Scythris richteri sp. n., a new micromoth from Croatia (Lepidoptera: Scythrididae)

Bengt Å. Bengtsson

Abstract. A new species of the microlepidopterous family Scythrididae, Scythris richteri sp. n., is described. The type locality is situated in the south of Velebit in Croatia. The new species is externally similar to Scythris taygeticola Scholtz, 1997 but lacks the pale spot at the apex. It may also be confused with Scythris hornigi (Zeller, 1855) but differs externally by the whitish streak in the forewing not reaching the apex but ending at the termen two millimetres before the tip of wing. The male genitalia differ, for instance, by a straight row of large, stout bristles on the uncus. The type series was found in August at an elevation of ca. 1200 m, but the biology is otherwise unknown.

Introduction

The European fauna of the microlepidopterous family Scythrididae is comparatively well explored and only a few new species have been found and described after the review of the West Palearctic Scythrididae by Bengtsson (1997). An interesting exception from this is the number of new species that have been described from the most easterly parts of Europe in or close to the Ural Mountains, and from North Africa and Turkey, from where more than twenty new species have been described (e.g. Nupponen 1999, 2003, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2007, 2009, 2010; Nupponen et al. 2003; and Nupponen et al. 2000).

During 2011 Ole Karsholt at ZMUC, Copenhagen, sent me a damaged scythridid specimen, collected by L. Srnka, with its genitalia in a plastic tube. After remounting the genitalia I observed that the specimen represented an undescribed species. I corresponded with Ignác Richter in Mala’ Čausa in Slovakia, who had consulted Ole Karsholt about this taxon, and I was fortunate to receive further specimens from the same collecting area in Velebit, Croatia, regrettably only males. The female is thus still unknown.

Material and methods

The genitalia were mounted according to the method described by Robinson (1976) and Bengtsson (1997). The picture of the imago was produced by a multi-layer technique using a Canon EOS 350D with a 100 mm Canon Macro lens and artificial circular light-tube illumination.

The photographs (about 10) were processed by the software Helicon Focus Version 4.2.8 (10871). The genitalia illustrations were produced in a similar manner with multi-layer technique, using the same camera and a Euromex EB compound Microscope with a plan lens 5/0.18.

Fig. 1. – Scythris richteri Bengtsson sp. n. (holotype).

Scythris richteri Bengtsson sp. n.

Holotype: male; CROATIA, South Velebit, 26.8.2011, Lgt. Ignác Richter (white label); Gen. prep. no 1978X, Scythris richteri, B Å Bengtsson (yellow label); HOLOTYPUS Scythris richteri ä BENGTSSON (red label). – In coll. ZMUC [Copenhagen].

16 paratypes: 2 males; data as in the holotype. Genitalia of one male on slide 17571 (in glycerin in a plastic tube on the needle).

Key words: Scythrididae – Scythris – Croatia – taxonomy – faunistics.

Bengt Å. Bengtsson, Lokeg. 3, S-386 93 Färjestaden, Sweden. bengt.a.bengtsson@gmail.com
1 male (specimen very damaged); data as in holotype but 17.8.2007, lgt. C. Srnka. Genitalia on slide BÅB 1971X. – In coll. ZMUC.

13 males; CROATIA, South Velebit (12 km Gracac) 1200 m, 11.8.2010, lgt. C. SRNKA. – In coll. ZMUC, coll. Richter and coll. BÅB.

Diagnosis: Scythris richteri sp. n. resembles some other scythridids with brown forewing and a longitudinal, pale streak in fold towards apex. Scythris taygeticola Scholtz, 1997 has about the same wingspan but at the tip a pale, diffuse spot is present, and in the genitalia the uncus is armed with strong spines from two round pads and not from a straight, transverse row as in S. richteri sp. n. The gnathos and the valvae are of dissimilar shape, as well. Scythris hornigii (Zeller, 1855) also has the same size and coloration but the longitudinal streak runs all the way from the wing base to the wing tip, while in S. richteri sp. n. the streak ends about two millimetres before apex. The Moroccan species Scythris ciliatella Zerny, 1936 is smaller and has lighter hindwing.

Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to Ing. Ignác Richter who provided the type series of the undescribed species, and also to L’. Srnka for providing several paratypes. I also thank Ole Karsholt who forwarded to me the first specimen for determination and at which occasion I was able to confirm the status of the new taxon.

References