

# THE GENUS *THEOPE*: FOUR NEW SPECIES AND A NEW SUBSPECIES (LEPIDOPTERA: RIODINIDAE)

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**ABSTRACT.**— Four new species and a new subspecies of riodinid in the genus *Theope* Doubleday, 1847, are described from Central and South America: *Theope brevignoni* n. sp., *Theope dabreræ* n. sp., *Theope devriesi* n. sp., *Theope kingi* n. sp., *Theope sisemina tabacona* n. ssp.

**KEY WORDS:** Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guyana, hilltopping, Neotropical, Panamá, Peru, *Theope brevignoni* n. sp., *Theope dabreræ* n. sp., *Theope devriesi* n. sp., *Theope kingi* n. sp., *Theope sisemina tabacona* n. ssp.

The genus *Theope* Doubleday, 1847, has always been a bane to the riodinid specialist. The great rarity of some species, combined with their sexual dimorphism and uncanny interspecific similarities, has led to some confusion in the arrangements of most collections and an uncertainty as to exactly how many species there are in the genus. Bates (1868) provided a firm framework for the genus by describing numerous species from the Amazon basin, and this was strengthened by subsequent authors, especially Godman and Salvin (1878, [1886], 1897), working in Central America. Hans Stichel, the most ardent contributor to riodinid systematics this century, added surprisingly little to our knowledge of the genus *Theope*, probably due to the rather small and incomplete collection of this genus with which he worked in the Zoologische Museum at Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany. The latter part of this century has seen little attention focused on the genus (but see Gallard and Brévignon, 1989; D'Abrera, 1994; Willmott and Hall, 1994).

Seitz (1920), in his opus on the Macrolepidoptera of the world, skeptically regarded many of the described species in *Theope* as "deviations of the flying place" or forms. During the course of revisionary work on the genus by the first author, it has become apparent that this statement is amply true and that many names do indeed need to be placed in synonymy. However, at the same time, several rare and unnamed taxa do exist, and as a start in addressing this incompleteness of knowledge we herein describe and name four new species and a new subspecies in the genus *Theope*.

## *Theope kingi* Hall & Willmott, new sp.

Fig. 1a-d; 7

**Description.**— MALE: forewing length 18.5mm. *Dorsal surface:* forewing ground color black; basal area blue extending in a semicircle from base to near tornus, blue extending more towards margin in cell 1A+2A. Hindwing blue with a thin black outer margin, black above  $M_3$  and the discal cell and in the upper half of the discal cell. *Ventral surface:* both wings entirely pale yellow, paler along the anal margin of the forewing. Labial palpi dorsal surface black, ventral surface yellow.

Eyes bare and brown. Frons yellow with a vertical medial brown stripe. Antennae dorsal surface black, ventral surface black and white banded, black clubs, orange tips. Thorax and abdomen dorsal surface black, ventral surface yellow. Genitalia (Fig. 7): tip of uncus extended into two points, valvae projecting upwards and pointed with a very small lower projection; small sclerotized structure within the aedeagus.

**FEMALE:** forewing length 19mm. Similar to male except in the following respects: more rounded wingshape. *Dorsal surface:* blue of almost identical pattern but paler. *Ventral surface:* paler yellow.

**Types.**— *Holotype* ♂: PANAMA.— *Canal Zone:* Gatun, Jun 1971 (G. B. Small) (USNM). *Allotype* ♀: same locality data as above, 9 Feb 1973 (G. B. Small) (USNM).

**Paratypes:** PANAMA.— 2 ♂, same locality data as above, Feb 1973, Jun 1971 (G. B. Small) (USNM). 1 ♂, *Canal Zone:* Piña, 5 Feb 1973 (H. L. King) (AME). 1 ♂, same locality data as preceding, Jun 1971 (G. B. Small) (USNM). 2 ♀, *Panamá Prov.:* 5mi. N. of El Llano (330m), Jun 1978 (G. B. Small) (USNM).

**Etymology.**— This species is named in honor of H. L. King, who amassed invaluable collections of riodinids from Panamá, and who collected the first specimen of this species seen by the authors.

**Diagnosis.**— *T. kingi* n. sp. is a large species which most closely resembles *T. excelsa* Bates, 1868 (Venezuela-Peru, Brazil, Guianas, Trinidad). However, *T. kingi* has a broader wing-shape, with more rounded hindwings that do not end in a bulbous tip at the tornus of the hindwing, and a lighter yellow ventral surface. The color of the dorsal surface is purple rather than blue, and on the forewing it is restricted to a much smaller area along the anal margin, while on the hindwing, half of the cell is black. The shape of the valvae and rami of the male genitalia also differs between the two species. *T. sericea* Bates, 1868, is a smaller species with a more compact wing-shape, darker chrome yellow ventral surface, more blue on the forewing dorsal surface, and often a large black spot in the cell of the hindwing dorsal surface. The male genitalia differ most conspicuously in the shape of the aedeagus, which in *T. sericea* is short and stout, with the lower half extended into a point, and containing a multitude of finger-like spines.

**Discussion.**— All of the locality data for this species indicate that