

Three new psocids (Insecta, Psocodea, ‘Psocoptera’) for the Maltese fauna

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Psocids, commonly known as booklice or barklice, have a worldwide distribution (LIENHARD & SMITHERS, 2002) with about 5,700 described species (ZHANG, 2011). They usually live on vegetation, especially on the bark and foliage of trees and shrubs, where they feed on epiphytic microflora (algae, fungi and lichen), organic detritus and pollen; some species are regularly found in ground litter, under stones, in caves or in birds’ nests, mammals’ nests or human dwellings (LIENHARD, 1998). Recently, the psocid fauna of the Maltese Islands was studied in some detail and 27 species were reported from this archipelago (LIENHARD & MIFSUD, 2015). Further collections revealed the presence of three additional species, information on which follows hereunder.

Liposcelis picta Ball, 1940

Material examined: Malta, Verdala Palace (near Buskett) (35.86198°N, 14.40162°E; altitude 220m), 30.vii.-30.x.2015, 1 ♀, in Malaise trap, leg. D. Mifsud.

Notes: *Liposcelis picta* is known from the Mediterranean basin and is associated with the bark of various trees and ground habitats. The male is unknown. It was recorded from Cyprus, Greece, Israel, Lebanon and Morocco (LIENHARD, 1998). The material from Malta was collected from a semi-natural woodland, dominated by *Pinus halepensis*.

Lachesilla quercus (Kolbe, 1880)

Material examined: Malta, Msida, University grounds (35.901995°N, 14.482732°E), 5.vii.2015, 1 ♀, on cultivated *Euonymus* sp. leg. D. Mifsud.

Notes: *Lachesilla quercus* is mainly associated with dead or dying leaves that either remain attached to the tree or fall to the ground. It was found associated with deciduous trees, occasionally on conifers and/or leaf litter. From time to time, this species can also be found in wet places in human habitation or even in warehouses where flour is stored (LIENHARD, 1998). In Central Europe this species generally undergoes two generations per year with adults found from June to October. *L. quercus* is widely distributed in the Palaearctic Region and was accidentally introduced in USA and Australia. The material from Malta was collected on cultivated *Euonymus* which was severely infected by fungal pathogens.

Dorypteryx (?) *domestica* (Smithers, 1958)

Material examined: Malta, Zejtun (in private residence), 20.vii.2015, 1 young nymph, leg. D. Mifsud.

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Notes: Since no adults were available for the present study, the specific identity of this species is questionable but most likely it should be *D. domestica*. The genus *Dorypteryx* is represented in the Euro-Mediterranean Region by three species, but only *D. domestica* is generally collected whereas *D. longipennis* Smithers and *D. pallida* Aaron are rarely found in the mentioned territory. *D. domestica* was described from Zimbabwe and was first collected in Europe in 1973 (LIENHARD & SCHNEIDER, 1993); since then it was found in more than 20 European countries, where it is always associated with human habitations.

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