2013, *Entomologist's Gazette* **64**: 7–10

Stathmopoda auriferella (Walker, 1864) (Lepidoptera: Oecophoridae) an adventive species new to the British Isles

R. J. HECKFORD[1]

Department of Life Sciences, Terrestrial Invertebrate Division, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD, U.K.

Synopsis

An account is given of rearing *Stathmopoda auriferella* (Walker, 1864) from an imported pomegranate (*Punica granatum* L.). This appears to be the first record of this adventive species in the British Isles.

Key words: Lepidoptera, Oecophoridae, *Stathmopoda auriferella*, larva, *Punica granatum*, adventive species, British Isles, new record.

Introduction

On 9 April 2006 I reared a male *Stathmopoda auriferella* (Walker, 1864) from one of two larvae found in the calyx of a pomegranate (*Punica granatum* L.), stated origin Israel, purchased at a superstore at Plymouth, Devon (V.C. 3) on 30 October 2005. I cannot trace that the species has previously been recorded from the British Isles.

Stathmopoda auriferella (Walker, 1864)

(Fig. 1)

Gelechia? auriferella Walker, 1864, *List of the Specimens of Lepidopterous Insects in the collection of the British Museum*, Part 30 – Tineites: 1022.
Stathmopoda divisa Walsingham, 1891, *Transactions of the Entomological Society of London* **1891**: 121, pl. 6, fig. 61.
Stathmopoda ischnotis Meyrick, 1897, *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales* **22**: 324.
Stathmopoda crocophanes Meyrick, 1897, *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales* **22**: 324.
Aeoloscelis theoris Meyrick, 1906, *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* **17**: 410.
Stathmopoda tharsalea Meyrick, 1914, *Annals of the Transvaal Museum* **4**: 199.
Stathmopoda adulatrix Meyrick, 1917, *Exotic Microlepidoptera* **2**: 61.
Stathmopoda cirrhaspis Meyrick, 1922, *Exotic Microlepidoptera* **2**: 585.
[All synonymized by Kasy, 1973, *Tijdschrift voor Entomologie* **116**: 255–258.]

Description

Imago. Wingspan 9.5 mm. Head, frons shining ochreous white, vertex ochreous; antenna ochreous; labial palpus ochreous white, lower edge ochreous. Thorax and tegulae ochreous. Forewing very narrow, ochreous, darker ochreous basally, brown sub-basal mark on costa, brown oblique fascia at one-half broadening on costa and dorsum, brown sub-apically, cilia ochreous. Hindwing very narrow, pale grey; cilia ochreous. Legs: foreleg tibia brown mixed with ochreous, otherwise pale ochreous. Abdomen pale ochreous with concolorous caudal tuft. The extent of the brown colour on the forewing varies considerably, from forming a fascia at one half, at any angle to the costa from 90 to 45 degrees, to extending to the apex.
Genitalia ♂ (Figs 2, 3). Uncus sub-triangular; gnathos sub-triangular; tegumen comparatively long, curved; valva with distal two-thirds sub-oval, costa gently curved proximally and spiculate, sacculus about two-thirds length of valva; saccus rounded; aedeagus comparatively short and broad.
The genitalia of both sexes are figured by Kasy (1973: 259, figs 43, 44) and Koster & Sinev (2003: 254, fig. 26; 320, fig. 26).

[1] Scientific Associate. Correspondence address: *67 Newnham Road, Plympton, Plymouth, Devon PL7 4AW, U.K.*

Photo: R. J. Heckford

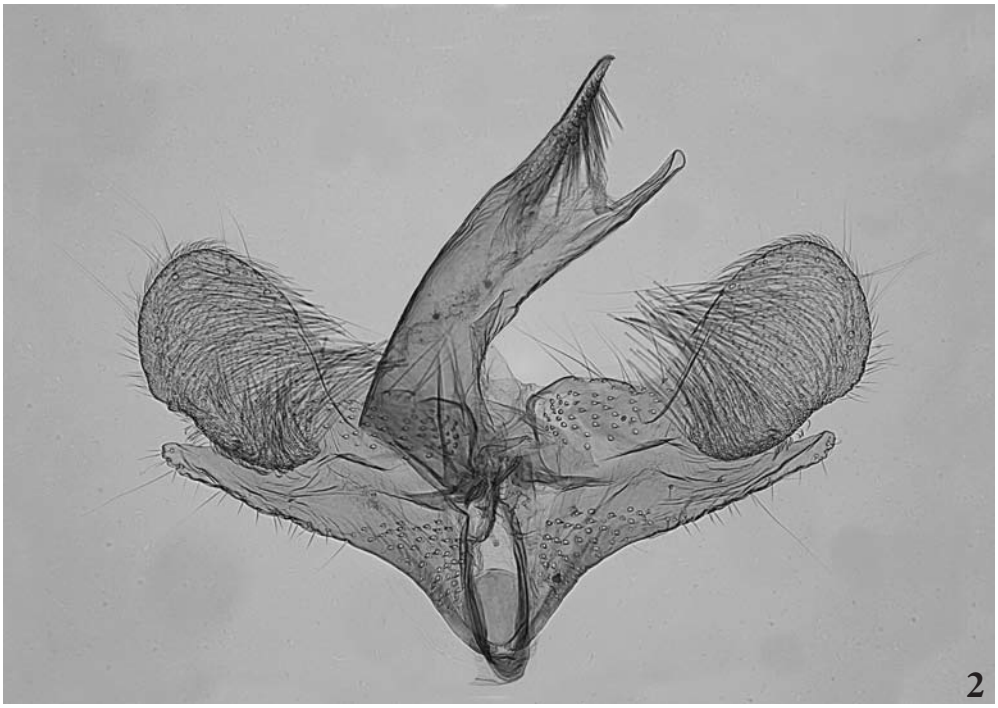
Fig. 1. *Stathmopoda auriferella* (Walker, 1864), ♂.

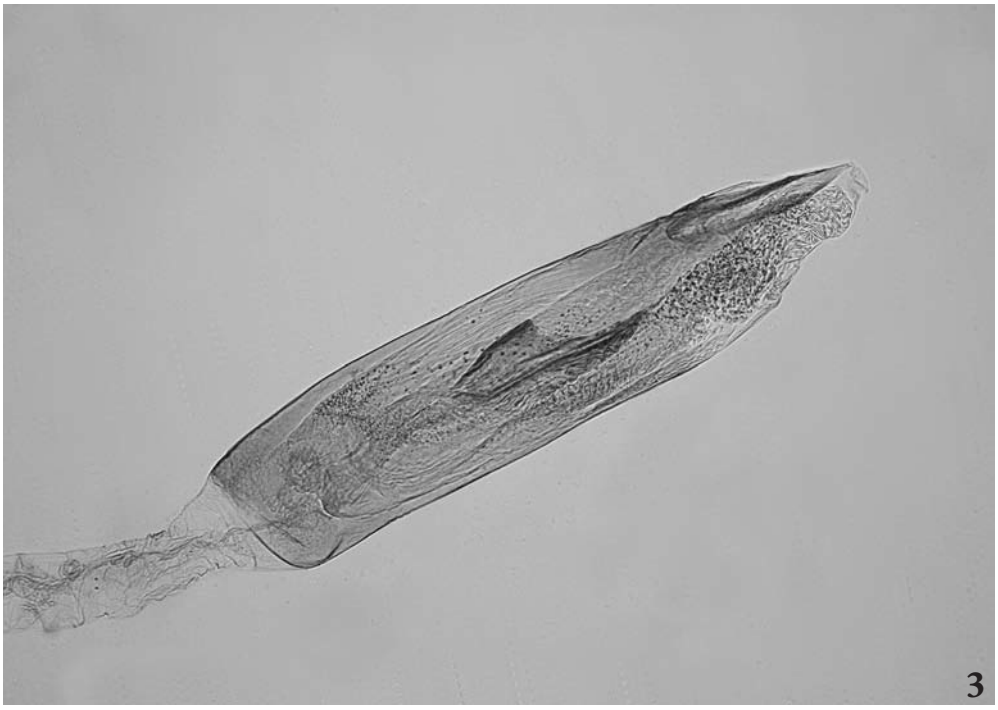
Larva. Head yellowish brown becoming brownish black posteriorly, clypeus and labrum reddish brown with a broad, whitish medial division, stemmata and adfrontal sutures black; prothoracic plate black, anterior edge whitish, a very narrow, reddish brown medial line; body dull purplish grey, when head is extended the lateral intersegmental areas between the head, thoracic segment 1 and thoracic segment 2 are visible and whitish, thoracic segments 2 and 3 with a raised sub-triangular area of cuticle on dorsum, the apex anterior to the base; pinacula very small, slightly darker than body colour and encircled whitish grey except for supraspiracular pinacula on abdominal segments 1 to 7 which are very dark brown encircled whitish grey edged black and the supraspiracular pinaculum on abdominal segment 8 which is black, sub-rectangular and curved downward posteriorly within which is an elongate whitish patch from which arises a seta; anal plate pale yellowish brown; thoracic legs translucent whitish with pale yellowish brown areas on the upper surface; ventral and anal prolegs translucent yellowish, crochets reddish brown.

Pupa. Pale reddish brown, in a slight, semi-transparent, whitish cocoon, not extruded on emergence of the imago.

Biology

The two larvae were in slight silken tubes in the calyx of the pomegranates. The larvae spun slight, whitish, semi-transparent silken tubes amongst the debris at the base of the calyx and appeared to feed on the debris, but were difficult to observe. What was clear was that they do not enter the fruit. The larva that produced the moth fed very slowly from the date of purchase, being provided with fresh calyces of pomegranates from time to time.





Photos: R. J. Heckford

Figs 2, 3. *Stathmopoda auriferella* (Walker, 1864). 2, male genitalia, armature; 3, aedeagus.

According to Koster & Sinev (2003: 64) the larva lives in silken galleries among various types of decaying vegetable matter and sometimes has been recorded from living flowers, seeds or shoots, injured by other invertebrates. It is known as a pest of minor importance of agricultural crops.

Remarks

The colour and pattern of the forewing of *Stathmopoda auriferella* are so distinctive that the species could not be confused with any other on the British list. The variation in the extent of brown on the forewing may be one of the reasons for the number of synonyms.

The specimen was exhibited in 2006 at the Annual Exhibition of the British Entomological and Natural History and photographed there (Heckford, 2007: 166, pl. 4, fig. 12). Langmaid & Young (2007: 256) include the record and allocate the number 877b to this species in the current British checklist (Bradley, 2000).

Distribution

The species is widespread in the Oriental and Afro-tropical regions but only occurs in the Palaearctic region where there is a subtropical climate, namely in the Middle East and the Far East of Russia (Koster & Sinev, 2003: 64).

Acknowledgements

I thank Mr M. R. Honey and Dr K. Sattler, both Natural History Museum (BMHN), London, for their help in various ways.

References

Bradley, J. D. 2000. *Checklist of Lepidoptera recorded from the British Isles* vi, 116 pp. Fordingbridge. [Privately published.]

Heckford, R. J. 2007. Exhibit – Annual Exhibition, 2006. *British Journal of Entomology and Natural History* **20**: 166, pl. 4 fig. 12.

Kasy, F. 1973. Beitrag zur Kenntnis der Familie Stathmopodidae Meyrick, 1913 (Lepidoptera, Gelechioidea). *Tijdschrift voor Entomologie* **116**: 227–299.

Koster, J. C. & Sinev, S. Yu. 2003. Momphidae, Batrachedridae, Stathmopodidae, Agonoxenidae, Cosmopterigidae, Chrysopeleiidae. *In* Huemer, P., Karsholt, O. & Lyneborg, L. (Eds), *Microlepidoptera of Europe* **5**: 387 pp., 15 col. pls, 124 monochrome pls. Stenstrup.

Langmaid, J. R. & Young, M. R. 2007. Microlepidoptera review of 2006. *The Entomologist's Record and Journal of Variation* **119**: 241–266.

Meyrick, E. 1897. Descriptions of Australian Micro-Lepidoptera. XVII. Elachistidae. *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales* **22**: 297–435.

——— 1906. Descriptions of Australian Micro-Lepidoptera. II. *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* **17**: 403–417.

——— 1914. Descriptions of South African Micro-Lepidoptera. *Annals of the Transvaal Museum* **4**: 187–205.

——— 1916–1923. *Exotic Microlepidoptera* **2**. London.

Walker, F. 1864. *List of the Specimens of lepidopterous Insects in the Collection of the British Museum*, Part 30 – Tineites: 137–1096.

Walsingham, Lord 1891. African Microlepidoptera. *Transactions of the Entomological Society of London* **1891**: 63–132.