

Autophila rosea (Staudinger, 1888) new for the European fauna (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae)

By

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Autophila rosea (Staudinger, 1888) new for the European fauna (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae). – The occurrence of *Autophila rosea* (Staudinger, 1888) in Europe is reported on the basis of Sicilian records.

During the study of the material collected on the Mt. Etna and surroundings (Sicily) by F. Härtig in 1984–1951 and preserved in the Museo di Zoologia dell'Università di Roma, seven specimens of *Autophila rosea* (Staudinger, 1888) were found.

The species, a typical inhabitant of arid biotopes (Rungs, 1981), was hitherto known from all the North African countries, from Morocco to Egypt (Boursin, 1940). The Sicilian specimens are on an average a little more dusky than the African ones from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia (coll. Mus. Zool. Univ. Roma and coll. Provera). Nevertheless, since one specimen shows the rosy sand colour characteristic of the species and the male genitalia do not show appreciable differences, the recognition of a different subspecies is not justified. *Autophila rosea* is unrecorded from Malta (Sammut, 1984).

All the specimens were collected in the surroundings of Taormina (eastern Sicily, province of Messina), at 200 m a.s.l., during December 1949 and 1950. In eastern and southern Sicily at that altitude the bioclimatic conditions are characteristic of the eumediterranean zone with pseudosteppic traits (UNESCO-FAO, 1969). The capture data agree with the flight period reported for Morocco by Rungs (1981).

The discovery of *A. rosea* in Sicily is biogeographically important because it increases the proportion of African palearctic species which, outside North Africa are known to occur exclusively in this Mediterranean island. However, further investigations are needed in order to ascertain the possible presence of *A. rosea* in other Mediterranean areas of southern Europe (e. g. southern Spain).

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