

Entomologische Notiz

Eriogaster inspersa STAUDINGER, 1879: New for the fauna of Europe (Lepidoptera: Lasiocampidae)

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Introduction

Six species of the genus *Eriogaster* GERMAR, 1810 are known from Europe: *Eriogaster lanestris* (LINNAEUS, 1758), *E. arbusculae* (FREYER, 1849), *E. catax* (LINNAEUS, 1758), *E. neogena* (FISCHER VON WALDHEIM, 1824), *E. henkei* (STAUDINGER, 1879) and *E. rimicola* ([DENIS & SCHIFFERMÜLLER], 1775). The latter is also known from Asia Minor where it has several sister-species, one of which is *E. inspersa* STAUDINGER, 1879. *E. inspersa* is conspecific with *Eriogaster nippei* DE FREINA, 1988 and morphologically resembles *E. rimicola* (ZOLOTUHN 2007). However, the flight times of both species are different: while *E. rimicola* is on the wing in late autumn and early winter (September to December, depending on the locality), *E. inspersa* flies from late winter to early spring (March and April) (ZOLOTUHN 2007, DE FREINA 1988, 1992). So far *E. inspersa* has exclusively been reported from southern Turkey where it inhabits the submediterranean oak zone at a range from the western Taurus Mountains east to Kurdistan (ZOLOTUHN 2007). Herein we report on the first European record of *Eriogaster inspersa* STAUDINGER, 1879 in the Eastern Rhodope Mountains of Greece.

Results and discussion

In early March of 2016 the authors undertook a field trip to northern Greece to study the late winter moth fauna. During this trip they sampled moth in the Eastern Rhodope Mountains near

the village of Avantas, Province of Thrace (40°57'38" N, 25°54'56" E). The sampling site was located within a sparse submediterranean oak forest, predominated by *Quercus cerris*, on a southerly exposed slope at an altitude of 190 m (Fig. 1). On 2. III. 2016 at around 8:30 local winter time in the evening, a single male of an *Eriogaster* species came to the UV light which could be determined as the first record of *E. inspersa* for Greece and Europe (Fig. 2). This determination was verified by morphological examination of the genitalia (not illustrated).

A number of additional interesting species came to the light and/or sugar bait that night. Among those were *Erannis ankeraria* (STAUDINGER, 1861) and *Dioszeghyana schmidtii* (DIÓSZEGHY, 1935), both of which are pannonic species inhabiting oak (shrub) forests in Asia Minor and, locally, south-eastern Europe. The Rhodope Mountains are also known as part of the north-western distribution border of other pannonic moth species such as *Gripesia pinkeri* KOBES, 1973, *Gripesia wegneri* KOBES & FIBIGER, 2003 and, as has just recently been reported, *Biston achyra* WEHRLLI, 1936 (WEGNER 2011, KOBES & FIBIGER 2003, TÓTH et al. 2013 and own observations). Thus, it seems plausible that the range of *E. inspersa* also extends to this area into Europe.

In summary, here we report *Eriogaster inspersa* from the Greek part of the Eastern Rhodope Mountains as the first record for Europe. We anticipate that further moth sampling in this area could result



Fig. 1: Habitat of *Eriogaster inspersa* STAUDINGER, 1879 in the Eastern Rhodope Mountains of Greece, 1. III. 2016. — Photo: Frank ROSENBAUER. — Fig. 2: Insert: mounted male of *Eriogaster inspersa* STAUDINGER, 1879 from Avantas, Thrace, Eastern Rhodope Mountains, 2. III. 2016, leg. Franz THEIMER and Frank ROSENBAUER, coll. Franz THEIMER. — Photo: Bernd MÜLLER.

in the discovery of additional pannonic species which so far are unknown from Europe, especially when considering those that are on the wing during the winter months.

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