

A short note on *Phyllodesma (Epicnaptera) priapus* DE LAJONQUIÈRE, 1963

(Lepidoptera, Lasiocampidae)

by

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Abstract: The specific status of *Phyllodesma (Epicnaptera) priapus* DE LAJONQUIÈRE, 1963 is confirmed and the second hitherto known specimen is recorded from Tunisia. The ♂♂ genitalia are figured for both known specimens (figs. 1, 2).

Zusammenfassung: Von *Phyllodesma (Epicnaptera) priapus* DE LAJONQUIÈRE, 1963 wird der Artstatus bestätigt. Von Tunesien wird ein weiterer Falter (♂) gemeldet, das zweite von dieser Art bekannt gewordene Exemplar. Die Genitalien beider ♂♂ werden abgebildet (Abb. 1, 2).

The species *Phyllodesma (Epicnaptera) priapus* DE LAJONQUIÈRE, 1963 was described after a single ♂, collected in the mountains of northern Algeria. Its genitalia were remarkable and distinctly separated the species from externally similar congeners. Actually, the name "Priapus" was given for the species because of the strongly enlarged and C-shaped aedeagus as in Priapos (Latinized as Priapus), a minor rustic god of fertility, protector of gardens, herds and ♂ genitalia in Greek mythology who was usually represented as a grotesque individual with a huge phallus. This character was so unusual for the genus where the aedeagi in most species are heavy sclerotized (but not enlarged and in some species even decreased in size), that specific independence of the species was questioned by some authors. Thus, DE FREINA & WITT (1987: 372) wrote: "Die Berechtigung von *Phyllodesma priapus* LAJ. ist anzuzweifeln. Vermutlich handelt es sich lediglich um ein abweichendes Exemplar von *Phyllodesma suberifolia* (DUP.)".

Recently, the second known specimen was verified via my friend and colleague AIDAS SALDAITIS. The genitalic peculiarities of that specimen undoubtedly prove its belonging to this species and correspondingly, the independence as a good species.

***Phyllodesma (Epicnaptera) priapus* DE LAJONQUIÈRE, 1963 (figs 1, 2)**

Annales de la Société entomologique de France 132: 82, pl. 11: 164; pl. 8: 128; pl. 9: 144. Type locality: Algeria, Kabylie, Akfadou, Talaa-Kitane. Holotype ♂ (by original designation) in ZFMK [examined] (fig. 1).

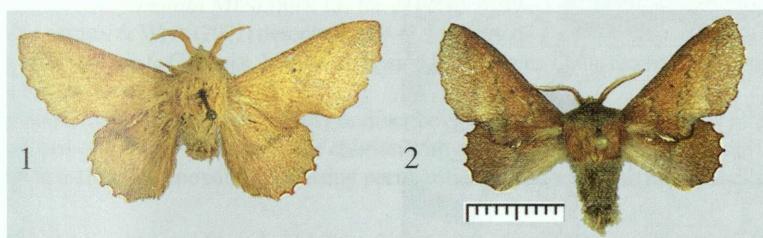


Fig 1, 2: *Phyllodesma (Epicnaptera) priapus* DE LAJONQUIÈRE, 1963. (1) holotype ♂, Algeria, Kabylie, Akfadou, Talaa-Kitane (ZFMK); (2) ♂, Nord-Tunesien, Ain-Sobh, 10.V.-16.V.2004 (coll. H. SIEBALD).

The single Tunisian specimen (1 ♂, Nord-Tunesien, Ain-Sobh, 10.V.-16.V.2004, leg. et coll. H. SIEBALD, fig. 2) was collected in a sparse cork oak and pine tree forest with lilac, genista, and spurge in underbrush on sandy ground in temperatures about +12-15°C. The specimen was attracted to mixed light of 160 W (H. SIEBALD, pers. comm. from 26.X 2009).

The two known specimens are quite distinct in wing pattern and colouration (figs 1, 2), but very similar in the ♂ genitalia (figs 3, 4): the shape of uncus and serrate outer margin of the valva are diagnostic. The collecting date is unknown for the holotype ♂, but it is suggested here that a paler yellow colouration without a prominent pattern is typical for the second generation appearing in summer. Therefore, it is assumed that the species develops at least two generations per season, distinctly distinguishable phenotypically; the same character is also known for other congeners.

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References

- FREINA, J. DE & TH. WITT (1987): Die Bombyces und Sphinges der Westpaläarktis (Insecta Lepidoptera) 1: 1-708. - Edition Forschung und Wissenschaft, München.
LALOQUIÈRE, Y. DE (1963): Révision de genre *Phyllodesma* HÜBNER (= *Epicnaptera auctorum*) espèces paléarctiques [Lep. Lasiocampidae]. - Annales de la Société entomologique de France 132: 31-84, Paris.

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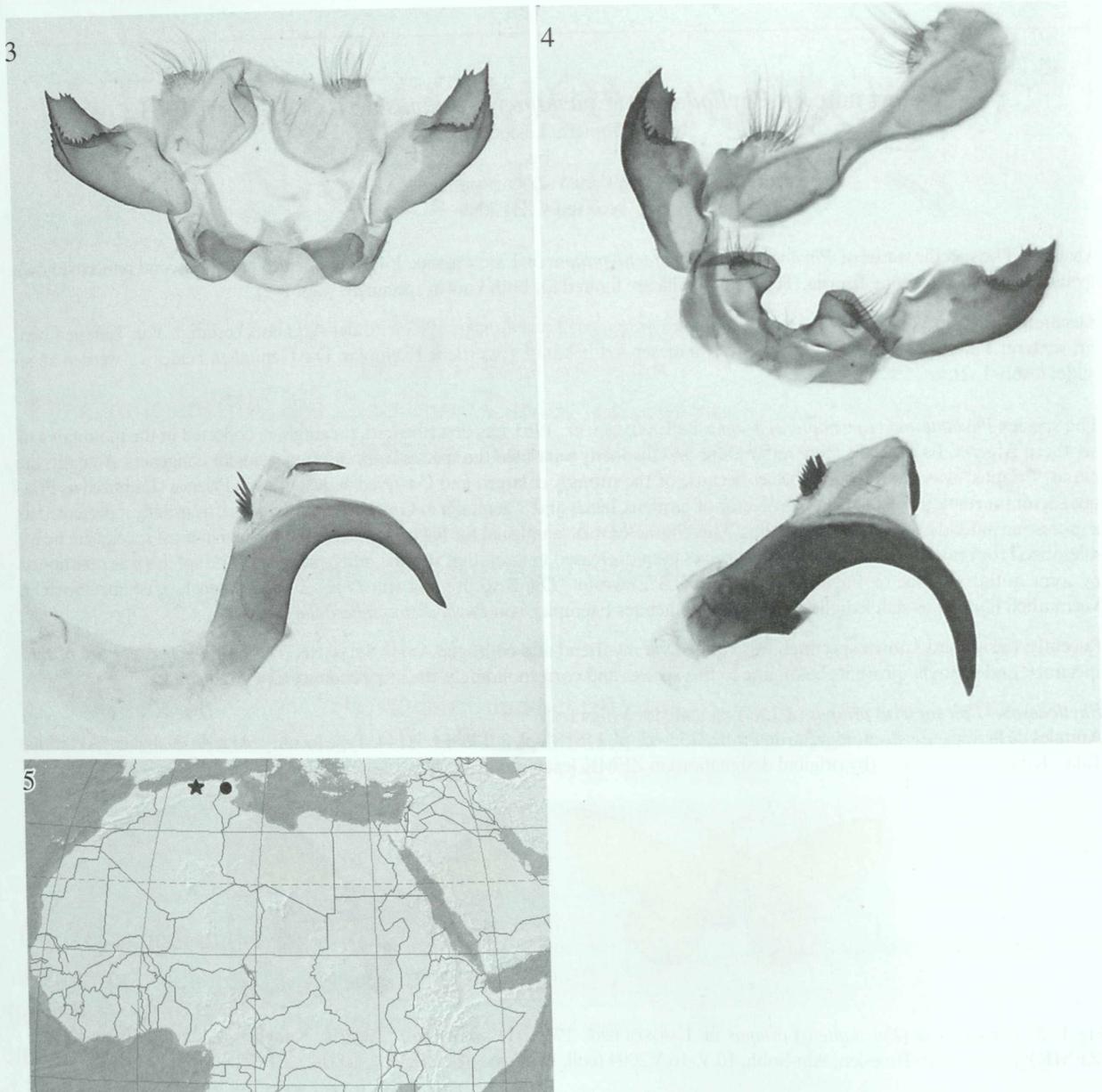
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Figs. 3-5: *Phyllodesma (Epicnaptera) priapus* DE LAJONQUIÈRE, 1963. (3) Genitalia of the holotype ♂ (ZFMK); aedeagus extracted; (4) genitalia of the Tunisian ♂; (5) distribution of the species in North Afrika.

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