

## Sloperia proto O. on the Italian Continent (Lepidoptera, HesperIIDae)

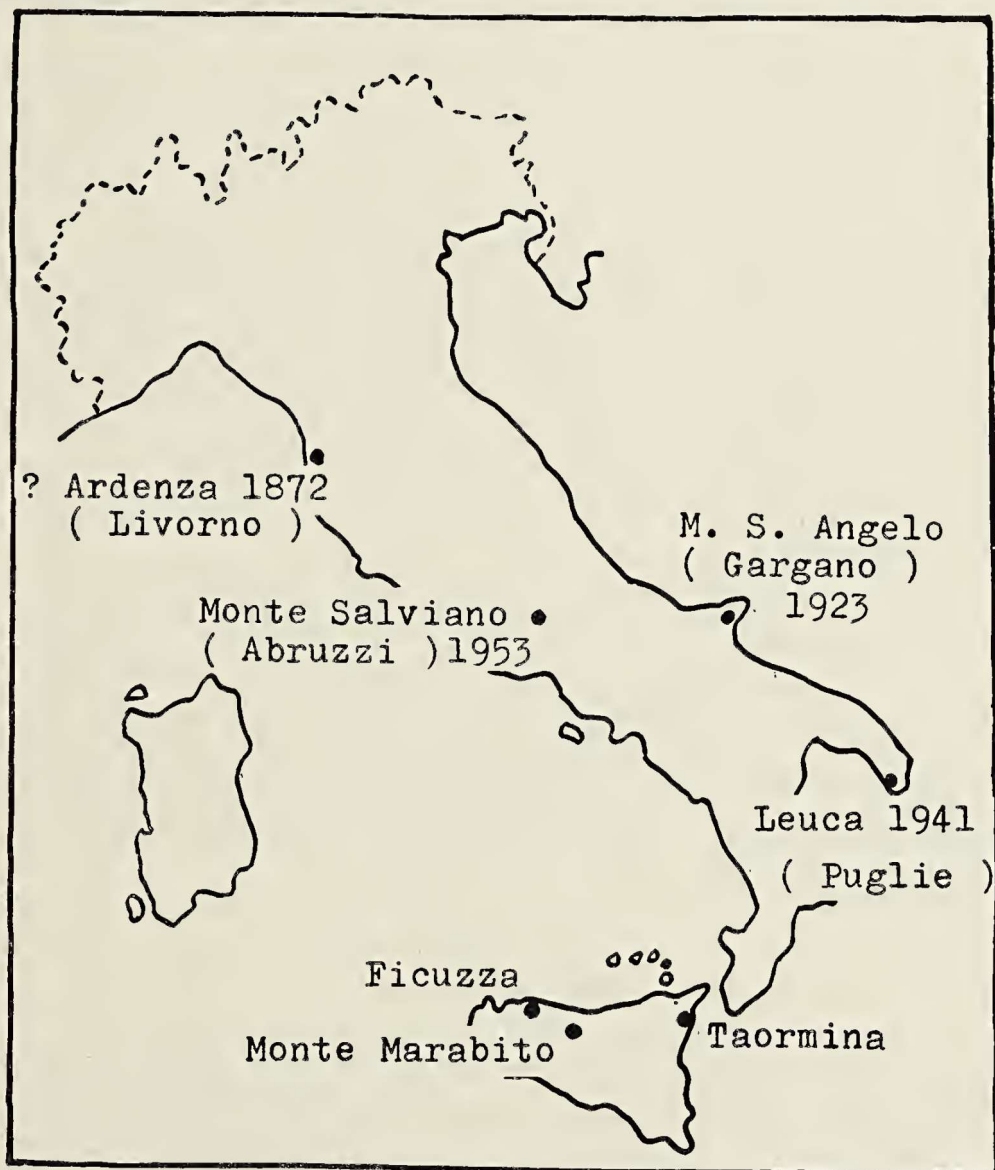
by

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*Sloperia proto* D. has a quite remarkable distribution. It has been found in rather a large number of localities in Spain and France, in the latter country, however, exclusively in the southern districts. Then it is known from Greece (British Museum coll.), Ragusa (Dalmatian coast) and south-eastern Russia (Sarepta).

In Spain and France this species is not very rare in the localities, where it occurs. It prefers dry and sunny places. The larvae live on *Phlomis* species.

Remarkably enough *Sloperia proto* O. is one of the rarest butterflies of the Italian fauna.



Distribution of *Sloperia proto* O. in Italy.

VERITY in his monumental work, *Le farfalle diurne d'Italia*, Vol. 1, p. 84 (1940) gives the following account of the distribution in Italy:

"CURÒ had it included into the Italian butterflies on account of a statement made by MANN in *Verb. Ges. Wien*, 23, p. 120 (1873) who should have found the species in Ardenza (neighbourhood of Leghorn) by the middle of June 1872,



but it has never been found again in this locality in spite of the various investigations by many entomologists, including myself, during three quarters of a century. So one may consider this statement as one of the many mistakes, made by this active, but little precise collector. From a statement, made by STRUVE and published by RAGUSA in *Naturalista Siciliano*, p. 491 (1884) larvae of this species have been reared, collected on a *Salvia*-species from Monte Venero (neighbourhood of Taormina), which delivered the butterflies at the end of July; this may be exact, since RAGUSA says to possess specimens taken by KRÜGER on the Ficuzza (Palermo) in August, and WARREN mentions Taormina, according to CHAPMAN. To these data we may now add another very interesting one, because I have found a male specimen among the butterflies collected by Confalonieri, July 1923 at Monte S. Angelo (Gargano); these butterflies were given to Rocci, whose collection now forms a part of my own collection. The exactness of this locality seems more valuable, since *Sloperia proto* is very well known from Dalmatia and more precisely from Ragusa on the other side of the Adriatic opposite Gargano".

In the supplement to the first volume of this work, published in 1953, VERITY mentions the species again, collected by CASTELLANI at Leuca (Puglie), 7.VIII.1941. Records of the species in Sicily have been published by SCHWINGENSCHUSS in *Zeitschr. Wien. Ent. Ver.* 27: 182 (1942) from the Marabito Mountains.

Now I have collected three males on Monte Salviano at 900 m, July 2d 1953. This locality is situated on the eastern mountain-range of the Valle del Liri (Prov. of Aquila); it is a dry, sunbaked mountainslope with a dwarf vegetation of herbs, among which *Phlomis* may also be observed. Here, the highway climbs in curves over the ridge to descend on the other side towards Avezzano.

Dissection of one of the specimens confirmed the identification of the butterfly as *Sloperia proto* O.

VERITY (l.c., pag. 85) has given a special racial name to his single specimen taken at Monte S. Angelo: *fulvosatura*, differing from the Spanish and French populations by a very warm shade of the underside of the hindwings. The comparison of my own French *proto* specimens (from Plan d'Aups, 15.VII.1938) with these Italian specimens gives only little difference in colouring, but the latter are conspicuously smaller, my French specimens measuring 30—32 mm and the Italian ones only 24—26 mm.

### Sommario

L'autore ha scoperto 3 maschi della rarissima *Sloperia proto* O. sul Monte Salviano (Valle del Liri, m. 900, 2 luglio 1953). Questa farfalla ormai trovata con certezza negli Apennini, fu raccolta solamente in un esemplare maschile sul Gargano nel 1923 e più tardi al punto estremo delle Puglie a Leuca nel 1941, queste località essendo le uniche conosciute della Penisola. La specie è stata trovata diverse volte in Sicilia.

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