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Anteon ephippiger (Dalman, 1818) (Hymenoptera, Dryinidae) – a new dryinid record for the Maltese entomofauna

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Dryinidae (Hymenoptera, Chrysidoidea) constitutes a family of solitary wasps with about 1,830 described species worldwide (Olmi & Xu, 2015). 263 species are known from the Palaearctic Region (unpublished datum), but the greatest species diversity is found in the tropics. In general, Dryinids are ectoparasitoids of Auchenorrhyncha, with one nearctic/neotropical genus, *Crovettia* Olmi, 1984, being endoparasitoid of Membracidae (Olmi, 1999). Females are provided with a sting, used both as ovipositor and for paralysing the hosts for the time necessary for depositing the eggs. With the exception of the Aphelopinae, female has chelate protarsus, used for capturing and restraining its hosts. Males are very different from the females, so that it is very difficult to associate the opposite sexes without rearing or DNA analysis. With the exception of the endophagous *Crovettia* species, females insert their eggs between two overlapping host sclerites, so that one of the two poles is external, the other pole being internal. Immature larvae are ectophagous, their body being contained in a sac or thylacium formed by the cast larval skins and protruding from the host body. They feed on the host haemolymph. Mature larvae emerge from the host body after consuming all haemolymph and internal tissues. Pupation takes place in a silk cocoon spinned on plants or in the soil.

The only dryinid records for the Maltese Islands are *Aphelopus querceus* Olmi, 1984 and *Gonatopus tussaci* (Olmi, 1991) (Olmi, 1999). The full collecting data of these species is provided below as they were never previously published:

Aphelopus querceus: Gozo, Għasri, 1996, leg. C. Farrugia.
Gonatopus tussaci: Malta, Valletta, 18.ii.1996, leg. C. Farrugia; Gozo, Zebbug, 27.i.1996, 1 ♀, leg. C. Farrugia, 1 ♀ (in Olmi's collection); same locality label, 5.iv.1997, 10.v.1996, 2 ♀♀.

A third species of Dryinidae was recently collected in a Malaise trap in Malta with the following geographical coordinates 35.86198°N, 14.40162°E and an altitude of 220m. The habitat where the malaise trap was located is best described as a semi-natural woodland dominated by *Pinus halepensis* trees.

Anteon ephippiger (Dalman, 1818)

Material examined: Malta, Verdala Palace, nr. Buskett, 30.viii–30.x.2015, 1 ♀, leg. D. Mifsud.

Notes: *Anteon ephippiger* is common species throughout the Palaearctic Region. Its distribution range extends from the Iberian Peninsula up to the Russian Far East and Japan. It is known to parasitize various species of Cicadellidae living on grass or small shrubs. Some hosts, such as *Psammotettix alienus* (Dahlbom), recorded also from Malta by D'Urso & Mifsud (2012), are well known agricultural pests vectors of virus.

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