



SHILAP Revista de Lepidopterología

ISSN: 0300-5267

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Sociedad Hispano-Luso-Americana de  
Lepidopterología  
España

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SHILAP Revista de Lepidopterología, vol. 42, núm. 167, julio-septiembre, 2014, pp. 385-398

Sociedad Hispano-Luso-Americana de Lepidopterología

Madrid, España

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# Revision of European Elachistidae. The genus *Stephensia* Stainton, 1858 (Lepidoptera: Elachistidae)

U. Parenti (†) & F. Pizzolato

## Abstract

Five species of the genus *Stephensia* Stainton, 1858, are present in Europe. The biology of these taxa is, altogether, well-known. The hostplants and the parasites are reported. The male and female genitalia are illustrated. The currently ascertained distribution is given. The synonymy is established between *Stephensia staudingeri* Nielsen & Traugott-Olsen, 1981 and *Stephensia brunnichella* (Linnaeus, 1767).

KEY WORDS: Lepidoptera, Elachistidae, *Stephensia*, biology, genitalia, distribution, Europe.

## Revisión de los Elachistidae europeos. El género *Stephensia* Stainton, 1858 (Lepidoptera: Elachistidae)

## Resumen

Están presentes en Europa cinco especies del género *Stephensia* Stainton, 1858. La biología de estos taxos, es bien conocida en conjunto. Se presentan las plantas nutricias y los parásitos. Se ilustran las genitalias de los machos y de las hembras. Se da la distribución actualmente conocida. Se establece la sinonimia entre *Stephensia staudingeri* Nielsen & Traugott-Olsen, 1981 y *Stephensia brunnichella* (Linnaeus, 1767).

PALABRAS CLAVE: Lepidoptera, Elachistidae, *Stephensia*, biología, genitalia, distribución, Europa.

## Revisione di Elachistidae europeo. Il genere *Stephensia* Stainton, 1858 (Lepidoptera: Elachistidae)

## Riassunto

Cinque specie del genere *Stephensia* Stainton, 1858, sono presenti in Europa. La biologia di questi taxa è, nel complesso, ben conosciuta. Sono riportate le piante ospiti e i parassiti. Sono illustrati i genitali maschili e femminili. E' segnalata la distribuzione attualmente accertata. Viene stabilita la sinonimia di *Stephensia staudingeri* Nielsen & Traugott-Olsen, 1981 con *Stephensia brunnichella* (Linnaeus, 1767).

PAROLE CHIAVE: Lepidoptera, Elachistidae, *Stephensia*, biologie, genitali, distribuzione, Europa.

## Introduction

The genus *Stephensia* Stainton, 1858, has a Holarctic diffusion (KAILA, 1999). Of the five species present in Europe only one, *Stephensia brunnichella*, is recorded for Italy. Larvae are leaf-miners of Labiaceae and Boraginaceae.

## Material and methods

Larvae and genitalia were treated with the same protocols described in two previous papers (PARENTI, 2008, 2010). Concerning female genitalia, a particular attention was paid to put the spermatheca in evidence.

## Results

The genus *Stephensia* Stainton, 1858, *Trans. ent. Soc. Lond.* (N. S.), **4**: 269

Type species: *Phalaena (Tinea) brunnichella* Linnaeus, 1767, *Syst. Nat.* (ed. 12), **1**(2): 898

*Stephensia* Stainton, 1858

*Kumia* Falkovich, 1986

*Austriana* Traugott-Olsen, 1995

*Canariana* Traugott-Olsen, 1995

*Holstia* Traugott-Olsen, 1995

*Giblatariensis* Traugott-Olsen, 1996

*Kearfottia* Traugott-Olsen, 1996

Diagnosis: The wingspan of adults ranges from 6 to 12 mm. The colour ranges from brown, more or less dark and with white marks, as in *S. abbreviatella*, *S. calpella* and *S. cedronellae*, to bronzy brown with four golden marks in *S. brunnichella*, to silvery white with sparse brown scales in *S. unipunctella*.

Male genitalia: Uncus lobes more or less developed, rounded apically, or cone-shaped. Gnathos oval, very developed, rounded only in *S. calpella*. The valva, short and stocky as in *calpella* or longer and thinner as in *S. unipunctella*, tapers distally and ends with a point or a small thorn-shaped process. Digitate process absent. Juxta lobes conical or rectangular, distally rounded. Aedeagus basally bilobate, without cornuti.

Female genitalia: Papillae anales elongate. Sternite VIII with a pair of processes on the anterior margin, not evident in *S. calpella*. Antrum funnel- or cupwise. Colliculum generally well sclerotized. Bursa bilobate in *S. brunnichella*. Signum as an elongate dentate plate or rounded with few teeth.

The analysis of the spermathecae pointed highlighted three significantly different models. The first, a thin sclerotized spiral (Fig. 1f), seems exclusive to *S. abbreviatella*; the second, a stocky C-shaped structure, with a long spiralized fecondation duct (Fig. 1e), was observed in *S. calpella* and *S. brunnichella*; the third, a poorly sclerotized cone (Fig. 1d), is present in *S. unipunctella*. These different spermathecae seem to indicate separated evolutionary routes, although within the morphological uniformity of the genital structure of both sexes.

Biology: *Stephensia brunnichella* was reared in the laboratory on *Satureja vulgaris*. The eggs are elongate and have strong longitudinal ridges. The larva starts boring a thin mine that then evolves into a blotch. The mature larva is greenish white. Pupation takes place in a fold of the leaf inside a dense silk cocoon. In the pupa the spiracles open at the end of very small cones. The mesonote is without ornamentations, and in the abdomen the two grooves between the IV-Vth and V-VIth segments are missing, while they are generally present in pupae of Elachistidae; the cremaster is missing too. The larvae of European *Stephensia* feed as leaf-miners on the dicotyledonous families Labiaceae and Boraginaceae (Fig. 2).

### Check-list of European *Stephensia* Stainton, 1858

*Stephensia abbreviatella* (Stainton, 1851)

*Stephensia brunnichella* (Linnaeus, 1767)

*Stephensia calpella* (Walsingham, 1908)

*Stephensia cedronellae* (Walsingham, 1908)

*Stephensia unipunctella* Nielsen & Traugott-Olsen, 1978

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*Stephensia abbreviatella* (Stainton, 1851)

*Elachista abbreviatella* Stainton, 1851: 26

*Elachista maxima* Höfner, 1897: 179

*Scirtopoda myosotivora* Müller-Rutz, 1937: 165

Diagnosis: Wingspan, 10-12 mm. Male (Fig. 14), forewing ground colour varying from light brown to dark greyish brown, with three small whitish marks. Female (Fig. 15), on the dark grey-brown ground of the forewing there are three white marks: a slightly oblique fascia before the middle and the triangular costal and tornal spots.

Male genitalia (Fig. 4): Uncus elongate, posterior margin very slightly emarginated. Gnathos elongate and slender. The valva tapers distally and ends with a short, upturned blunt tip. On the valva there is a thin fascia that from the base develops parallel to the costa and bears one or two papillae. Each papilla has a robust seta. Juxta lobes long, rounded apically. Aedeagus S-shaped.

Female genitalia (Fig. 9): Antrum wide, cupwise. The very short colliculum is followed by a long and poorly spiralized ductus that widens at the entrance of the bursa, which is round and with a showy and dentate signum.

Biology: Described by KLIMESCH (1939) (sub *Scirtopoda myosotivora*). Hosplant. Braconidae: *Myosotis sylvatica*

Distribution: Austria, Czech Republic (LIŠKA, 1998), Germany (KOLBECK & PRÖSE, 1997), Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Turkey.

*Stephensia brunnichella* (Linnaeus, 1767)

*Phalaena (Tinea) brunnichella* Linnaeus, 1767: 898

*Microsetia stephensella* Douglas, 1848: 21

*Stephensia staudingeri* Nielsen & Traugott-Olsen, 1981: 245, **syn. n.**

Diagnosis: Wingspan, 8-9 mm. Male (Fig. 16) and female (Fig. 17): Antenna blackish, except for some white segments beyond the middle. Forewing ground colour bronzy brown with bluish shine and four golden marks: one costal fascia, one fascia at about mid wing, and the long and subtriangular costal and tornal spots.

Male genitalia (Fig. 5): Uncus lobes triangular divided by a wide U-shaped incision. Gnathos long and thin. The valva tapers in the distal part and ends with a short hook directed dorsally. Juxta lobes rectangular with the apex rounded. Aedeagus sinuous, with a short and thin spine at the apex.

Female genitalia (Fig. 10): Antrum wide, funnel-shaped, followed by a short colliculum and the very long and spiralized ductus bursae. Bursa bilobate, with granular microsclerotizations and a long dentate signum.

Biology: Described by STEUER (1987) and SRUOGA & DISKUS (2001). Sclerotized plates of the larva (Fig. 1a, b, c). Parasitoid. Hymenoptera, Ichneumonidae; *Mevesia arguta* (Wesmael, 1845). Braconidae: *Apanteles arisba* Nixon, 1973 (PARENTI *et al.*, 1995). Hostplants. Labiatae. *Calamintha officinalis* (Moench), *Clinopodium vulgare* L. (BARAN, 2005), *Satureja vulgaris* (L.) Fritsch.

Distribution: Widely distributed in Europe.

*Stephensia calpella* (Walsingham, 1908)

*Perittia calpella* Walsingham, 1908b: 54

*Perittia bullatella* Chrétien, 1915: 360

Diagnosis: Wingspan 8-10 mm. Male (Fig. 3a): forewing ground colour greyish brown, with three white marks, one fascia at one third of the wing and the subtriangular costal and tornal spots. Cilia line

blackish. Cilia beige, darkest at apex and tornus, white from apex to middle of termen. Female (Fig. 3b): forewing pale cream from base to fascia.

Male genitalia (Fig. 6): Uncus lobes short and triangular, divided by a wide U cut. Gnathos stocky, oval. The valva tapers in the distal part and ends with a short cone. Juxta lobes long, thin, distally rounded. The aedeagus, as long as the valva, ends with a thin bifid spine.

Female genitalia (Fig. 11): Papillae anales long and wholly run with thin longitudinal crests. Antrum funnel-shaped. Colliculum not evident. Ductus bursae with longitudinal crests on the stretch before the bursa. Bursa reniform, with a swarm of small teeth in the central part; signum like a small plate, with a few small teeth.

Biology: Described by CHRÉTIEN (1915) and HERING (1935). The larva, pale greenish, bores the leaves of *Ballota irsuta* where it makes blotch-mines. Pupation takes place on the ground in a dense ovoid silk cocoon mixed with debris.

Distribution: Only known from Algeria, Gibraltar and Spain.

*Stephensia cedronellae* (Walsingham, 1908)

*Perittia cedronellae* Walsingham, 1908a: 970

*Perittia lavandulae* Walsingham, 1908a: 971

*Perittia bistropogonis* Walsingham, 1908a: 972

Diagnosis: Wingspan, 6-8 mm. Male (Fig. 18) and female, forewing ground colour dark grey-brown with yellowish white marks, an oblique fascia from one-third of the costa; one tornal triangular spot; near the apex an elongate spot; cilia line dark brown.

Male genitalia (Fig. 7): Uncus lobes poorly accentuated and rounded. Gnathos oval elongated. Valva distally produced into a short upturned point. Juxta lobes wide, triangular. Aedeagus sinuous, as long as the valva.

Female genitalia (Fig. 12): Papillae anales wide and rounded. Antrum funnel-shaped; the colliculum, well sclerotized, is about 1/4 of the ductus bursae in length. In the bursa, small and rounded, the signum is a tiny plate with only a large tooth and some sparse small teeth.

Biology: Described by KLIMESCH (1990). The larva bores the leaves of Labiatae *Bistropogon organifolius*, *B. plumosus*, *Calamintha* sp., *Cedronella canariensis*, *Lavandula multifida* subsp. *canariensis*, *L. stoecha*, *Micrometria* sp.

Distribution: Only known from Spain: Canary Islands.

*Stephensia unipunctella* Nielsen & Traugott-Olsen, 1978

*Stephensia unipunctella* Nielsen & Traugott-Olsen, 1978: 194

Diagnosis: Wingspan, 7-8 mm. Male and female (Fig. 19): on the silvery white ground of the forewing there are sparse brown scales. At the middle of the wing, a distinct dark brown dot.

Male genitalia (Fig. 8): Lobes of the uncus short, stocky, rounded apically. Valva tapering into a short blunt tip. Juxta lobes triangular. Aedeagus sinuous, tapering towards the distal end.

Female genitalia (Fig. 13): Papillae anales wide and suboval. Antrum funnel-shaped with a very wide mouth. Bursa large, rounded; the signum is a plate with a robust tooth often accompanied by one or more small teeth.

Biology: Unknown.

Distribution: Spain: Andalusia (Sierra de Cazorla) and Catalonia (south of Barcelona).

## Discussion

The five species present in Europe of the genus *Stephensia* are here described. The synonymy of *Stephensia staudingeri* Nielsen & Traugott-Olsen, 1981, with *Stephensia brunnichella* (Linnaeus, 1767) is established. The biology of the species here described, except for *S. unipunctella*, is well-known. The hostplants are Labiatae and Boraginaceae. *S. brunnichella* was reared in the laboratory on *Satureja vulgaris*. In the larva, of a greenish white colour, the two tergal plates of the prothorax are each

L-shaped, with the horizontal branch very wide. The sternal plate is formed by two thin club-shaped structures. The anal plate is a large irregular shield. The larva pupates in a fold of the leaf, protected by a dense silk cocoon. In the pupa, without ornamentations, the grooves between the IV-Vth and V-VIth abdominal segments and the cremaster are missing; the spiracles open at the end of very small cones.

### Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Axel Hausmann and Andreas Seegerer (Bavarian State Collection of Zoology in München, Germany), Carlo Morandini (Udine, Italy), Luca Picciau (Torino, Italy) and Kevin. R. Tuck (The Natural History Museum, London) for sending me the material.

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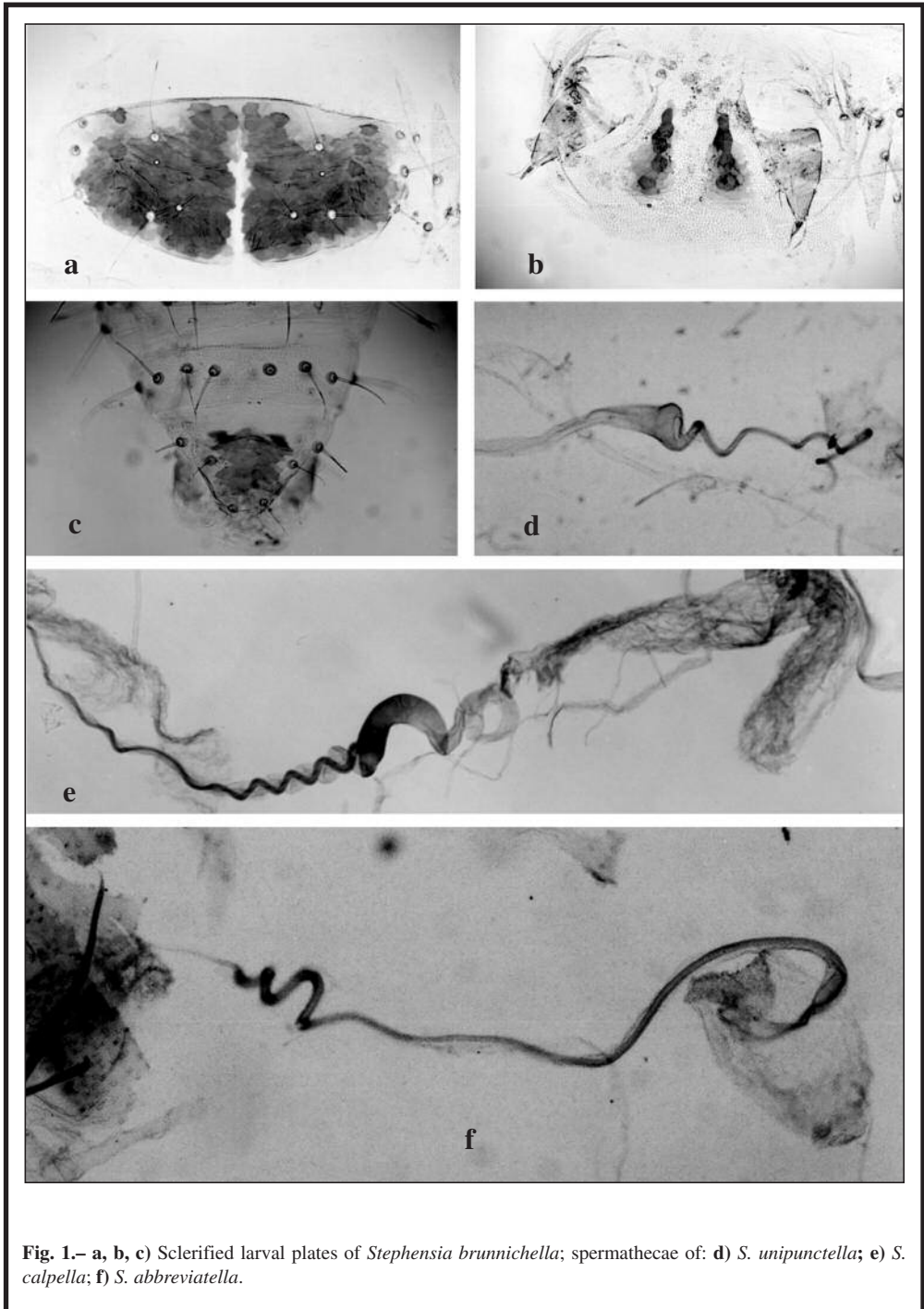
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(Recibido para publicación / *Received for publication* 26-V-2014)

(Revisado y aceptado / *Revised and accepted* 7-VII-2014)

(Publicado / *Published* 30-IX-2014)





**Fig. 1.**– a, b, c) Sclerified larval plates of *Stepheisia brunnichella*; spermathecae of: d) *S. unipunctella*; e) *S. calpella*; f) *S. abbreviatella*.



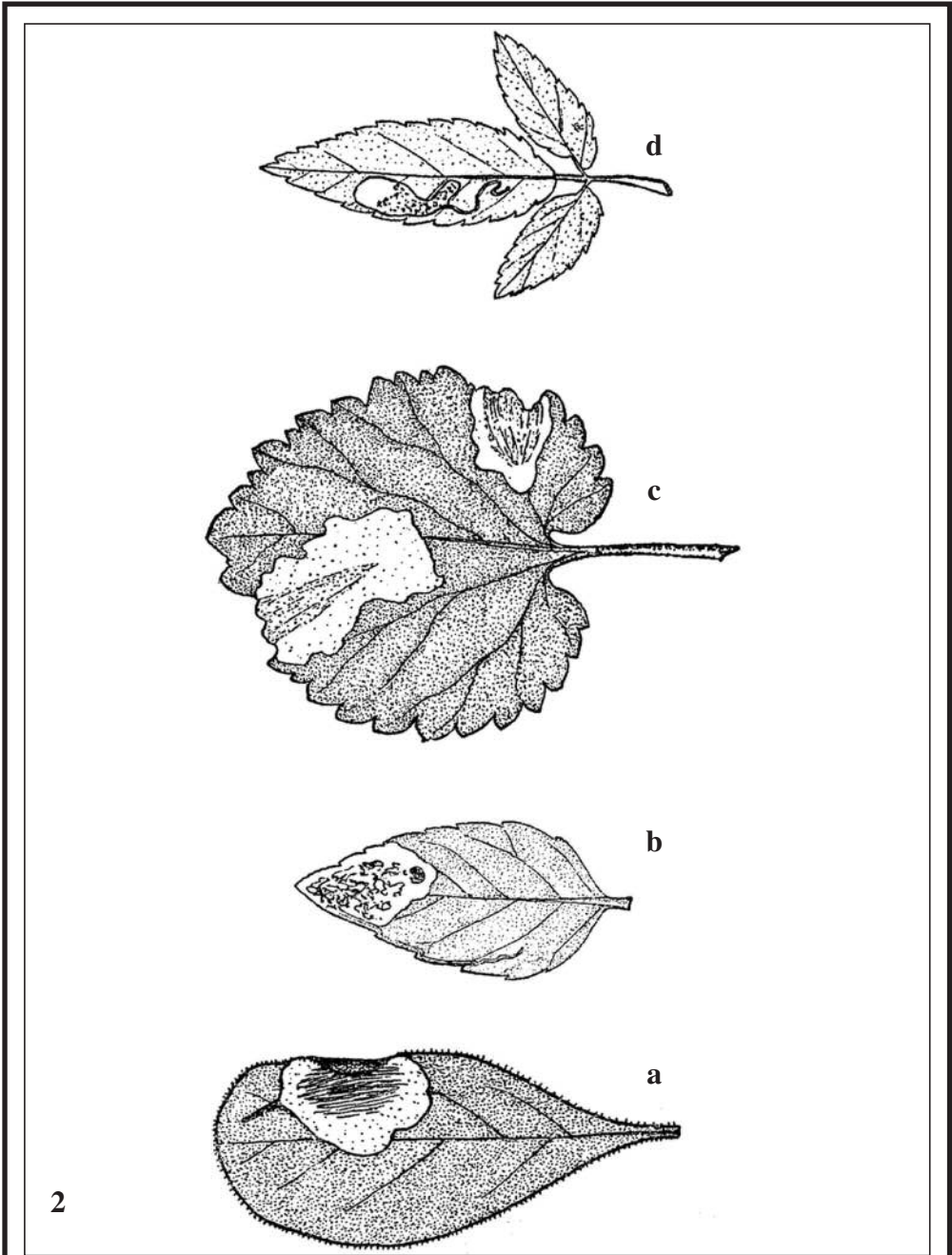
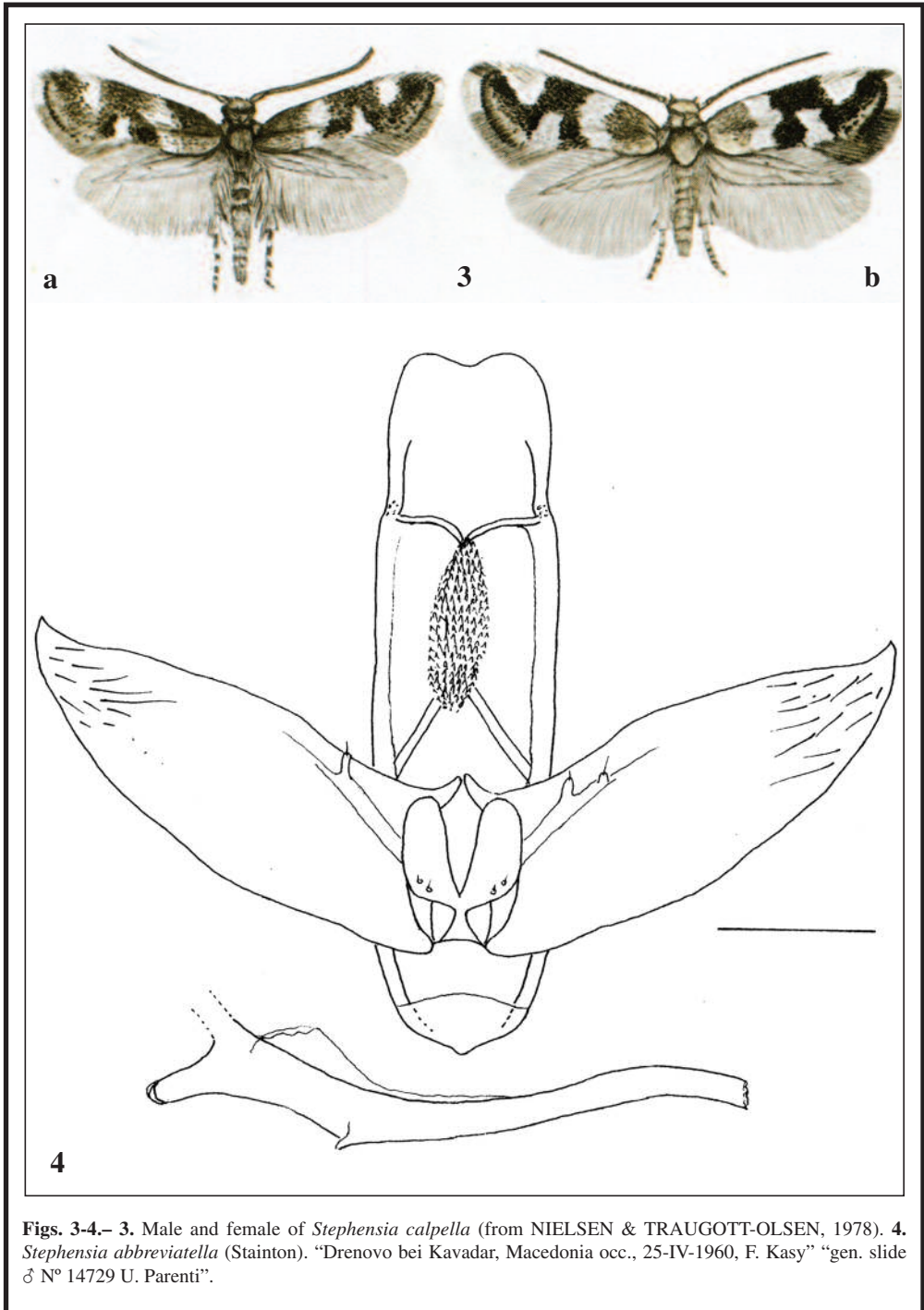
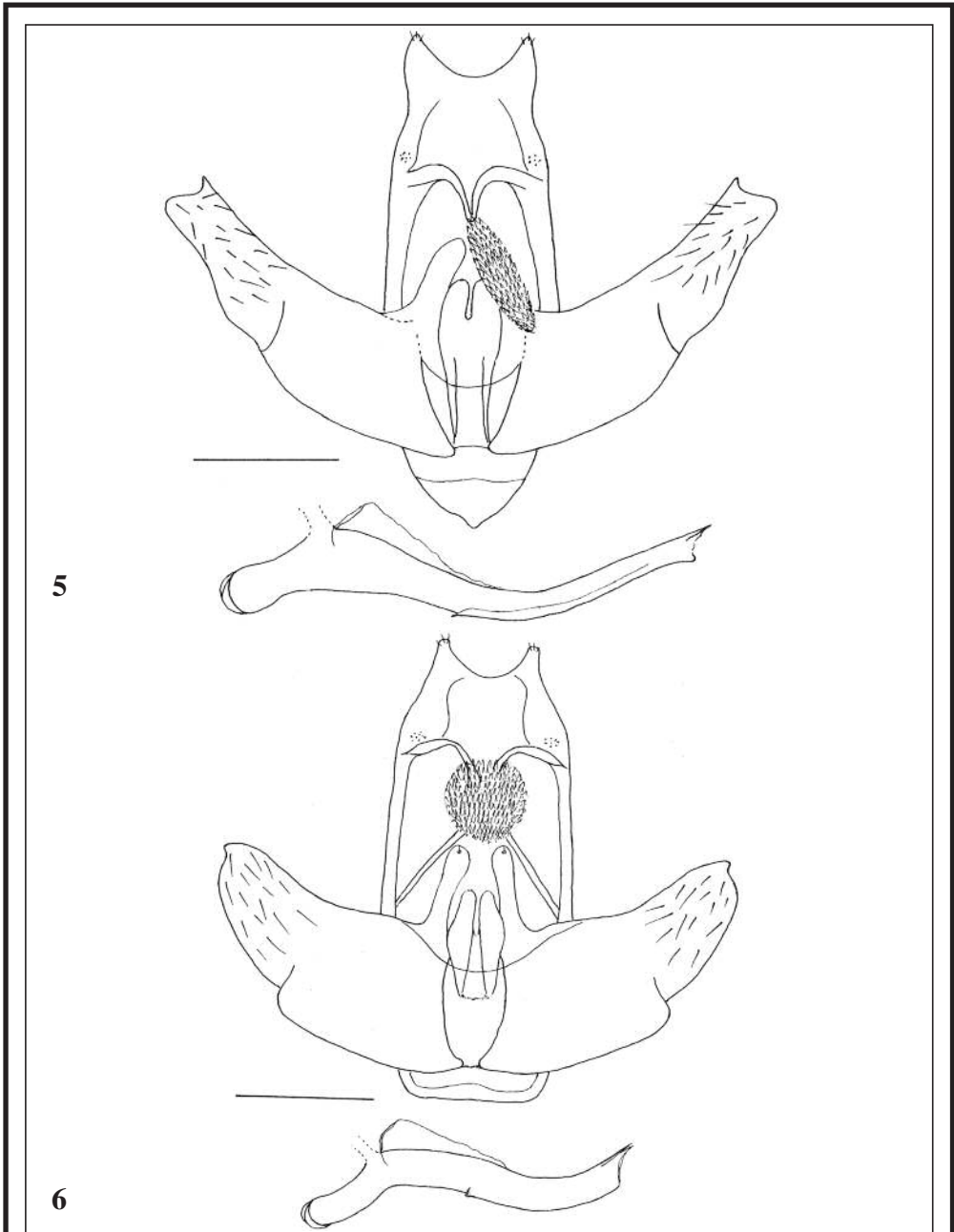


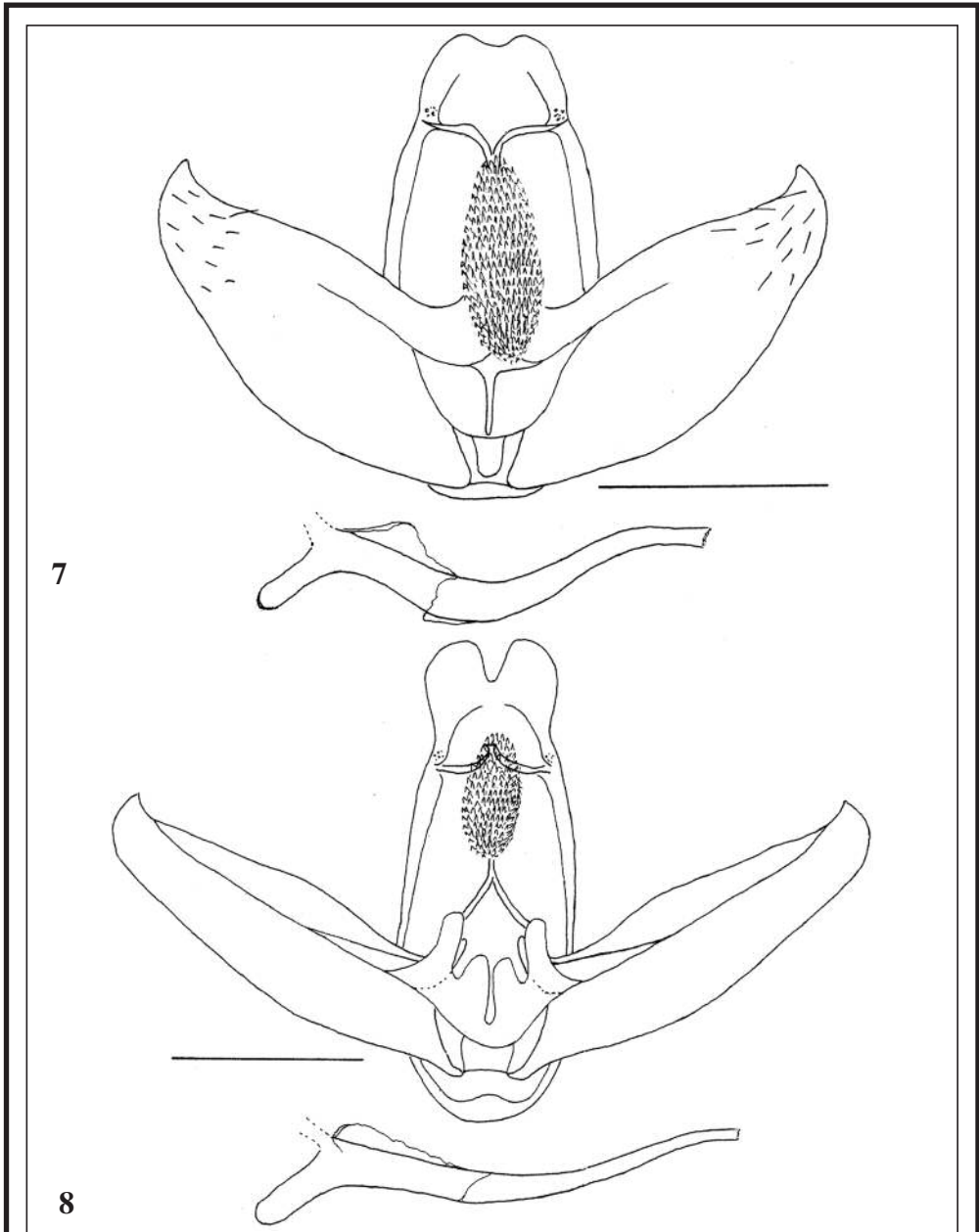
Fig. 2.- Mine of *Stephensia*: a) *S. abbreviatella*; b) *S. calpella*; c) *S. cedronellae*; d) *S. brunnicella*. (From HERING, 1957).



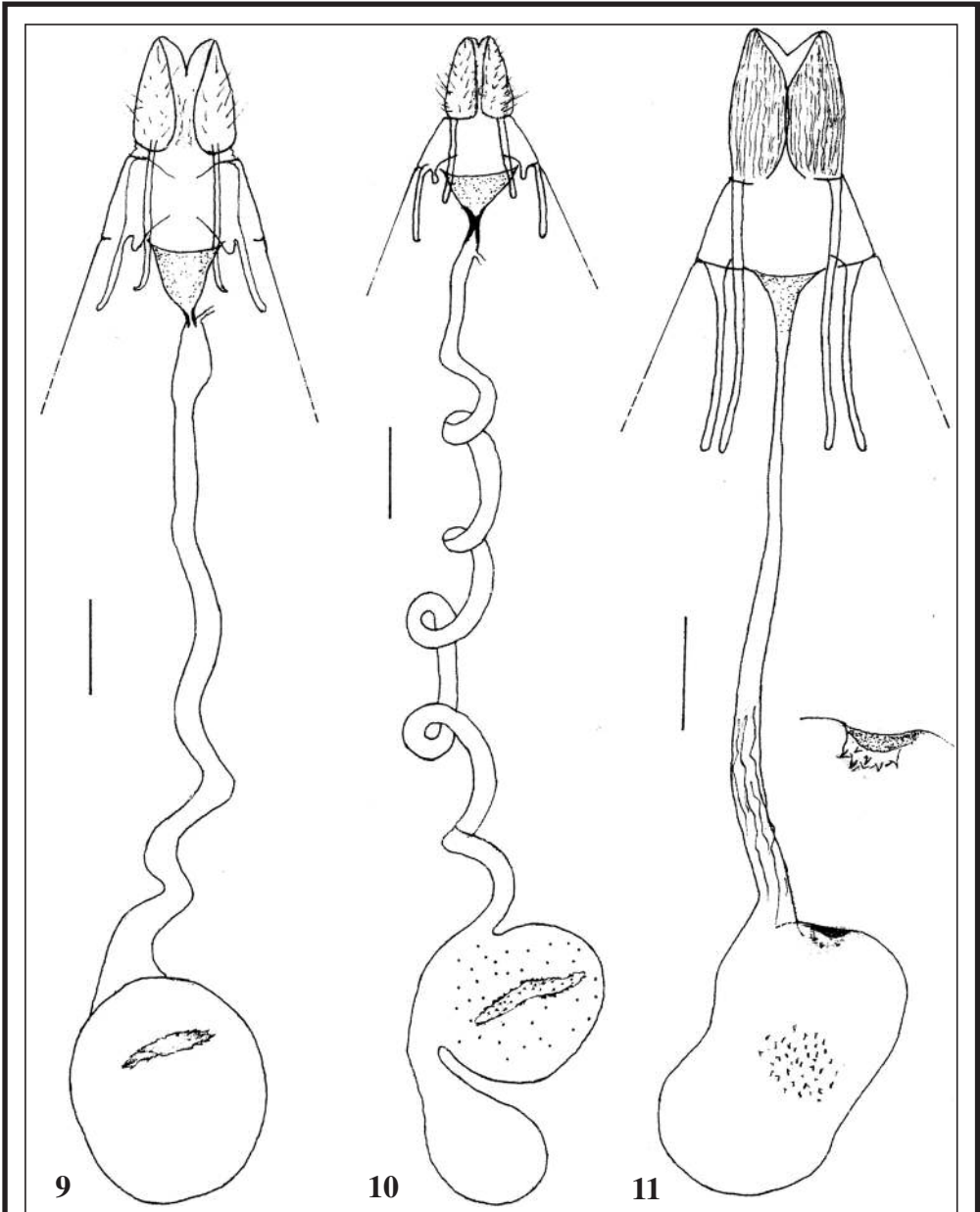
**Figs. 3-4.**— 3. Male and female of *Stephensia calpella* (from NIELSEN & TRAUGOTT-OLSEN, 1978). 4. *Stephensia abbreviatella* (Stainton). “Drenovo bei Kavadar, Macedonia occ., 25-IV-1960, F. Kasy” “gen. slide ♂ N° 14729 U. Parenti”.



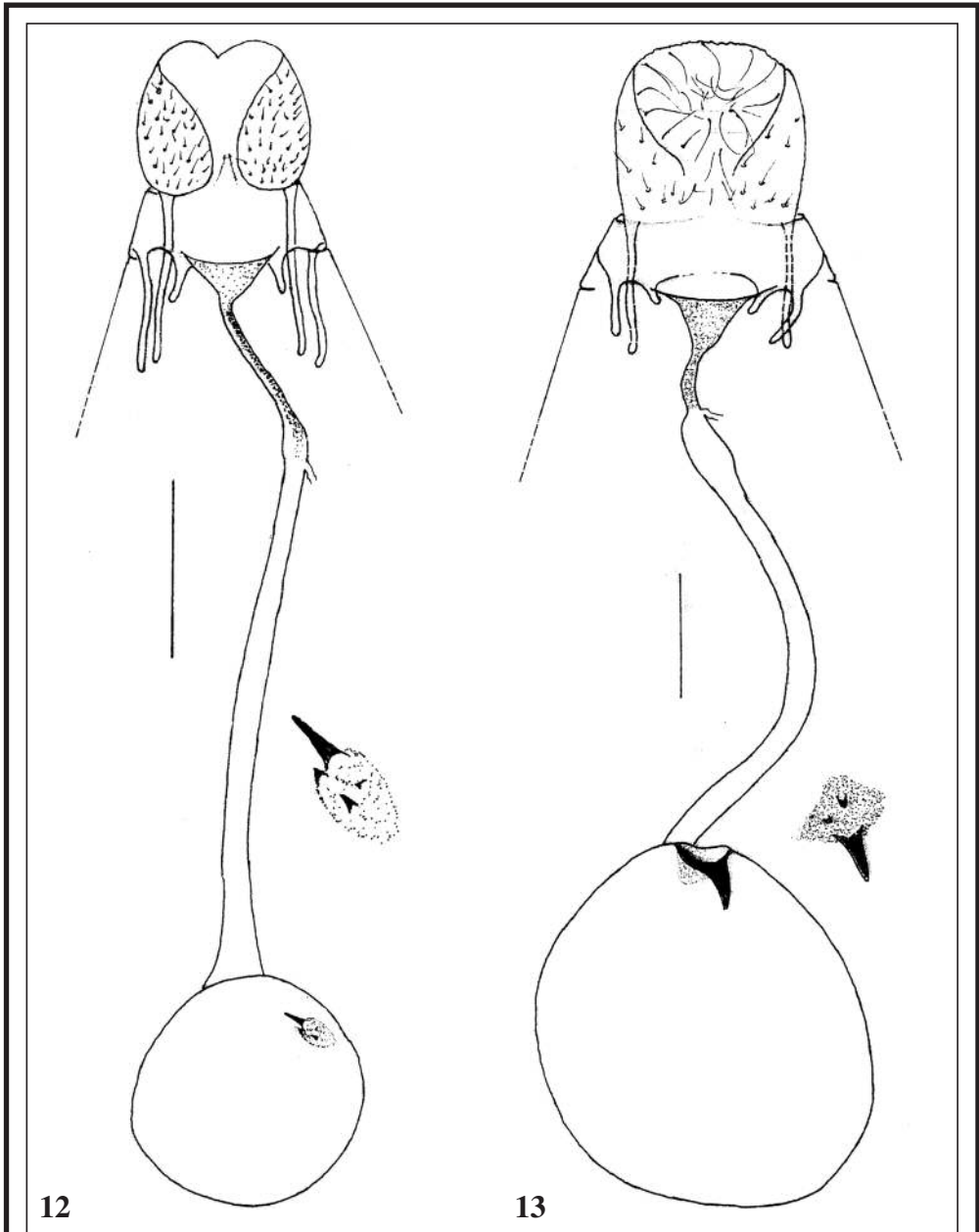
**Figs. 5-6.**—5. *Stephensia brunnichella* (Linnaeus). “Italia - Piemonte, Dintorni di Giaglione (Torino), m 1050, 2-VI-1989 leg. U. Parenti” “gen. slide ♂ N° 13833 U. Parenti”. 6. *Stephensia calpella* (Walsingham). “Costantine Algeria 6-V-1904 *Salvia?* Ex 4-XI. Wlsm” “Walsingham Collection B.M. 1910-427” “gen. slide ♂ N° 15381 U. Parenti”.



**Figs. 7-8.**— 7. *Stephensia cedronellae* (Walsingham). “Palma El Paso” “Mine an *Bystropogon plumosum*” “Canar. Ins. 22/4.26. N° 283 ♂ O. & M. Hering” “gen. slide ♂ N° 14623 U. Parenti”. 8. *Stephensia unipunctella* Nielsen & Traugott-Olsen. “Hoyos de Muñoz, S[ierra de] Cazorra, 24-29-IX-1991, J. L. Yela” “gen. slide ♂ N° 14675 U. Parenti”.

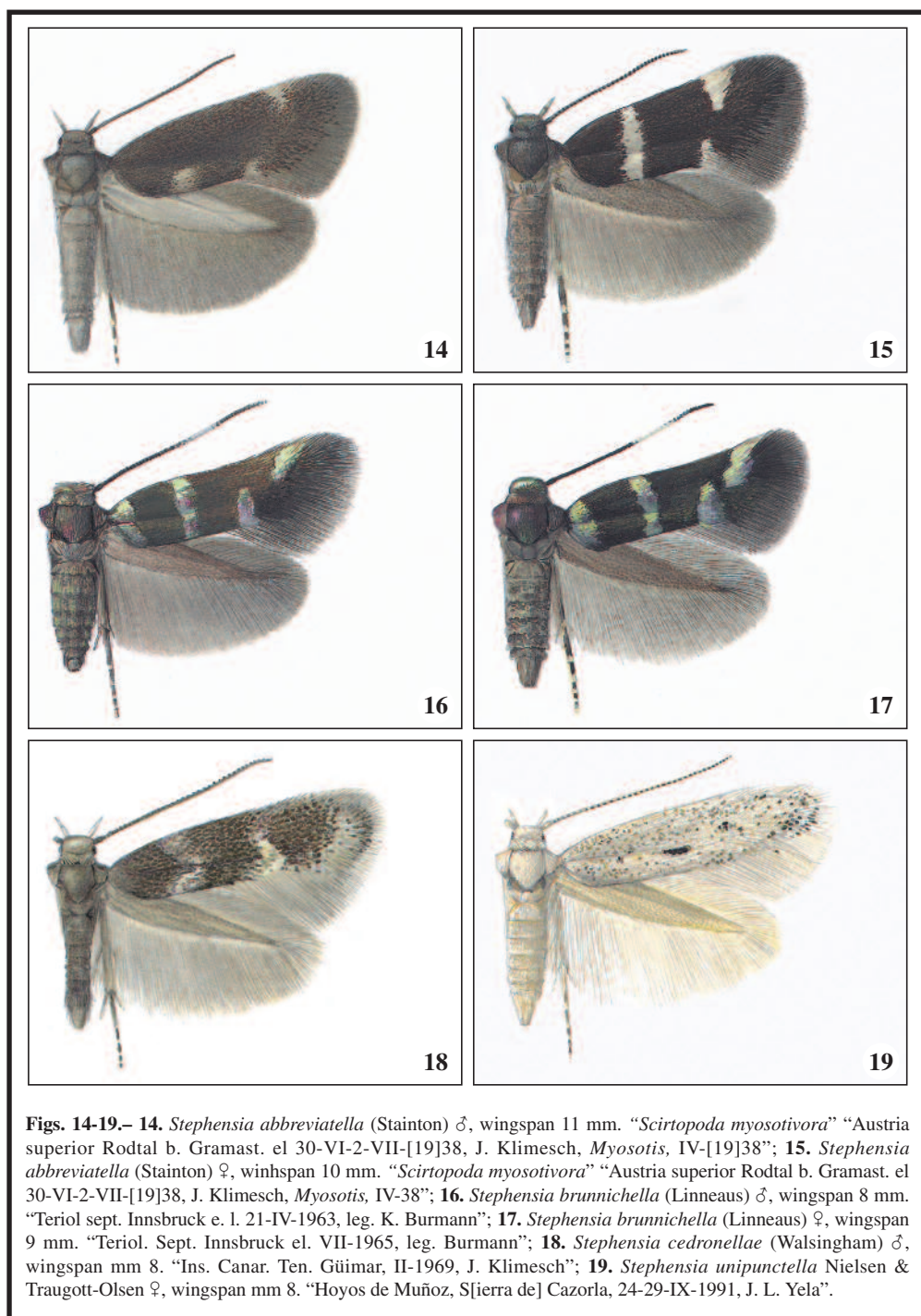


**Figs. 9-11.**— **9.** *Stephensia abbreviatella* (Stainton). “Austria superior Rodtal b. Gramast. el 22-VII-1935, J. Klimesch” “gen. slide ♀ N° 14730 U. Parenti”; **10.** *Stephensia brunnichella* (Linnaeus). “Teriol sept., Insbruck e.l., 22-IV-1963, leg. K. Burmann” “gen. slide ♀ N° 15402 U. Parenti”. **11.** *Stephensia calpella* (Walsingham). “Costantine, Algeria, 6-V-1904, *Salvia*? 6-V-1904 ex 4-XI Wlsm” “Walsingham Collection, B.M. 1910-427” “gen. slide ♀ N° 15656 U. Parenti”



**Figs. 12-13.**— 12. *Stephensia cedronellae* (Walsingham). “Ins. Canar., Gomera, El Cedro e. l. *Bystropogon organifolium*, 23-XII-1966, J. Klimesch” “gen slide ♀ N° 14626 U. Parenti”. 13. *Stephensia unipunctella* (Nielsen & Traugott-Olsen). “Hoyos de Muñoz, S[ierra de] Cazorla, 19-IX1991, J. L.Yela” “gen. slide ♀ N° 12071 U. Parenti”.





**Figs. 14-19.**— **14.** *Stephensia abbreviatella* (Stainton) ♂, wingspan 11 mm. “*Scirtopoda myosotivora*” “Austria superior Rodtal b. Gramast. el 30-VI-2-VII-[19]38, J. Klimesch, *Myosotis*, IV-[19]38”; **15.** *Stephensia abbreviatella* (Stainton) ♀, wingspan 10 mm. “*Scirtopoda myosotivora*” “Austria superior Rodtal b. Gramast. el 30-VI-2-VII-[19]38, J. Klimesch, *Myosotis*, IV-38”; **16.** *Stephensia brunnichella* (Linnaeus) ♂, wingspan 8 mm. “Teriol sept. Innsbruck e. l. 21-IV-1963, leg. K. Burmann”; **17.** *Stephensia brunnichella* (Linnaeus) ♀, wingspan 9 mm. “Teriol. Sept. Innsbruck el. VII-1965, leg. Burmann”; **18.** *Stephensia cedronellae* (Walsingham) ♂, wingspan mm 8. “Ins. Canar. Ten. Güimar, II-1969, J. Klimesch”; **19.** *Stephensia unipunctella* Nielsen & Traugott-Olsen ♀, wingspan mm 8. “Hoyos de Muñoz, S[ Sierra de] Cazorra, 24-29-IX-1991, J. L. Yela”.