

Autophila libanotica osthelderi BOURSIN, 1940
and *Characoma nilotica* (ROGENHOFER, 1882)
new to Europe
(Lepidoptera, Noctuidae : Catocalinae, Ophiderinae)

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Summary

Two species of Noctuidae, *Autophila libanotica osthelderi* BOURSIN, 1940 and *Characoma nilotica* (ROGENHOFER, 1882), are recorded for the first time from Europe. The first was found on the mountain Phalakron, north of Drama in northern Greece, and the second in the south of the Peloponnese in southern Greece and on Crete.

Résumé

Deux Noctuidae nouvelles pour l'Europe : *Autophila libanotica osthelderi* BOURSIN, 1940, et *Characoma nilotica* (ROGENHOFER, 1882) sont signalées. La première trouvée dans la chaîne intéressante du Phalakron au nord de Drama en Grèce septentrionale, et la deuxième dans le sud du Péloponnèse en Grèce méridionale et sur la Crète.

Zusammenfassung

Zwei Noctuidae : *Autophila libanotica osthelderi* BOURSIN, 1940 und *Characoma nilotica* (ROGENHOFER, 1882) werden neu für Europa gemeldet. Die erstere aus dem interessanten Gebirge, Phalakron, nördlich von Drama in Nord-Griechenland, die zweite aus Süd-Griechenland, Süd-Peloponnes und auf Kreta.

***Autophila libanotica osthelderi* BOURSIN, 1940 (Fig. 1)**

On the way to Turkey in 1986, the author once again collected on the interesting mountain of Phalakron north of Drama in Greece. On the night of 6th July, he and his equipment were suddenly attacked by a frightening thunderstorm with hailstones of more than 2 cm diameter. However, before he fled to the car for the rest of the night, he succeeded in catching approx. 30 specimens of the newly described *Euxoa hilaris derrae* HACKER, 1985 (the taxon *derrae* is perhaps a



Fig. 1. *Autophila libanotica osthelderi* BOURSIN. Female, 40 mm. Hellas, Drama, Mt. Phalakron above Volas, 1700 m, 6.vii.1986, leg. M. FIBIGER. Gen. prep. no. 1683 M. FIBIGER.

full species). In the morning, one *Autophila* was found sitting underneath an egg carton. This specimen proved to be *A. libanotica* (STAUDINGER, 1901) ssp. *osthelderi* BOURSIN, 1940 (det. L. RONKAY), which has not previously been found in Europe.

A. libanotica was described from the Lebanon (STAUDINGER, 1901 : 251), whereas *A. osthelderi* was reported from Turkey : Prov. Karaman-marasch, Kayseri (Erciyas dagh), Prov. Sivas, Prov. Konya, Prov. Erzurum, and Iran : Elburs Mountain, Kendevan-Pas (BOURSIN, 1940 : 515-517). The distribution in Turkey is discussed by HACKER (1985, 1986a, 1986b, 1986c) and HACKER, KUHNA & GROSS (1986).

The genitalia of both sexes are figured in the recent revision of *Autophila* (RONKAY, 1986 ; 1989).

***Characoma nilotica* (ROGENHOFER, 1882) (Figs 2, 3)**

The author found one male of *Characoma nilotica* ROGENHOFER in the Zoological Museum of Copenhagen among some undetermined microlepidoptera collected by the Dane, G. CHRISTENSEN. Later, Ole KARSHOLT found two more specimens in the museum, females from the same locality, the home of the G. CHRISTENSEN in Greece. Furthermore, one male was recorded by the author on Crete in November 1991. Besides one report from Malta (SAMMUT, 1984), this species, although otherwise extremely widespread, has not previously been recorded from Europe.

Characoma nilotica (ROGENHOFER, 1882 : 26) was described from Alexandria, Egypt. It is a very variable species. WARREN (*in* SEITZ, 1913 : 290-291) gives names to three forms (aberrations) which are shown on plate 53d together with the nominate form.



Fig. 2, 3. Specimens of *Characoma nilotica* ROGENHOFER. 2. Male, 16 mm. Hellas, Lakonia, 5 km S. of Monemvasia, 12.x.1979, leg. G. CHRISTENSEN, coll. Zool. Mus. Copenhagen. 3. Female, 18 mm. Same data, but 4.x.1984.

The type specimen of *C. nilotica* from Egypt was bred from *Tamarix articulata* VAHL., but WILTSHIRE believes that the larva is polyphagous. The moth has been recorded in most months of the year. In Europe and northern Africa the flight period might be compared with that of *Nycteola*: From September to May/June with a winter diapause.

The distribution is Holotropical, Holosubtropical and Holarctic (WILTSHIRE, 1945). WILTSHIRE states (pers. comm.) that *C. nilotica* ROGENHOFER is one of the most widely distributed species in the world. It is reported from India to Arabia, northern Africa (down to Eritrea and the Canary islands), to the West Indies, North, Middle and South America (WILTSHIRE, 1987).

The male and female genitalia of *C. nilotica* are illustrated in WILTSHIRE's fifth work on the Saudi Arabian macrolepidoptera (WILTSHIRE, 1987). The genitalia of two of the Greek specimens are shown in Figs 4, 5.

Systematically, the genus *Characoma* belongs to the subfamily Sarrothripinae and should be placed next to *Pardasena* (from tropical Africa and Arabia) and *Nycteola*.

MATERIAL EXAMINED : 1 ♂, Hellas, Lakonia, 5 km S. Monemvasia, 12.x.1979, leg. G. Christensen ; 2 ♀♀, same locality, but dated 4.x.1984 ;

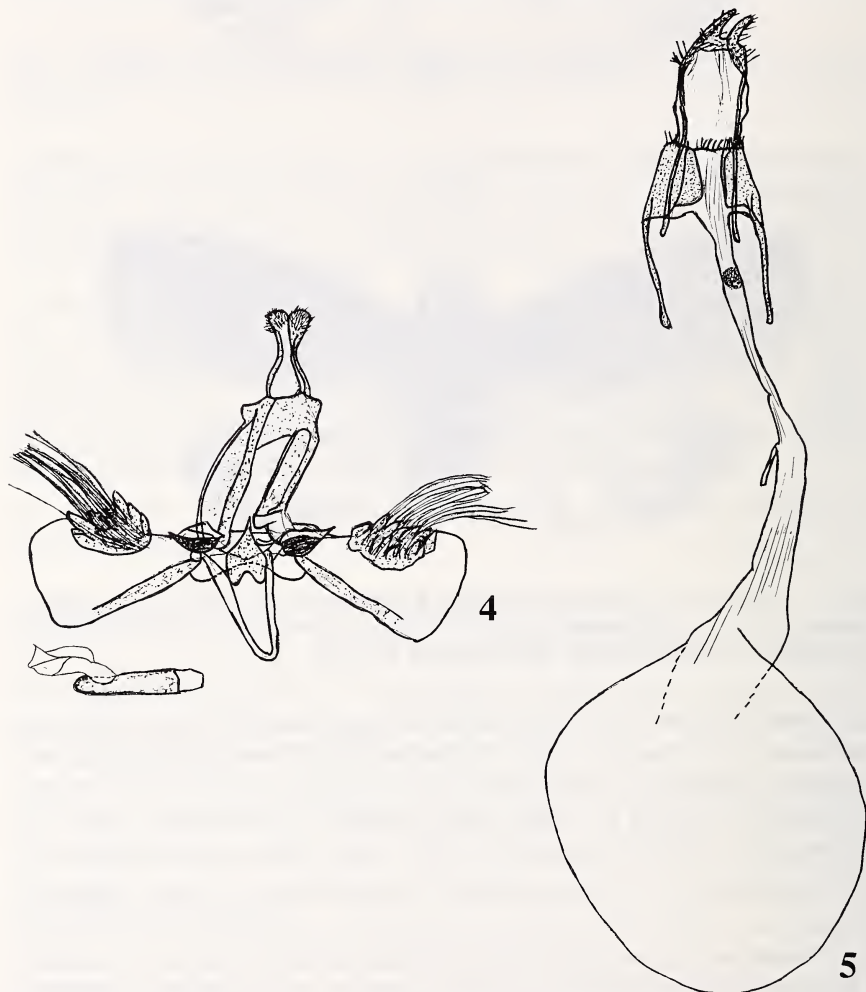


Fig. 4, 5. Genitalia of *Characoma nilotica* Rogenhofer. 4. Male genitalia of specimen in Fig. 2, gen. prep. no. 1143 M. FIBIGER. 5. Female genitalia of specimen in Fig. 3, gen. prep. no. 1176 M. FIBIGER.

1 ♂, Hellas, Crete, 20 km east of Heraklion near Gurnae, 10 m, 12.xi.1991, leg. M. FIBIGER.

Acknowledgements

The following colleagues are sincerely thanked for their help on various subjects : E. P. WILTSHIRE, England, L. RONKAY, Hungary and O. KARSHOLT and G. BROVAD, Denmark.

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