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Exceptionally preserved Oligocene emperor butterfly from France provides a new calibration point for Apaturinae evolution

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A new genus and species of emperor butterfly (Nymphalidae, Apaturinae) is described based on an exceptionally well-preserved specimen from the “Calcaire de Campagne Calavon” limestone of southern France (early Oligocene age, approximately 34–28 Mya). Most parts of the right wings and upper parts of the left wings are visible, with complete venation and even wing patterns. The head and thorax are clearly visible from both sides, and most of the abdomen is preserved. *Apaturoides monikae* gen. et sp. nov., is compared to all genera of the subfamily and based on the form of the wings and venation is considered most similar to species of *Apatura*, today occurring widely in Palearctic, excluding North Africa and Middle East. This discovery provides an important calibration point based on direct fossil evidence for estimating relationships and divergence estimates among emperor butterflies.

Key words: Lepidoptera, Papilionoidea, Nymphalidae, Apaturinae, new genus, new species, Oligocene, France.

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