Occurrences of three Phyllonorycter Hübner species (Lepidoptera, Gracillariidae: Lithocolletinae) for the first time in Iran

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ABSTRACT. Three Phyllonorycter species namely, Ph. coryli (Nicelli, 1851), Ph. millierella (Staudinger, 1871) and Ph. roboris (Zeller, 1839) are newly reported for the fauna of Iran. These species are collected in Azarbaijan-e Sharghi, Tehran and Kordestan provinces, respectively. The first two species were collected as larvae while feeding on Carpinus betulus L. (Betulaceae) and Celtis australis L. (Cannabaceae), in the order, and the last one collected as adult in an Oak forest using light trap. The genus Carpinus L. and C. betulus are newly reported as larval host plant for Ph. coryli. Brief taxonomic characterizations of these species are provided and an updated list of the Phyllonorycter species occurring in Iran is presented.

Key words: Gracillariidae, Phyllonorycter, new record, new host plant, Iran

Introduction

The family Gracillariidae constitutes the main plant mining family of Lepidoptera (Davis, 1987) and includes almost 2000 known species in 100 genera (van Nieukerken et al., 2011; De Prins & De Prins, 2017). The most species-rich genus of this family, Phyllonorycter Hübner, 1822 (syn., Lithocolletis Hübner, 1825) is assigned to the subfamily Lithocolletinae and comprises 401 described species (De Prins & De Prins, 2017). This genus has a worldwide distribution with the greatest diversity in the Palearctic Region (257 species) (De Prins & De Prins, 2017). Most of the Phyllonorycter species are strictly monophagous (Robinson et al., 2001, 2002, 2010; De Prins & De Prins, 2005, 2017) and their larvae feed internally on living plant tissues. The larval instars are devouring the parenchyma cells, making tentiform mines on upper or lower surfaces and undergoing all their pre-imaginal stages including the pupa within a mine (Emmet et al., 1985; Davis & Robinson, 1998). As our knowledge goes, 112 plant genera from 31 different families, 15 orders, and six subclasses have been recorded as food plants of the Phyllonorycter species (Lopez-
Vaamonde et al., 2003; De Prins & De Prins, 2017).

Little is known about the Gracillariidae of Iran and up to 20 species in 10 genera and five subfamilies namely, Acrocercopinae Kawahara & Ohshima, 2016, Gracillariinae Stainton, 1854, Lithocolletinae Stainton, 1854, Parornichinae Kawahara & Ohshima, 2016, and Phyllocnistinae Herrich-Schäffer, 1857 have been reported from Iran so far. The recorded species are belonging to the genera: Acrocercops Wallengren, 1881 (one species), Aspilapteryx Spuler, 1910 (three species), Caloptilia Hübner, 1825 (one species), Calybites Hübner, 1822 (one species), Cupedia Klimesch & Kumata, 1973 (one species), Dialectica Walsingham, 1897 (one species), Parornix Spuler, 1910 (two species), Phyllocnistis Zeller, 1848 (one species), Phyllonorycter Hübner, 1822 (seven species), and Polymitia Triberti, 1986 (two species) (Kimber, 2018; while wingspan of the species was identified as Ph. roboris (Zeller, 1839). These three species are newly reported for the fauna of Iran. Moreover, this is the first record of the genus Carpinus and C. betulus L. as the larval host plant for Ph. coryli. In the present study brief characterizations of these species are provided and an updated list of the Phyllonorycter species occurring in Iran is presented.

Material and methods

The specimens of Ph. coryli and Ph. millierella were collected as larvae in Arasbaran forest (Azarbaijan-e Sharghi province) and National Botanical Garden of Iran (Tehran province) in 2017, respectively, but Ph. roboris collected as adult using light trap in Kordestan province. The larvae were reared in small plastic containers at room temperature. The adults were examined externally using a stereomicroscope with maximum magnification 128×. The species were identified based on their external appearance and their male genitalia structure when necessary. Genitalia dissections were based on those described by Clarke (1941) and Robinson (1976). Photographs were taken using a digital Still camera DSC-F717 and a Dino-Eye Microscope Eye-piece camera. All of the examined specimens are deposited in the Hayk Mirzayans Insect Museum.

Results

The adult examined specimens are briefly characterized as follows:

**Phyllonorycter coryli** (Nicelli, 1851) (Fig. 1A)

**Material examined:** Āzarbāijān-e Sharghi Prov.: 1 ♂ 1 ♀, Kaleybar, Arasbārān forest, N 38° 51′ 44″, E 46° 58′ 40″, 1867 m, 7.IX.2017, Farahāni leg. (GS: HA-2344).

**Diagnosis of the adults:** Wingspan 7.0–9.0 mm (Kimber, 2018); while wingspan of the...
examined male 7.1 mm and that of the female 4.6 mm; antennae slightly shorter than the forewing, each flagellum shining dirty-cream and ochre at distal end which gives it a ringed appearance; ground colour of the forewing brownish-orange, with four and three white hooks at distal half of costal and dorsum margins, respectively which are dark-edged internally, an elongated black spot at apex of the wing, and a white longitudinal line extended from the base to first pair of the hooks; hindwing gray (Fig. 1A).

In the genitalia (Fig. 1H) of examined male uncus elongated and tapering apically; valvae symmetrical, relatively narrow at base and gradually broadened and slightly rounded distally, with a distinct bend medio-ventrally, bearing ventral and subdorsal setae at distal half and an sclerotized elongated large spine at mid-dorsal edge extended to slightly behind the apex of valva; transtilla well developed and sclerotized; vinculum rounded and small; saccus large and rounded; eighth abdominal sternite almost triangular and crenate laterally, with few fine hairs at the apex; phallus very long, slender and straight, without cornuti.

**Biology:** The larva makes a more or less round, white to silvery mine on the upper side of a leaf, over veins (Figs 1B, C) and causes the leaf to fold upwards. There are two generations per year (Kimber, 2018; Pitkin et al., 2017).

**Host plants:** Betulaceae: *Corylus avellana* L., *C. colurna* L., *C. maxima* Mill., *Ostrya carpinifolia* Scop., *Sorbus aria* (L.) Crantz and *Ribes sanguineum* Pursch (De Prins & De Prins, 2017; Pitkin et al., 2017). In this study the larvae were collected on *Carpinus betulus* L. The genus and species of the host plant are newly reported for *Ph. coryli*.

**Distribution:** Widespread in continental Europe. It has also been reported from Near East (De Prins & De Prins, 2017).
Biology: The larvae making tentiform mines at the lower surface of the leaves without visible wrinkles (Fig. 1E) which is visible at the upper surface (Fig. 1F), and pupate within the mines. The species has at least two generations per year (Jurc et al., 2016; Ellis, 2001–2017). Often more than one mine can be found on a single leaf (Csóka, 1995).

Distribution: Switzerland, Spain, Slovenia, Russian Federation (European part), Portugal, Macedonia, Italy, Sicily, Israel, Georgia, France, Corsica, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan (Puplesis et al., 1996; De Prins & De Prins, 2017).

Phyllonorycter roboris (Zeller, 1839) (Fig. 1G)

Material examined: Kordestān Prov.: 1 ♀, Marivān- Chenāreh Rd., 9 km. E. Marivān (Oak forest), N 35° 31’ 51.8″, E 46° 16’ 51.6″, 1371 m, 3.VI.2012, Ālipanāh leg.

Diagnosis of the adults: This species can easily be distinguished from the remaining Phyllonorycter species based on its wing. Wingspan 6–9 mm (Lemurel, 2013–2018), and that of the examined specimen 7.3 mm.

Figure 1. A. Phyllonorycter coryli adult male and its mines on the upper surfaces of the Carpinus betulus leaves (B, C), Azarbaijan-e Sharghi province; D. Ph. millierella adult male, its mines on the lower surfaces of Celtis australis leaves (E), Tehran province, and symptoms at the upper surfaces of them (F); G. Ph. roboris adult female, Kordestan province; H. Male genitalia and phallus in Ph. coryli; I. Male genitalia and phallus in Ph. millierella. The scale bar in the figures of adult specimens indicates 0.5 cm.
inner one-third of the forewing golden-brown with a distinct white dash, middle part white and the outer part golden-brown with three black-edged white hooks at costal area and one black-edged white one at dorsal edge. Apex of the forewing with a black spot, and an extended tail out of the tip (Lemurell, 2013–2018).


**Biology:** The larvae create large tentiform blister mines at the lower surface of the leaves. The lower epidermis seems smooth but has fine length folds (Pitkin et al., 2017; Kimber, 2018). This species has one generation per year (Kimber, 2018).

**Distribution:** Widespread in Europe. Also recorded in Near East (Pitkin et al., 2017).

**Discussion**

For many of the world’s genetic resources, Iran is considered as the centre of origin (Makhdoum, 1990). The Irano-Touranian region is rich in endemic species and the Hyrcanian district is the home of relict species of the Tertiary era. Meanwhile, in the south of Iran, the Saharo-Sindian region, subtropical species thrive (Zohary, 1973, 1981; Frey & Probst, 1986). Poor sampling of *Phyllonorycter* specimens in Iran, which is mostly because of difficult collecting of the mines and rearing of the larvae, cannot adequately represent the true situation of their species in Iran. Considering the species reported from the adjacent countries (unpublished data of Jaroslaw Buszko), and diverse flora and habitats in Iran, it seems that the number of the gracillariid species occurring in Iran be much more than the species reported so far.

Due to their ability to feed within leaves, some lithocolletteine species are well-known pests, such as *Phyllonorycter blancardella* (Fabricius, 1781) on *Malus* spp. (De Prins & Kawahara, 2012) that can also be found in Iran (Modarres Awal, 1997).

According to De Prins & Kawahara (2012), species of most genera of the family Gracillariidae feed only on one or two host families, and only *Cameraria* and *Phyllonorycter* species are known to be true polyphagous ones and feeding on multiple plant families. In most cases, closely related moths feed on closely related host plants, and these usually belong to either the same plant genus or to closely related plant genera belonging to the same family (Lopez-Vaamonde et al., 2003; De Prins & De Prins, 2005). In the present study, *Carpinus betulus* was found as a new larval host plant for *Ph. coryli*. This host species is not reported for *Ph. coryli* so far; however, it belongs to the family Betulaceae which embraces all the presently known host plants of *Ph. coryli*.

Normally up to 70% of the larvae are parasitized by Braconidae, Eulophidae, Ichneumonidae, or Pteromalidae (Fulmek, 1962; Vidal & Buszko, 1990; Davis & Deschka, 2001; Noyes, 2003). The newly reported species in the present study are parasitized by Eulophidae species.

**List of the Phyllonorycter species reported from Iran**

**Ph. blancardella** (Fabricius, 1781)

**Distribution in Iran:** Azarbaijan-e Sharghi, Tehran, Markazi, Lorestan, Hamedan, Esfahan, Chaharmahal va Bakhtiari and Khorasan (unstated provincial division) provinces (Modarres Awal, 1997).

**Ph. coryli** (Nicelli, 1851)

**Distribution in Iran:** Azarbaijan-e Sharghi Prov.: Arasbaran forest.

**Ph. corylifoliella** (Hübner, 1796)

**Distribution in Iran:** Azarbaijan-e Sharghi, Tehran, Markazi, Fars, Esfahan, Khorasan (unstated provincial division) (Modarres
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Ph. iranica Deschka, 1979
Distribution in Iran: Khorasan-e Razavi Prov.: Mashhad (Deschka, 1979).

Ph. maestingella (Müller, 1764)
Distribution in Iran: Northern provinces (Abai, 1984).

Ph. millierella (Staudinger, 1871)
Distribution in Iran: Tehran Prov.: Peykan Shahr.

Ph. platani (Staudinger, 1870)

Ph. populi (Filipjev, 1931)
Distribution in Iran: With general distribution (Modarres Awal, 1997).

Ph. populifoliella (Treitschke, 1833)
Distribution in Iran: With general distribution (Modarres Awal, 1997).

Ph. rajella (Linnaeus, 1758)
Distribution in Iran: Caspian Sea areas (Modarres Awal, 1997).

Ph. roboris (Zeller, 1849)
Distribution in Iran: Kordestan Prov.: Marivan.

Ph. salicicolella (Sircom, 1848)
Distribution in Iran: With general distribution (Modarres Awal, 1997).

Ph. turanica (Gerasimov, 1931)
Distribution in Iran: Tehran, Fars, Esfahan, Chaharmahal va Bakhtiar and Khorasan (unstated provincial division) provinces (Modarres Awal, 1997).

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Conflict of Interests
The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References


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from: http://www.ukflymines.co.uk/Moths
[Accessed December 2nd, 2017]


گزارش وجود سه گونه از جنس Phyllonorycter Hübner برای اولین بار در ایران (Lithocolletinae)

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چکیده: سه گونه از جنس Phyllonorycter به نام Ph. coryli (Goeze, 1783) به عنوان میزبان جدید برای Ph. coryli (Goeze, 1783) به عنوان میزبان جدید برای Ph. coryli (Goeze, 1783) در ایران معرفی می‌شود. همچنین فهرست گونه‌های متعلق به جنس Phyllonorycter Hübner (Lepidoptera, Gracillariidae, Lithocolletinae) در ایران ارائه شده است.

واژگان کلیدی: Phyllonorycter , Gracillariidae, گزارش جدید, میزبان جدید, ایران.