



Description of a new species of the Central Palaearctic genus *Margelana* Staudinger (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae) from northeastern Iran

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Abstract

The genus *Margelana* Staudinger, 1888 is a member of the tribe Apameini in the subfamily Xyleninae *sensu* Fibiger & Lafontaine 2005. The genus comprises three superficially similar species, all occurring from the Middle East to the Central Palaearctic region: *Margelana versicolor* (Staudinger, 1888), *M. flavidior* F. Wagner, 1931 (with its subspecies *M. flavidior ochrea* Brandt, 1941) and *M. brunnea*, **sp. n.** The habitat of all three species is dry rocky steppe with herbaceous vegetation and scattered bushes. Adults and male and female genitalia of all three species of *Margelana* are described, compared and illustrated. All three species occur in Iran.

Key words: new species, Iran, Noctuidae, *Margelana*

Introduction

A large collection of Iranian moths is in the Hayk Mirzayans Insect Museum (HMIM), belonging to the Insect Taxonomy Research Department (ITRD) of the Plant Pests and Diseases Research Institute (PPDRI). During the second ALI (Association Lepidoptera Iranica) meeting in May 2005 the authors discovered several specimens of an apparently undescribed species of *Margelana* Staudinger, 1888. However, some specimens were quite similar to some *Margelana flavidior* F. Wagner, 1931, so the issue could only be resolved by examining the male and female genitalia. This research made it clear that the larger, more brownish specimens were an undescribed *Margelana* species. Further study revealed that this new species had also been found in the same area by the Austrian lepidopterists Günter Stangelmaier and Christian Wieser.

Following the classification of Noctuidae (Fibiger & Lafontaine 2005), *Margelana* is placed in the subfamily Xyleninae Guenée 1837, tribe Apameini Guenée 1841, subtribe Apameina Guenée 1841. *Margelana* is a Middle East and Central Palaearctic genus with three species. *Margelana* was inadvertently omitted from the list of the World's Apameini genera (Zilli, Ronkay and Fibiger 2005). The new species is compared with *M. flavidior*, *M. flavidior ochrea* Brandt, 1941, and *M. versicolor* Staudinger, 1888.