

NOTES ON THREE CARABIDS COLLECTED FROM THE MALTESE ISLANDS
(COLEOPTERA, CARABIDAE)

David Mifsud¹ & Augusto Vigna Taglianti²

ABSTRACT

Following the recent work on the carabid fauna of the Maltese Islands (Magrini & Schembri, 1997), *Campalita olivieri* Dejean and *Somotrichus elevatus* (Fabricius) are here recorded for the first time. The record of *Ocydromus andreae* (Fabricius) by Magrini & Schembri is incorrect and should refer to *Ocydromus atlanticus* (Wollaston).

INTRODUCTION

The carabid fauna of the Maltese Islands has been recently studied by Magrini & Schembri (1997) who reported a total of 125 species. The occurrence of seven additional species was indicated as doubtful for the Maltese Islands. It is outside the scope of the present note to provide new collecting data on previously recorded species or to supply new information on species cited by previous authors (eg. Cameron & Caruana Gatto, 1907) which were not confirmed by the recent study of Magrini & Schembri (1997). In the present work, data on three interesting carabids will be provided. Material has been deposited in the following institutions and private collections:

AVTI Augusto Vigna Taglianti, Università di Roma 'La Sapienza', Italy

DMM David Mifsud private collection, Malta.

SPECIES LIST

Campalita olivieri Dejean, 1831

Material examined. MALTA, Valletta, 24.XII.1997, 1 ex., Leg. C. Farrugia & D. Mifsud (DMM).

One live female specimen was collected in a rather busy street in the capital city of Valletta. The specimen was only slightly damaged, probably due to human activity. Only two records of this carabid beetle have so far been reported from Europe. One dead specimen in a good state of preservation was found on Lampedusa (Vigna Taglianti, 1993, 1995) and another record was reported from Southern Spain (Zaballos & Jeanne, 1994). Both these records are probably accidental and Vigna Taglianti (1995) suggested that *C. olivieri* could occasionally and irregularly fly from

North Africa to Europe, or be transported there through the agency of wind or predators. *C. olivieri* is distributed in the desertic and sub-desertic regions from the Atlantic Islands up to North Western India.

Ocydromus (Peryphus) atlanticus (Wollaston, 1854)

Material examined. GOZO, Qbajjar (around Qolla l-Bajda), 15.VI.1991, 3 exs., Leg. D. Mifsud (DMM; AVTI).

[One of these three specimens was given on loan for study and to be included in the work of Magrini & Schembri (1997). This specimen was unfortunately destroyed through insect infestation, as was most of the other carabid material (Schembri, S., *personal communication*, 1999)]

The three specimens of *O. atlanticus* were collected under a large stone near brackish water pools. Unfortunately, this species was misidentified by Magrini & Schembri (1997) as the somewhat similar *O. andreae* (Fabricius, 1787).

O. atlanticus was originally described from material collected in Madeira and was subsequently reported from the Canary Islands (Machado, 1992). We ascribe the Maltese specimens to the subspecies *megaspilus* (Walker, 1871), described from Sinai: it is widely distributed in Northern Africa, known from Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria (Hoggar), Egypt and Ethiopia (Antoine, 1955), and from Saudi Arabia and Yemen (Basilewsky, 1979). It is also known from the Eastern Mediterranean area, in Jordan, Syria and Black Sea (from Bulgaria it had been described as *serdicanus* Apfelbeck, 1904, synonym of *megaspilus*) (Hieke & Wrase, 1988). In their checklist of the Carabidae of Russia and adjacent lands, Kryzhanovskij *et al.* (1995) recorded this species from Crimea, Ciscaucasia, Caucasus, Kazakhstan, Turan, Kopetdagh, Tian-Shan and mountains of SE Middle Asia.

¹ Naturhistorisches Museum Basel, Augustinergasse 2, CH-4001 Basel, Switzerland

² Dipartimento di Biologia Animale e dell'Uomo, Università "La Sapienza", Roma, Italy

O. atlanticus is frequent and typically found in small springs, on muddy, often brackish soils, while *O. andreae*, a South-European riverine species, is associated with sandy streams and rivers of low and medium altitude.

Somotrichus elevatus (Fabricius, 1787)

Material examined. MALTA, Msida (Tal-Qroqq), 20.VI.1995, 1 ex., Leg. C. Farrugia (AVTI); Marsa (Ghammieri), 4.XI.1996, 1 ex., Leg. D. Mifsud (DMM).

Both specimens were attracted to light. In Italy, (Binaghi, 1948), *S. elevatus* is known from a single record collected at the port of Genova while searching through remains of imported grains infested with weevils and tenebrionid beetles. The same author reports that *S. elevatus* has been

introduced in several territories and is currently almost cosmopolitan in distribution. It was reported as common in Eastern Africa and South East Asia. In Eastern Africa (Tanzania), *S. elevatus* was collected in caves on bat guano ("grottes du Kulumuzi près Tanga" - Alluaud, 1916).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank a number of colleagues who in some way or other helped us during the preparation of this note. We thank Dr Richard Heinertz (Basel) for identifying *Campalita olivieri* and for providing important information, Dr Charles Huber (Bern) for providing useful information and Mr. Charles Farrugia (Malta) for donating his carabid material.

(Accepted 22nd April, 1999)

REFERENCES

- Alluaud, C. (1916) Coléoptères des îles Mascareignes et Séchelles. Cicindelidae et Carabidae. *Annales de la Société entomologique de France*, **85**: 37-90.
- Antoine, M. (1955) Coléoptères Carabiques du Maroc (Première partie). *Mémoires de la Société des Science Naturelles et Physiques du Maroc*, Nouvelle Série, Zoologie, **1**: 177 pp.
- Basilewsky, P. (1979) Insects of Saudi Arabia Coleoptera: Fam. Carabidae. *Fauna of Saudi Arabia*, **1**: 141-146.
- Binaghi, G. (1948) Note di Caccia (III) (Coleoptera). *Bollettino della Società Entomologica Italiana*, Genova, **78** (7-10): 77-79.
- Cameron, M. & Caruana Gatto, A. (1907) A list of the Coleoptera of the Maltese Islands. *Transactions of the Entomological Society of London*, **59** (3): 383-403.
- Hieke, F. & Wrase, D.W. (1988) Faunistik der Laufkäfer Bulgariens (Coleoptera, Carabidae). *Deutsche entomologische Zeitschrift*, (n.f.) **35** (1-3): 1-171.
- Kryzhanovskij, O. L., Belousov, I. A., Kabak, I. L., Kataev, B. M., Makarov, K. V. & Shilenkov, V. G. (1995) A Checklist of the Ground-Beetles of Russia and Adjacent Lands (Insecta, Coleoptera, Carabidae) *Series Faunistica* No. 3. Pensoft Publishers, Sofia-Moscow. 271 pp.
- Machado, A. (1992) Monografía de los Carabidos de las Islas Canarias (Insects, Coleoptera). *Instituto de Estudios Canarios*, La Laguna, 734 pp.
- Magrini, P. & Schembri, S. (1997) A topographic catalogue of the Carabidae of the Maltese Islands (Coleoptera). *Bollettino della Società Entomologica Italiana*, Genova, **129** (3): 213-234.
- Vigna Taglianti, A. (1993) *Coleoptera Archostemata, Adephaga 1 (Carabidae)*. In: Minelli, A., Ruffo, S. & La Posta, S. [Eds.] Checklist delle specie della fauna italiana, **44**. Calderini, Bologna.
- Vigna Taglianti, A. (1995) Coleoptera Carabidae. In: Massa, B. [Ed.]. *Arthropoda di Lampedusa, Linosa e Pantelleria (Canale di Sicilia, Mar Mediterraneo)*. *Naturalista siciliano*, Palermo, **19** (Suppl.), 357-421.
- Zaballos, J. P. & Jeanne, C. (1994) Nuevo Catalogo de los Carabidos (Coleoptera) de la península iberica. *Monografias Sociedad Entomológica Aragonesa*, Zaragoza, **1**: 159 pp.
-