

# *Metalampra italica* (Lepidoptera: Oecophoridae), also in Belgium

Willy De Prins & Jurate De Prins

**Abstract.** As so many other species, *Metalampra italica* Baldizzzone, 1977, sibling to *M. cinnamomea* (Zeller, 1839), has recently expanded its area northwards. The species was described from Italy, but has been recorded lately from Germany, Croatia, the Netherlands and Switzerland. Its presence in Belgium is confirmed now by examination of its genitalia.

**Samenvatting.** *Metalampra italica* (Lepidoptera: Oecophoridae), ook in België  
Zoals zoveel andere soorten, heeft nu ook *Metalampra italica* Baldizzzone, 1977, zustersoort van *M. cinnamomea* (Zeller, 1839), zijn areaal naar het noorden uitgebreid. De soort is beschreven uit Italië, maar werd onlangs ook gemeld uit Duitsland, Kroatië, Nederland en Zwitserland. Het voorkomen van deze soort in België is nu bevestigd door genitaalonderzoek.

**Résumé.** *Metalampra italica* (Lepidoptera: Oecophoridae), aussi en Belgique  
Comme beaucoup d'autres espèces, *Metalampra italica* Baldizzzone, 1977, espèce jumelle de *M. cinnamomea* (Zeller, 1839), a étendu son aire de distribution vers le nord. L'espèce a été décrite d'Italie, mais elle fut mentionnée d'Allemagne, Croatie, Pays-Bas et Suisse. La présence en Belgique de cette espèce a été confirmée par examen des génitales.

**Key words:** *Metalampra italica* – *Metalampra cinnamomea* – Belgium – Faunistics – First record.

De Prins W.: Dorpstraat 401B, B-3061 Leefdaal. willy.deprins@gmail.com

De Prins J.: Koninklijk Museum voor Midden-Afrika, Leuvensesteenweg 13, B-3080 Tervuren. jurate.de.prins@africamuseum.be

## Introduction

Traditionally, it was assumed that the genus *Metalampra* (Oecophoridae) is represented in Central and North Europe only by *Metalampra cinnamomea* (Zeller, 1839). However, in a recent paper, Seliger & Schreurs (2013) showed that also *M. italica* Baldizzzone, 1977, originally described from Italy, occurs much further north and that this species is present in many collections

under the name of *M. cinnamomea*. Two specimens, a male and a female, from our own collection turned out to belong to *M. italica* as well and hence, this species is mentioned here for the first time from Belgium: Province of West-Vlaanderen, Bredene, 23.vii.2004, 1♀, leg. L. Janssen; Province of Vlaams-Brabant, Leefdaal, 23.vii.2009, 1♂, leg. W. De Prins, both in collection Willy & Jurate De Prins, Leefdaal (figs. 1–2).



Figs. 1–3. Adults of *Metalampra*. 1.– *Metalampra italica* Baldizzzone, 1977, ♂, Belgium, Province of Vlaams-Brabant, Leefdaal, 23.vii.2009, leg. W. De Prins; Fig. 2.– Idem, ♀, Belgium, Province of West-Vlaanderen, Bredene, 23.vii.2004, leg. L. Janssen; Fig. 3.– *Metalampra cinnamomea* (Zeller, 1839), The Netherlands, Province of Limburg, Melloweg, 30.vii.1986, leg. G. R. Langohr, all specimens in coll. W. & J. De Prins, Leefdaal (Photographs S. Hanot).

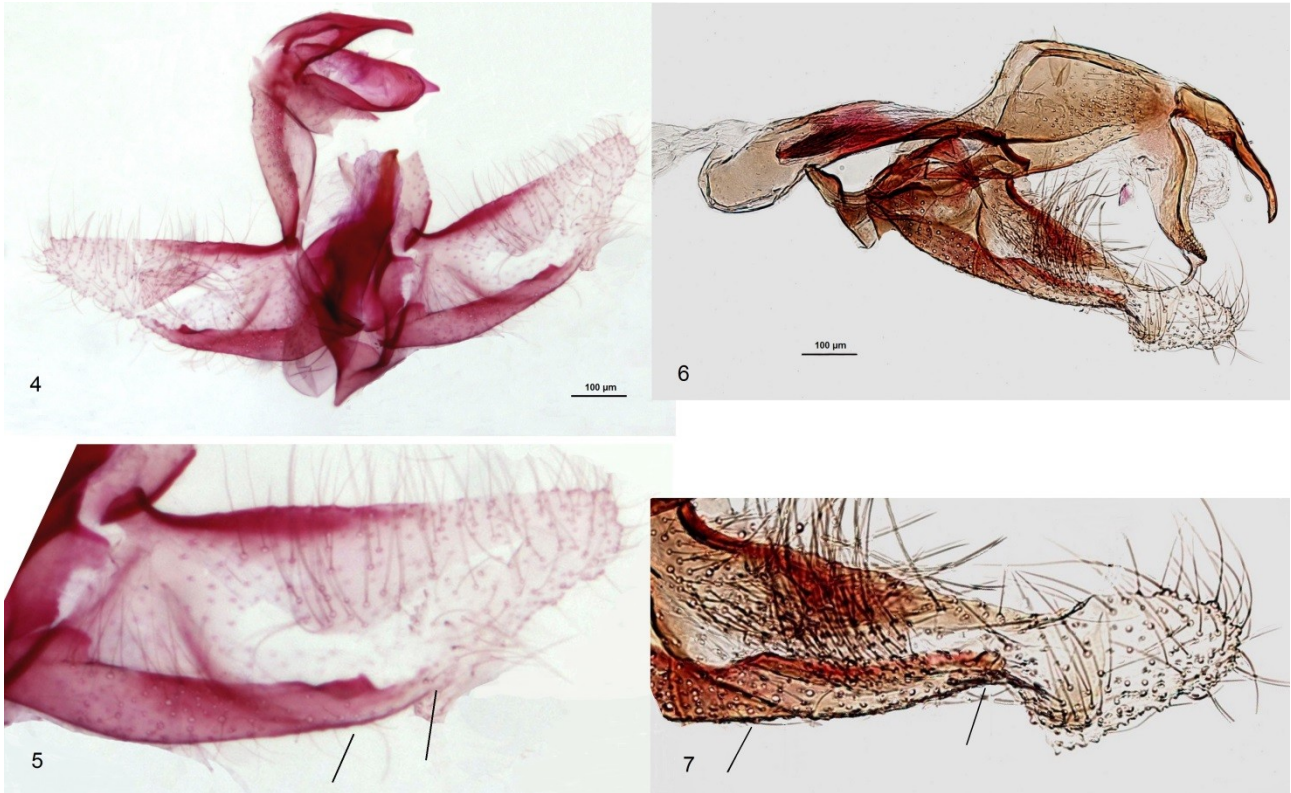
## Adults of *Metalampra*

In fresh specimens, it is possible to distinguish both species looking at their external morphology. In *M. cinnamomea* the forewing ground colour is weaty greyish brown and the yellowish markings are conspicuous, especially the costal rectangular blotch (fig. 3). In *M. italica* the forewing ground colour is reddish brown and a little shining, and in comparison to *M. cinnamomea*, the markings are less pronounced, especially that pre-apical yellow blotch, giving *M. italica* a more homogenous appearance (Seliger & Schreurs 2013). Clear and correct illustrations can be found in Tokár *et al.* (2005).

Tokár *et al.* (2005) stated that the male genitalia differ in having a triangular valval form in *M. italica*,

whereas the valva is oval in *M. cinnamomea*. Just like Seliger & Schreurs (2013), we did not observe this difference in our preparations, but we found the clear differences in the sacculus as explained by Seliger & Schreurs. In *M. cinnamomea* the broadest part of the sacculus is near its base and the apex of the sacculus is blunt and evenly rounded, whereas in *M. italica*, the broadest part of the sacculus is closer to the apex, which is rectangular with sharp edges (figs. 4–7).

Differences in the female genitalia are mainly seen in the sclerotisation of the antrum of the ductus bursae. In *M. cinnamomea*, the antrum is only weakly sclerotised with more strong sclerotised edges (fig. 8), whereas in *M. italica* the whole antrum is evenly sclerotised (Tokár *et al.* 2005, Seliger & Schreurs 2013).



Figs. 4–8. Male genitalia of *Metalampra*; Figs. 4–5: *Metalampra italica*, Belgium, Province of Vlaams-Brabant, Leefdaal, 23.vii.2009, leg. W. De Prins, genitalia slide De Prins 3827♂, 4. genitalia in ventral view, 5.– detail of valva and sacculus; Figs. 6–7: *Metalampra cinnamomea*, The Netherlands, Province of Limburg, Melloweg, 30.vii.1986, leg. G. R. Langohr, genitalia slide De Prins 3830♂, 6.– genitalia in ventral view, left valva removed, 7.– detail of valva with sacculus (photographs J. De Prins).



Fig. 8.– Female genitalia: *Metalampra italica*, Belgium, Province of West-Vlaanderen, Bredene, 23.vii.2004, leg. L. Janssen, genitalia slide De Prins 3828♀ (Photograph J. De Prins).

## Distribution

*M. italica* was originally described from Italy (Prov. Torino, Asti, Beschi di Valmanero, 130 m, 02.vii.1976, leg. Baldizzone). It also occurs in the provinces of Verona and Trento, all situated in North Italy (Burmam 1988). In Fauna Europaea (Lvovsky 2013) it is still mentioned from that country only, but apparently, this species has spread northwards much earlier but remained unnoticed and unrecognised. This is partly caused by the fact that some *M. italica* specimens are figured in publications under the name of *M. cinnamomea*, e.g. Parenti (2002) depicts 2 specimens of *Metalampra*, one as *M. italica*, the other as *M. cinnamomea*, while they both are *M. italica*. It is as yet unclear whether *M. italica* has been always present in Central Europe, or whether it is a recent addition to the Central European fauna, perhaps caused by global warming. It might even be possible that it replaced *M. cinnamomea* in recent years since almost all specimens checked by Seliger & Schreurs (2013) belong to *M. italica* and only very few specimens turned out to be *M. cinnamomea*.

The oldest record of *M. italica* known in the Netherlands even dates back to 1985; Nederlands-Limburg, Kerkrade, 10.vii.1985, leg. A. Schreurs. *M. italica* is further mentioned from Germany: Baden-Württemberg, first published record by Gaedike 2010, but already known there since 2005 (LepiForum), Nordrhein-Westfalen (oldest known record 2003) and Rheinland-Pfalz (Seliger & Schreurs 2013). The species is furthermore recorded from Croatia, 2007 and Switzerland, 2010 (Seliger & Schreurs 2013).

In France, *M. italica* has been found in the Alpes Maritimes (Pathpiva 2013), and also in Lot.

*M. italica* is also known to occur in Great Britain where it was first found in Devon in 2003. Later on it was also recorded from Bedfordshire, Hampshire, Hertfordshire but not yet from the Isle of Wight (Wall 2013), and it has been recorded from Kent, Oxfordshire, Suffolk, and Surrey as well (various internet sites and forums). *M. cinnamomea* has not been found in Great Britain thus far (Kimber 2013).

## Biology

Not much has been published on the biology of *Metalampra* species. The caterpillar has not yet been described. Like most oecophorid species, the caterpillar of *M. italica* can be found in decaying wood. They prefer *Quercus* and live under loose bark in the neighbourhood of several fungi species like *Trametes gibbosa*, *Trametes versicolor* and *Lenzites betulinus*. They construct a loose, silken web. It is not clear yet whether they feed on the decaying wood, the bark, the fungus, or all together (Bryner on LepiForum). Burmam (1988) and Tokár et al. (2005) mention more precise records from decaying wood of *Quercus rubescens*, *Q. robur* and *Ostrya carpinifolia*. The caterpillars can be found from autumn till early May and again in July. Burmam (1988) found caterpillars near Bozano (Italy) in December 1986 which produced moths in June and August 1987.

Moths are on the wing from late May till early July and in August. It is not completely clear whether there is one long generation per year or two overlapping ones.

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