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Notes on the genus *Perittia* of the West Palaearctic region with descriptions of three new species (Lepidoptera: Elachistidae)

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Abstract

New records for seven species of the *Perittia* moths from the West Palaearctic area are given. Three of them are described as new species: *Perittia junnilaisella* **sp. n.** from Turkey, *P. ravida* **sp. n.** from Turkey and Greece, as well as *P. minitaurella* **sp. n.** from Greece (Crete). The females of *Perittia huemeri* (Traugott-Olsen) and *P. mucronata* (Parenti) are described for the first time. *Perittia karadaghella* Sinev & Budashkin and *P. huemeri* are reported from Turkey for the first time, and *Perittia biloba* Sruoga is recorded from Uzbekistan for the first time.

Key words: Taxonomy, Gelechioidea, Elachistinae, systematics, new species, faunistics

Introduction

Perittia Stainton is a relatively small genus of the Elachistinae moths, comprising about forty described species (Kaila 1999a, b). The genus is nearly cosmopolitan in its distribution. The species diversity seems to be highest in South America (Kaila 1999b) and possibly also elsewhere in southern hemisphere (L. Kaila, unpublished; see also Sruoga & De Prins 2009). Almost all of the species of *Perittia* appear to be difficult to find as adults, and life histories are unknown for the majority of known species. Therefore, many representatives of this genus are only known from scarce and scattered records. All of the known *Perittia* larvae feed on dicotyledon plants, unlike those of the much larger, exclusively monocotyledon-feeding genus *Elachista* Treitschke. Based on their similar outer appearance, the affinities of these genera have long been supposed to be close, in spite of remarkable differences in their genital as well as pupal structure (e.g., Braun 1948; Traugott-Olsen & Schmidt Nielsen 1977; Kaila 1999a). Phylogenetic analyses of Kaila (1999a, 2004a) support close relationships of these genera. Given the paucity of records of most species of *Perittia*, it is likely that the genus will eventually prove to be substantially larger than now considered. The species of the genus are relatively well known only in Europe and adjacent areas, at least if compared to the rest of the world. Yet new species are constantly being discovered in Europe too (Whitebread 1984; Traugott-Olsen 1990; Budashkin & Sinev 1991; Parenti 2001; Kaila *et al.* 2003). Until now, twelve *Perittia* species have been reported to occur in the area covered by *Fauna Europaea* (Kaila 2004b).

This paper follows Kaila's (1999a) concept of *Perittia*, i.e., the genera *Mendesia* Joannis and *Polymetis* Walsingham, as well as all those introduced by Traugott-Olsen (1995a, b, c) and the monotypic genus *Kuznetsoviana* proposed by Traugott-Olsen (1996) are included in *Perittia*. Kaila (1999a) opted for this conservative approach because the latter genera are distinguished only on basis of slight differences in wing venation (see Albrecht & Kaila 1997 for a review of these characteristics) and the shape of the male valva. Kaila's (1999a) conclusions were somewhat biased in that the majority of the species were known from adult males only. As this situation still prevails, a robust classification subordinate to the inclusive concept of *Perittia* is not deemed presently possible. In light of current knowledge, subordinate classifications within

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