

**NOTES ON THE ACER-FEEDING CALOPTILIA SPECIES  
(LEPIDOPTERA: GRACILLARIIDAE) IN LITHUANIA***JURATE DE PRINS*

Lithuanian Entomological Society, Akademijos 2, LT-08412 Vilnius, Lithuania

E-mail: jurate.de.prins@africamuseum.be

**Introduction**

Two *Acer*-feeding *Caloptilia* species – *C. hemidactylella* (Denis & Schiffermüller, 1775) and *C. rufipennella* (Hübner, 1796) had been recorded in Lithuania (Ivinskis *et al.*, 1985; Ivinskis, 1993; De Prins & De Prins, 2005, 2010). Both species are widely distributed in Europe (De Prins & De Prins, 2005, 2010; Buszko, 2010). Larvae of both species first mine the leaf, as sap feeding instars; later, as tissue feeding instars, they construct successive cones (up to three) by curling a portion of the leaf downwards (Emmet, 1985). The differential characters between both species concerning their biology are minuscule: *C. rufipennella* makes slightly bigger blotch mines (ca. 6 mm) as opposed to 3–4 mm made by *C. hemidactylella* larvae, measuring its longer axis (Emmet, 1985). The larvae of *C. hemidactylella* can feed on *Acer campestre* L. (Stainton, 1864; Hartig, 1964; Emmet, 1985; De Prins & De Prins, 2005, 2010), *A. pseudoplatanus* L. (Frey, 1861; Stainton, 1864; Emmet, 1985; De Prins & De Prins, 2005, 2010), *A. platanoides* L. and *A. saccharinum* L. (Emmet, 1988; Buszko, 1990, Kuznetzov & Baryshnikova, 1998; De Prins & De Prins, 2005, 2010). The larvae of *C. rufipennella* can feed on the same *Acer* species (De Prins & De Prins, 2005, 2010; Langmaid & Young, 2009). In Lithuania, both species were recorded as miners (first instars) and rollers (last instars) on *Acer platanoides* L. (Ivinskis *et al.*, 1985). Interestingly, Davis (1987) postulated that the species-groups within Gracillariidae that produce folded or rolled leaves might be of ancestral lineages while those which mine in leaves are probably derived ones.

Very recently (in October 2010), a new *Caloptilia* species feeding on *Acer platanoides* has been described from Sweden (Bengtsson, 2010). This is not only a sensational event, keeping in mind the fact that a new species was described from a country where not only all the species seemingly are recorded beginning with the Linnaeus classification (1758), but, if the readers forgive me a joke, I thought that in Sweden all the insect specimens had already been recorded thanks to the outstanding activities of the entomological institutions and societies denoting great public interest in biodiversity issues and the availability of sufficient funds. However, what sometimes seems impossible can become possible: the description of a new *Caloptilia* species feeding on *A. platanoides* from Sweden is a fact. This new species, *C. jurateae* Bengtsson, 2010, has been recorded from the following countries: Germany, Norway, Poland, and Sweden (Bengtsson, 2010). However, Bengtsson (2010) in the original description of *C. jurateae* states that “the distribution area is certainly much larger and may extend over most of Europe”. The newly described *C. jurateae* is very similar to *C. semifascia* (Haworth, 1828) which also feeds on *Acer* spp. Neither species has been found in Lithuania yet, but the probability of their occurrence in this country is very high.

The aim of this paper is to encourage Lithuanian lepidopterists to carefully examine the *Acer*-feeding *Caloptilia* species in their country and, if successful, to augment the List of Lepidoptera of Lithuania, thus contributing to the knowledge of the taxonomy, faunistics and biology of this very interesting species-group.

### Notes on biology and distribution

Beside the above-mentioned *Caloptilia* species feeding on *Acer* spp. and found in Lithuania, two more *Acer*-feeding *Caloptilia* species occur in Europe. The first one is *C. fribergensis* (Fritzsche, 1871), feeding on *A. monspessulanum* L. in Bulgaria, Croatia and Macedonia (Klimesch, 1942, 1956; Buszko & Beshkov, 2004) and on *A. pseudoplatanus* in Germany and Poland (Fritzsche, 1871; Buszko, 1992), and the second one is *C. semifascia* (Haworth, 1828) feeding on *A. campestre* in Austria, Denmark, Germany, Slovakia, Switzerland and United Kingdom (Frey, 1880; Steudel & Hofmann, 1882; Gudmann, 1897; Hrubý, 1964; Meyrick, 1927, Emmet, 1985; De Prins & De Prins, 2010), also occasionally on *A. pseudoplatanus* in the United Kingdom (Emmet, 1985, 1988). At present, *C. semifascia* is recorded from almost all European countries except Lithuania, Sweden, Norway, Finland and the Netherlands (see for details Buszko, 2010; De Prins & De Prins, 2010). Neighbouring countries of Lithuania already have old records of the presence of *C. semifascia* in their faunistic lists: in Latvia, the first record of *C. semifascia* dates from 1870 (Nolcken, 1870) and in Poland from 1965 (Błeszyński *et al.*, 1965). Of special interest to Lithuanian lepidopterists is the 14-year-old record of *C. semifascia* in Estonia where it was feeding on *A. platanoides* (Kesküla *et al.*, 1996). Since *C. jurateae* is very closely related to *C. semifascia*, it is probable that Kesküla *et al.* (1996) in fact in Estonia found *C. jurateae*, rather than *C. semifascia*, although both species might feed on *A. platanoides*. According to the observations of Bengtsson (2010), *C. semifascia* in Denmark has been recorded from *A. campestre* but not from *A. platanoides*, while *C. jurateae* in Sweden, Norway and Finland feeds only on *A. platanoides*.

In Lithuania, the most common and the only native *Acer* species is *A. platanoides*; therefore, the probability of the occurrence of *C. jurateae* is high. *Acer campestre* is not so commonly planted in Lithuania. I recall that this species mainly grew some 15–20 years ago in the western part of Lithuania close to the border with Sovetsk, Russia (formerly Tilsit), and was more abundant in the Kaliningrad (formerly Königsberg) region. I encourage my fellow Lithuanian lepidopterists very much to search for *C. jurateae* on *A. platanoides* and for *C. semifascia* on *A. campestre* or to look for both moth species on the latter plants.

### Notes on taxonomy

There has been a long-lasting confusion between two names: *C. onustella* (Hübner, 1813) and *C. semifascia* (Haworth, 1828) and it was not clear whether these two species-group names represent one species or two. Both taxa are *Acer*-feeders; the type locality of *C. onustella* is Germany, while the type locality of *C. semifascia* is the United Kingdom (London) (De Prins & De Prins, 2005, 2010). Both names were used either as synonyms or treated as two separate species (Heydenreich, 1851; Wocke, 1861, 1871; Frey, 1880; Huemer & Tarmann, 1993; Laštůvka, 1993; Kuznetzov & Baryshnikova,

1998; Budashkin, 2004; etc.). The situation became even more complicated by the fact that the type series of *C. onustella* was destroyed and the only remaining reference to the type specimen of *C. onustella* is the illustration of Hübner (1813: pl. 45, fig. 314). Inadequate illustrations of moths and the assumed difficulties to identify species following these inadequate illustrations is a problem met not only in modern times. Zeller (1847: 319), concerning *C. onustella*, wrote the following: “Hübner hat Fig. 314 eine Tin. Onustella, Calotripis Onustella Catalog S. 425, 4138, die in der Färbung und Gestalt des Vorderflügeldreiecks eine grosse Uebereinstimmung mit Oneratella zeigt. Er stellt sie sogar mit Franckella und Hemidactylella in einen Verein zusammen. Dennoch lässt sich die spezifische Uebereinstimmung aus dem Grunde noch nicht annehmen, weil diese Onustella viel zu breite Vorder- und Hinterflügel, hellgelbes Rückenschild und Kopf und einfarbig graue Vorderflügelfransen hat”. Karsholt & Razowski (1996: 303) commented appropriately: “The status of *C. onustella* (Hübner, 1813) from Central Europe needs further investigation. Some authors treat it as a form of *C. semifascia* (Haworth, 1828) and then it becomes a senior synonym. Huemer & Tarmann (1993) listed it as a separate species”. Thus, for almost two hundred years the question remained open whether the two European *Acer*-feeding *Caloptilia* species-group names *onustella* and *semifascia* indicated one taxon or two taxa. After careful re-examination of the drawing made by Hübner (1813, pl. 45, fig. 314), Bengtsson (2010: 106) expressed the very plausible remark that Hübner in his illustration of [*Tinea*] *Onustella* probably depicted not a *Caloptilia* species at all, but *Argyresthia goedartella* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Yponomeutidae). Seventeen years earlier, Hübner (1796, plate 20, Fig. 133) had already figured a specimen of *Tinea goedartella* in a group which he called Tineae Nobiles, and it is well possible that later on he considered an individual form of that species as a separate species in his group Tineae Ignobiles (Hemming 1937: 295, 298). Zeller (1847: 319) was the first to place *Tinea onustella* Hübner, 1813 to Gracillariidae, since that species resembled him very much his own new species [*Gracilaria*] *Oneratella*. Recent molecular studies on multiple nuclear genes revealed close genetic affinities between Gracillariidae and Yponomeutidae (Regier *et al.*, 2009; Mutanen *et al.*, 2010). It will be not very surprising if Gracillariidae will be grouped with Yponomeutidae in future molecular and taxonomic publications. So, P. C. Zeller was not so much mistaken in 1847, after all.

Herewith, I propose to follow the following taxonomic change:

***Argyresthia goedartella* (Linnaeus, 1758)** [Yponomeutidae]

*Tinea onustella* Hübner, 1813, **syn. n.**

***Caloptilia semifascia* (Haworth, 1828)** [Gracillariidae]

*Tinea onustella* sensu auct., nec Hübner, 1813

***Caloptilia falconipennella* (Hübner, 1813)** [Gracillariidae]

*Gracilaria oneratella* Zeller, 1847. A junior subjective synonym of *Tinea falconipennella* Hübner, 1813, synonymized by E. Hering (1891: 94).

I invite my colleague-lepidopterists to consistently use the name *C. semifascia* (Haworth, 1828) referring to one of the *Acer*-feeding European *Caloptilia* species from now on, and to avoid the taxonomic dualism with the specific name *Caloptilia onustella* which has continued for almost 200 years.

### Notes on diagnosis

The two *Acer*-feeding species – *C. semifascia* and *C. jurateae* – are very closely related. They cannot be distinguished by external characters (Figs. 1–2). However, the male and female genitalia show a few constant morphological differences, females being more distinct than males. The easiest noticeable difference can be found in the shape of the sterigma. In *C. jurateae*, the lamella antevaginalis is shaped as a semi-circular “pouch”, has an evenly arched rim and is directed anteriorly, while in *C. semifascia* the lamella antevaginalis shows a wide but shallow posterior concavity and is directed posteriorly. The detailed and richly illustrated explanations of diagnostic characters between both species are presented in Bengtsson (2010).

It is worth mentioning that the two above mentioned species are very similar genetically as well. The distance between these two taxa in the mitochondrial COI (DNA barcode) region ranges between 0.61–0.77% (Lopez Vaamonde pers. comm. For Methods, please refer to De Prins *et al.*, 2009). There have been some reports on Lepidoptera of two sibling species that share the same mitochondrial DNA but show clear morphological differences, for instance, *Pieris napi* (Linnaeus, 1758) and *Pieris bryoniae* (Hübner, 1806) (Dincă *et al.*, 2010). So far, in Gracillariidae, none of any species pairs that share the same DNA barcode have been known (BOLD systems). The note of Bengtsson (2010: 109) that *Phyllonorycter nicellii* (Stainton, 1851) and *P. klemannella* (Fabricius, 1781) share the same mitochondrial DNA is, unfortunately, erroneous, and perhaps it is better that it is corrected here. This pair of *Phyllonorycter* species shows different DNA barcodes (unpublished data). Many more details on the DNA barcodes of the European Gracillariidae species will be presented and explained in future publications.

### Concluding notes

I heartily encourage my fellow Lithuanian lepidopterists to collect and study the *Acer*-feeding *Caloptilia* species. It would be great if the morphological diagnostic characters of *C. semifascia* and *C. jurateae* presented by Bengtsson (2010) could be confirmed on new material. It would even be more challenging “to crack the nut” and to fix in absolute alcohol some freshly emerged specimens of *C. semifascia* and *C. jurateae* which will serve for a detailed multi-gene analysis. The ‘Gracillariidae team’ would be very grateful if the Lithuanian lepidopterists could co-operate in this matter. Moreover, I should add that the scientific truth is above everything. And if the lepidopterists community finds the factual evidences that *C. semifascia* and *C. jurateae* represent one taxon, then the name *C. jurateae* (unfortunately to the author of these lines) ends in synonymy. If those two species-group names represent two taxa anyway, then (fortunately to the author of these lines) the distribution border between these two species and /or overlapping biotopes will lie somewhere in Lithuania.



Figs. 1–2. Habitus of two *Acer*-feeding *Caloptilia* species possibly occurring in Lithuania: 1. *C. semifascia*, DENMARK: Skibinge, 16.ix.1980, O. Karsholt. 2. *C. jurateae*, paratype. SWEDEN: Öll[and], Torslunda, Kalkstad, 21.ix.1999, B. Å. Bengtsson, bred from *A. platanoides* L.; scale bar 2 mm.

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**Pastabos apie klevais besimaitinančias *Caloptilia* genties rūšis (Lepidoptera: Gracillariidae) Lietuvoje**

*J. DE PRINS*

**Santrauka**

Straipsnyje pateikiama informacija, kad yra didelė galimybė, jog Lietuvoje gali būti aptiktos dar dvi klevais (*Acer* spp.) besimaitinančios *Caloptilia* rūšys: *C. semifascia* (Haworth, 1828) ir naujai aprašyta *C. jurateae* Bengtsson, 2010. Straipsnyje pateikiamos pastabos apie šių rūšių biologijos, paplitimo ir taksonomijos ypatybes; Lietuvos entomologai skatinami surasti šias rūšis Lietuvoje ir atlikti nuodugnius tyrimus.

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