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ON A NEW OXYCANUS (LEPIDOPTERA HOMONEURA, FAMILY HEPIALIDAE) FROM NEW GUINEA

by

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With three figures and one plate

SUMMARY

A new species *Oxycanus balgooyi* is described from the vicinity of the Research Station at Mt. Wilhelm in the Eastern Highlands of New Guinea. There is a discussion on its presumed relationships with two other members of the genus, one from Western Australia and the other from the Carstensz Peak in Western New Guinea.

***Oxycanus balgooyi* sp. nov.**

(text-fig. 1-3, plate 1)

Male. — Antennae ochreous, slender, of moderate length, pectinate, with whorls of hairs on each segment. Head dark brown, thorax and legs pale brown, abdomen pale salmon pink, probably much brighter when fresh. Forewings pale ochreous brown with greyish brown transverse patches of similar scales, one in middle of wing, a second at $5/6$ ths and a third just before apex; a series of silvery white spots and markings each enclosed in a ring of dark brown scales; in a few such markings the white centres are obsolete; termen with a white centred black mark midway between the veins; fringe scales dark greyish brown; a few ochreous scales near the mid-point between the veins; hind marginal fringe scales very long and hair-like. Hindwing uniformly pale ochreous brown; dark brown fringe scales become pale, larger and hair-like towards hind margin. Forewings below ochreous brown with costal half clothed with darker brown, rather woolly hair; hindwings pale ochreous. Forewing length 25 mm; expanse 57 mm.

Locality. — North East New Guinea: Eastern Highlands, Mt. Wilhelm Research Station, July 1965, leg. M. van Balgooy; male holotype.

The unique type, which is in the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie, Leiden, was sent to me for study by Dr. A. Diakonoff to whom I am

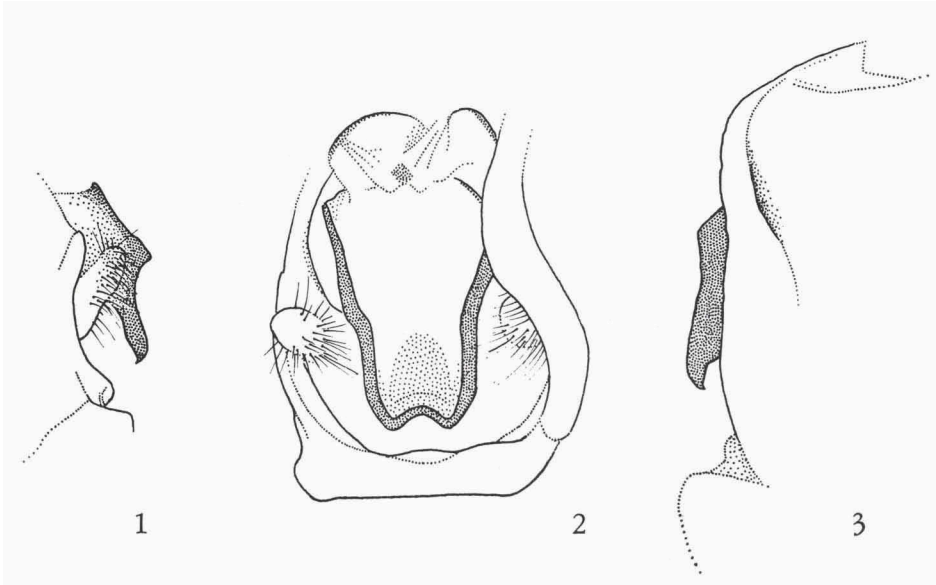


Fig. 1-3. *Oxycanus balgooyi* spec. nov., unmacerated genitalia of male holotype. 1, left lateral aspect; 2, posterior aspect; 3, right lateral aspect.

grateful. At his suggestion I have much pleasure in naming it after the collector, Mr. M. van Balgooy.

It has been possible to examine the male genitalia on the type, in situ, after brushing away some of the terminal hairs. The critical features were made visible and have supplied useful diagnostic characters. The tegumen is unarmed along its margin, hence in my key (Tindale, 1955: 309) it falls into the same bracket as *Oxycanus fuliginosa* (Rothschild) from Utakwa River, Carstensz Peak, New Guinea. Unlike that species the tegumen when viewed from a lateral direction does not present an even convex outline, but is markedly angled at about its middle.

These two evidently stand a little apart from other New Guinea species of the genus. I have already (1955: 311) compared its companion species *O. fuliginosa* with the related *O. perditus* Tindale, found in Western Australia. The new species confirms my opinion that all three are relatively old forms preserving features of an early phase of differentiation within the *Oxycanus* stock.

The *Oxycanus*-fauna of New Guinea must be extensive since few of the twenty-four now known have been taken on more than one occasion and in

only very few species are both sexes known. The brief emergence period and their presence, usually only in virgin forests and in mountainous areas, suggest they will always be rare in collections.

REFERENCE

- TINDALE, N. B., 1955. Revision of the Ghost Moths (Lepidoptera Homoneura, family Hepialidae) Part VI. — Rec. South Australian Museum, Adelaide **11** (4): 307-344.



Oxycaeus balgooyi spec. nov., male holotype.