOPHILOMORPHA)

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INTRODUCTION

Brachyschendyla dentata was first described by Brolemann and Ribaut (1911) from a single female found at Saint B at (Haute Garonne), central Pyrenees. Broleman (1930) also recorded it from a locality some 150 km north (Tarn). It was rediscovered nearly 40 years later in an urban site in southern England in 1968 (Barber & Eason, 1970) since when a series of records have been made from both English and other European sites. The present account includes drawings of specimens from Oxfordshire, England collected by S. Gregory during the course of a survey of that county when he made some dozen records (Gregory & Campbell, 1996).

DESCRIPTION

Length: 9 - 12 mm.

Number of trunk segments: 39 (only females are known).

Colour: whitish, somewhat translucent.

Head: slightly longer (1.1x) than broad (Figure 2).

Antennae: 3 - 4 times as long as breadth of head capsule and about one twelfth of body length. Articles about as broad as long.

Clypeus: typically with a pair of conspicuous post antennary setae, 6 irregularly arranged intermediate setae and a pair of minute prelabial setae (Figure 4) but the pattern differs from this in many specimens (Figure 3).

Labrum: with 15 teeth with projections on them not always visible (Figure 6). The differentiation between central pigmented and lateral pale sharp teeth is rather indefinite but one or more of those at either lateral extremity are feeble and rather inconspicuous.

Mandibles: with dentate and pectinate (fimbriate) lamellae (see Barber & Eason, 1970).

Maxillae: (Figure 5) First maxillae with femoral and coxal palps (lappets) but the latter especially are difficult to see in preparations (described as being seen by transparence through the coxosternite when viewed ventrally, Barber & Eason, *loc.cit.*) and are not shown in the present drawings. Second maxillae with simple spoon shaped claws without spines.

Forcípules: With a well developed medial tooth on the femoroid and a very prominent tooth at the base of the poison claw (Figure 1). The latter has a smooth concavity.

Anterior sternites: without pores, with faint reticulation and rather prominent anterior and posterior marginal setae (Figure 7).

Coxal pores of last legs: 2 + 2.

Last legs: Appear rather obviously swollen, the telopodite is about 1.5x as long as the penultimate, prefemur barely longer than trochanter when viewed ventrally, metatarsus very small, about one seventh the length of the tarsus and without armature (Figure 8).

Juveniles: 5 - 6.5 mm have been seen with relatively short and stout antennae, characteristics of forcípule less well developed, metatarsus of last leg one third the length of the tarsus and coxal pores 1 + 1.

Males are not known so presumably the species is parthenogenetic. This could account for its widespread distribution to urban / suburban sites.

DISTRIBUTION & ECOLOGY

The original British records were from two urban sites in Surrey and the species was subsequently found in a more rural location (although substantially human influenced) in the same area. Subsequently it was found twice in gardens, in a churchyard and in a private tip in Norfolk, an abandoned station garden in Plymouth, another Devon location (adjacent to buildings) and in formal gardens in London. As noted above, it has been found by Steve Gregory from 12 1km grid squares in Oxfordshire, from churchyards with sandy or calcareous friable soils (Gregory & Campbell, *loc.cit.*). More recently, it has been found in Dorset and in a churchyard in West Cornwall and in Edinburgh. Anecdotal evidence suggests that it is most likely to be found in winter, often during frosty weather.

The species has been recorded from a garden in Copenhagen (Enghoff, 1973) and from a park in Amsterdam (Jeekel, 1977) and Berg (1995) shows 5 10km grid square records from the Netherlands, two from the southern province of Limburg. This would suggest that it is likely to be found widely in synanthropic sites in western Europe.

Christian (1996) has the first mid-European record, this time not from an urban site but from *Quercus pubescens* woodland south-west of Leopoldsberg (Vienna region). He includes a photograph showing the characteristic appearance of the poison claws.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Brachyschendyla dentata is easily distinguished from immatures of the common *Schendyla nemorensis* by both the appearance of the back legs with their very small terminal article and by the very distinct appearance of the forcipules. The latter also distinguish it from all other British schendylids.

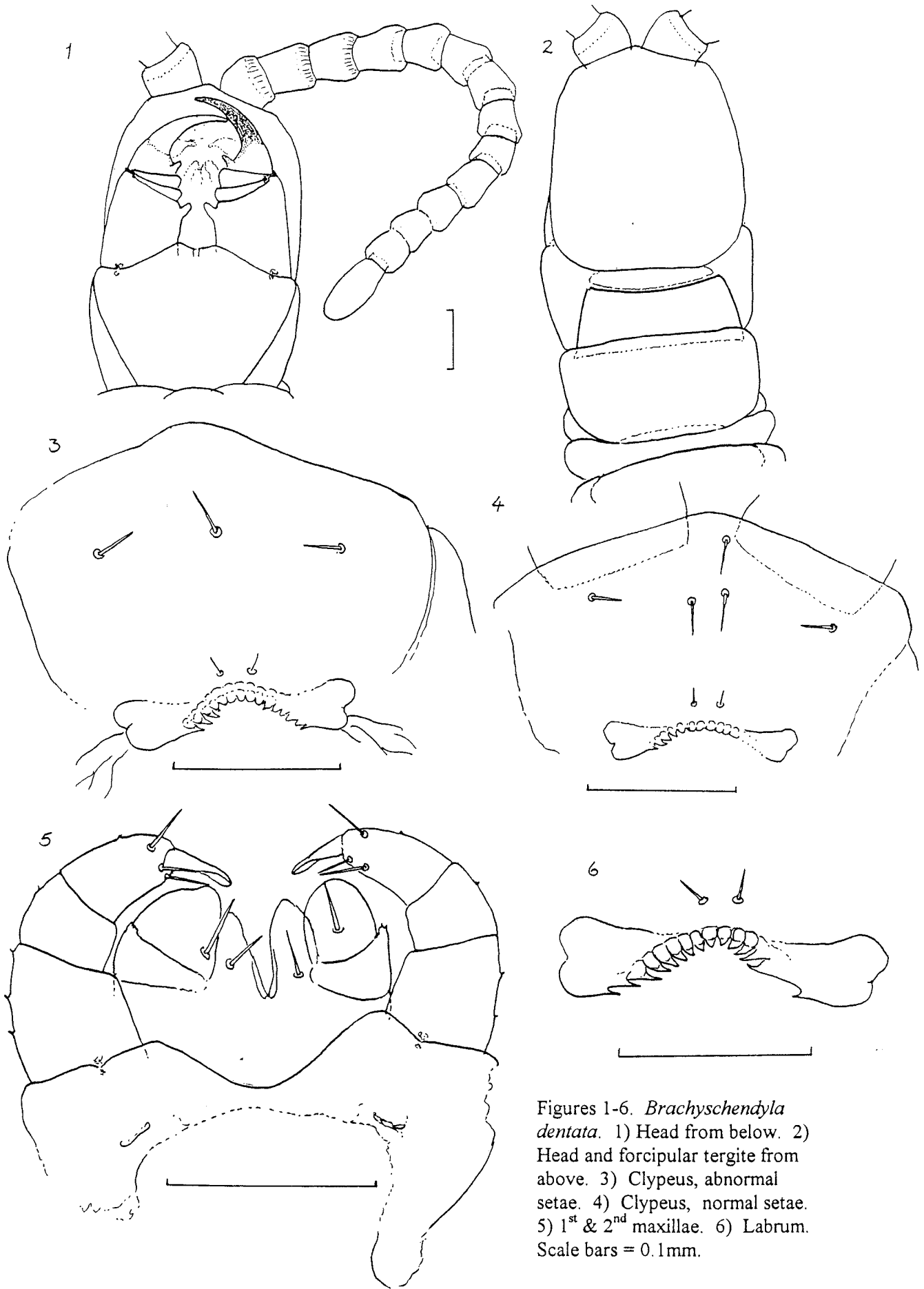
Brachyschendyla armata Brolemann, 1901 (as described in Brolemann, 1930) shows a very conspicuous tooth on the femoroid, more prominent than in *B. dentata* but its last legs are very different with the terminal articles of a more normal size. It is recorded from the littoral Mediterranean. *Brachyschendyla montana* (Attems), forms of which have been recorded in various parts of Europe seems to have a rather small protrusion on the femoroid. It lacks the characteristic last legs of *B. dentata* and bears a spine on the first maxillary claw.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Figures 1-6. *Brachyschendyla dentata*. 1) Head from below. 2) Head and forcipular tergite from above. 3) Clypeus, abnormal setae. 4) Clypeus, normal setae. 5) 1st & 2nd maxillae. 6) Labrum. Scale bars = 0.1mm.

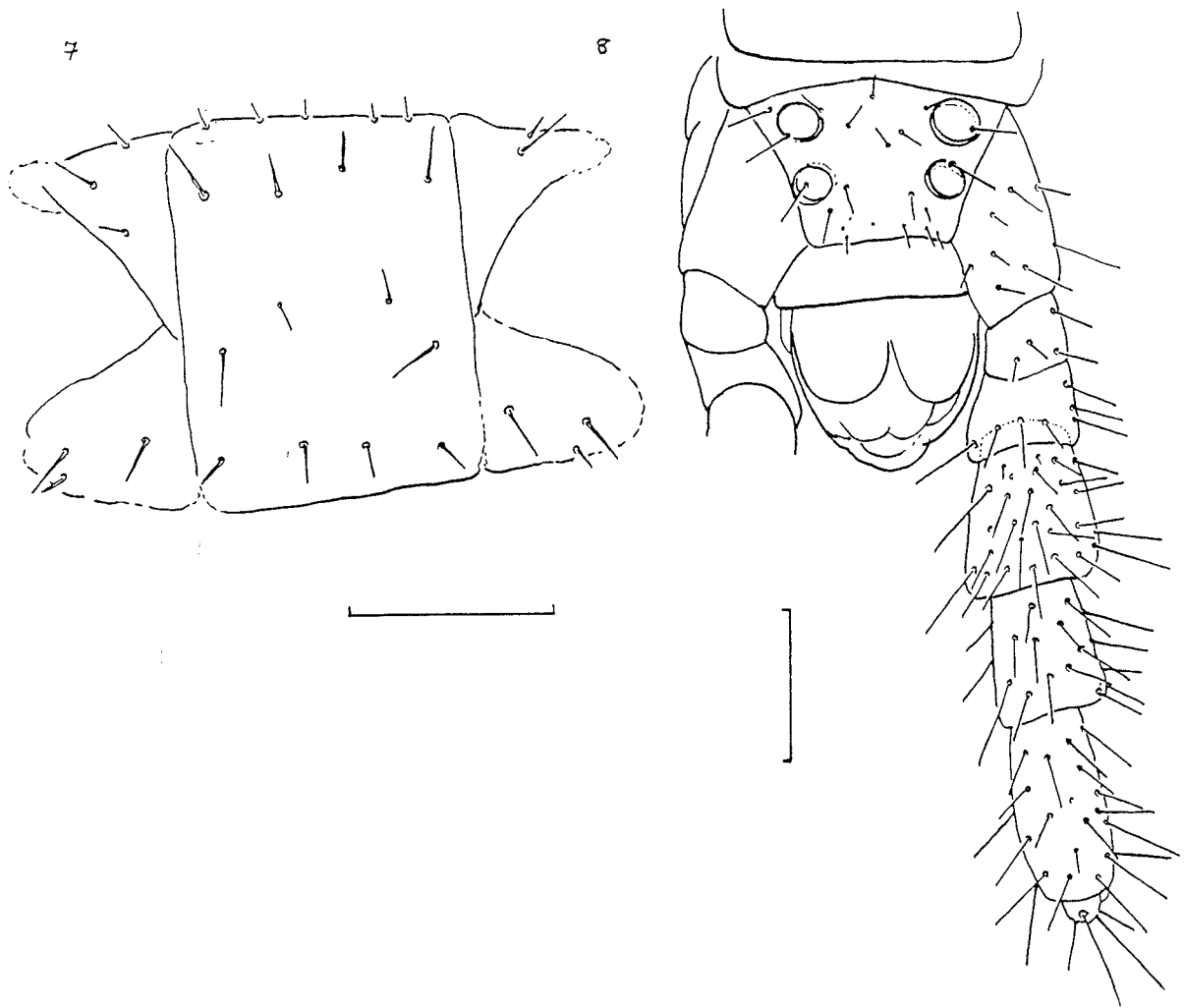


Figure 7-8. *Brachyschendyla dentata*. 7) Setae of the 3rd Segment. 8) Last leg bearing segment, female. Scale bars 0.1mm.