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Rhagonycha bythinica (Coleoptera: Cantharidae) – New to Europe

Rhagonycha bythinica (Coleoptera: Cantharidae) – nový nález pro Evropu

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Abstract. The soldier beetle *Rhagonycha bythinica* Marseul, 1864, previously thought to be endemic to north-western Anatolia is newly recorded from Lesvos Island. This is the first record for Greece, and the species can therefore be added to the European fauna.

INTRODUCTION

The Holarctic cantharid genus *Rhagonycha* Eschscholtz, 1829 currently includes about 300 species, mostly from the western Palearctic Region (Delkeskamp 1977; Kazantsev & Brancucci 2007). The highest diversity of species is found in Turkey, where 60 species are recorded, many of them described or revised fairly recently (Švihla 1993, 1995, 2002). A relatively distinctive and easily recognisable species is *R. bythinica* Marseul, 1864, described from "Anatolie" (Marseul 1864). It was also spelt "*R. bithynica*", which is an unjustified emendation by Dahlgren (1968). Only few literature citations exist for this species, after its original description (e.g. Bodemeyer 1900, Dahlgren 1968) and the number of specimens found in museum collections seems to be very limited. Based on literature data and identified specimens in the collections of Walter Wittmer and the BMNH, its distribution seems to be limited to the north-western part of Anatolia, in the Turkish provinces of Bilecik, Bursa, Balıkesir, **Ç**anakkale, and Izmir.

It was therefore a pleasant surprise to find a fresh specimen of this species in material collected in Greece by Z. Lucbauer. Although the locality is geographically close to the Turkish coast, this poorly-known species can here be recorded for Europe for the first time.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Previously unpublished faunistic data are based on specimens deposited at the Natural History Museum, London, Great Britain (BMNH) and the Naturhistorisches Museum Basel, Switzerland (NHMB). The male genitalia of the specimen newly recorded here were extracted, dry mounted and compared to material identified by the late W. Wittmer and V. Švihla at NHMB.

RESULTS

Rhagonycha bythinica Marseul, 1864
(Figs 1–2)

New record. Greece: Lesbos Is., East of Agia Paraskevi, 20.III.2015, Z. Lucbauer leg., BMNH(E) 2016-8, 1 ♂ (BMNH).

The following Turkish material was studied for comparison: „Asia min., Smyrna“, 1 ♂ (NHMB); Türkei, 19 km Izmir – Efes, 22.IV.1969, W. Wittmer leg., 1 ♀ (NHMB); „Karacabey / Brussa, As.min. / 26.vi.1930, Ajtai leg.“, 1 ♀ (NHMB); „ASIA-MINOR / BILEDJIK / v. BODEMEYER“, 1 ♂, 1 ♀ (NHMB); “TR, Umgb. Bilecik, 400-600 m, iv.1973, Heinz leg.”, 1 ♀ (NHMB); “TR occ., 7. IV. [19]79, s. Canakkale, leg. D. Bernhauer, 1 ♂ (NHMB); “6653, E. B. [Pash Liman (Paşalimanı), 25.–26.III.1902, as inferred from M. Cameron’s notebooks], Dr. M. Cameron. / B. M. 1936-555.”, 1 ♂, 1 ♀ (BMNH).

Rhagonycha bythinica is easily distinguished from all other European species by the entirely black elytra, pronotum, head, antennae and tarsi, contrasting with the reddish femora and tibiae (Fig. 1). In the relatively similar *R. viduata* Küster, 1854 (widespread on the Balkan Peninsula), the tarsi and the basal antennomeres are reddish. Also, the aedeagus is very distinctive (Fig. 2).

DISCUSSION

The locality lies on the Greek island Lesvos (also spelt Lesbos) in the northern Aegean Sea. As it is only narrowly separated from the Turkish (Anatolian) mainland (provinces **Ç**anakkale, Balıkesir and Izmir), it is therefore not surprising that a species of Anatolian origin can be found on this island. The cantharid fauna of Lesvos is very poorly surveyed, and a new subspecies with Anatolian affinities has been described from the island fairly recently (*Malthodes denizlianus lesvosensis* Švihla, 2009) (Švihla 2009). Although there is a fairly short geographic distance between the new locality record here and its closest known occurrences on the Turkish mainland, it is nevertheless relevant to report this poorly-known species as a new addition to the European fauna, so it can be included in relevant literature or databases (e.g. “Fauna Europaea”, http://www.fauna-eu.org/).

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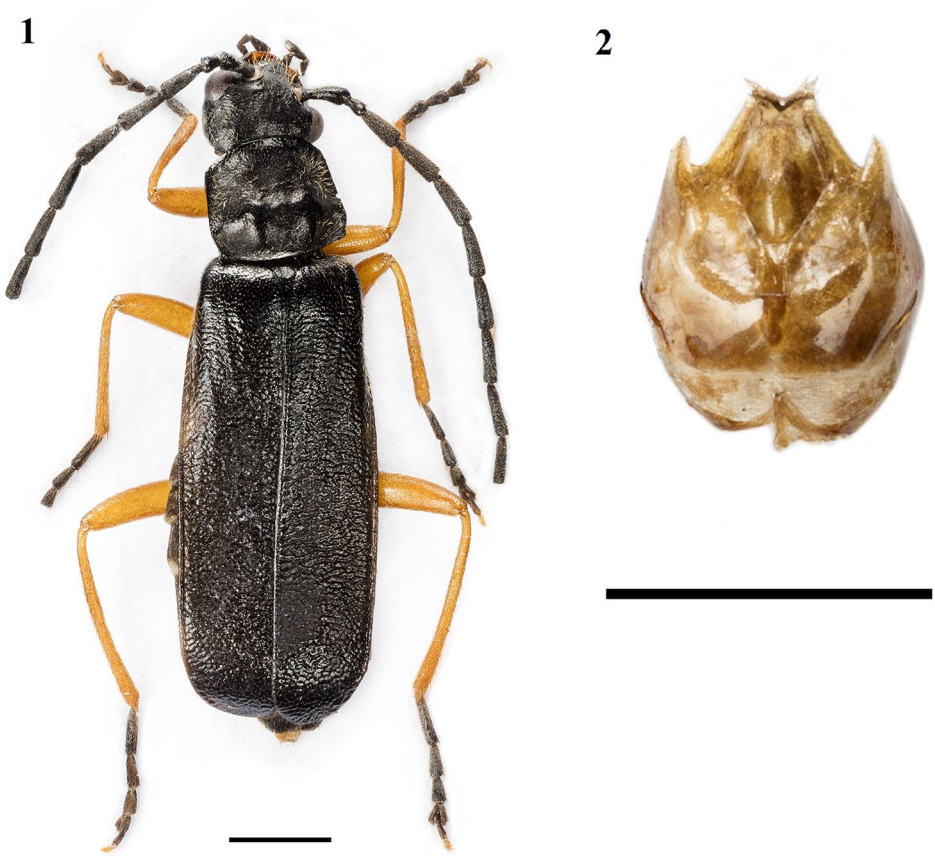
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Figs 1–2. *Rhagonycha bythinica* Marseul, 1864, ♂ from Lesvos, Greece. 1 –dorsal habitus, 2 – aedeagus, ventral view. The scale bar in each case is 1 mm.
Obr. 1–2. *Rhagonycha bythinica* Marseul, 1864, ♂ z ostrova Lesbos, Řecko. 1 – habitus dorzálně, 2 – aedeagus, ventrální pohled. Měřítka v obou případech 1 mm.

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SOUHRN

Páteříček *Rhagonycha bythinica* Marseul, 1864, dříve uváděný jako endemický druh severo-západní Anatolie (Marseul 1864 Bodemeyer 1900, Dahlgren 1968), je nově uveden z řeckého ostrova Lesbos. Tento nález je zároveň prvním údajem druhu *R. bythinica* pro Řecko, a může tedy být přidán do seznamu evropských brouků.