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Cebrio (*Cebrio*) *benedicti* Fairmaire, 1849 in Malta (Coleoptera: Elateridae: Cebrionini)

José Luis ZAPATA DE LA VEGA [1], David MIFSUD[2] & Antonio SÁNCHEZ-RUIZ [3]

ABSTRACT. *Cebrio* (*Cebrio*) *benedicti* Fairmaire is here recorded from the Maltese Islands. This species was previously recorded as *C. gigas* (Fabricius) and *Cebrio* cf. *fiorii* Leoni.

KEY WORDS. Mediterranean region, new record.

INTRODUCTION

Cameron & Caruana Gatto (1907) recorded *Cebrio gigas* (Fabricius, 1787) from the following localities in Malta: Girgenti, Attard and Mellieħa. Leoni (1906) and Rattu (2013) indicated that *C. gigas* is a species which is not present in southern Italy and thus its presence in Malta is doubtful. Wurst & Mifsud (2012) reported this species as *Cebrio* cf. *fiorii* Leoni, 1906 with recently collected material from Siggiewi, Baħrija and Qrendi.

Cebrio (*Cebrio*) *benedicti* Fairmaire, 1849

(Figs. 1-4)

Material examined. MALTA: Qrendi, 14.xi.2003, 4♂♂, leg. D. Mifsud (Fig. 1); B'Kara, 6.x.2014, 1♂, leg. T. Cassar; 1♂, G.C. Champion coll. B.M. 1927-409 (Fig. 2); Baħrija 27.x.1991, 1 ♂ on *Foeniculum vulgare*, leg. D. Mifsud; Siggiewi, 2.xi.1995, 1♂, leg. M. Schembri; Zebbug, 20.x.2020, 1♂ UV light trap, leg A. Catania (Fig.3); Pembroke, 23.xi.2003, 2♂♂, leg. A. Catania; Għammieri, 15.x.1976, 1♂, leg. D. Dandria; Rabat, 1/6.xi.2005, 2♂♂, leg. P. Sammut; Wied Qirda, 13.xii.1989, 1♂, leg. A. Seguna; Naxxar, Tas-Sgħajtar, 26.xi.2019, 1♂, leg. A. Seguna.

Fairmaire (1849) described *Cebrio benedicti* based on material collected from Sicily. His original description, is very poor and he indicated the short but sharp posterior angles of pronotum as the main character to discriminate this species from closely related ones. *Cebrio benedicti* was recently included in the subgenus *Cebrio* by Zapata & Sánchez-Ruiz (2017).

Description. The above-mentioned material from Malta was examined in detail and was compared with the type material of *C. benedicti* (Fig. 4). The material from Malta was found to compare well with the type material of *C. benedicti* and other Sicilian specimens identified as such. The material is consistent in the following morphological characters: Large hemispherical and prominent eyes, sickle jaws, strongly punctured head and pronotum, with umbilical having thick and relatively dense punctures; antenna with first segment oval in shape, practically twice as long as wide; 2nd and 3rd segments short, clearly wider than long; 4th slightly triangular, widest posteriorly and 11th

[1] Azafrán, 25. E-28760 Tres Cantos, Madrid, Spain. E-mail: jlzvega@gmail.com
[2] Institute of Earth Systems, Division of Rural Sciences and Food Systems, University of Malta, Msida, Malta. E-mail: david.a.mifsud@um.edu.mt
[3] Médico Solana, 8-B. E-02610 El Bonillo, Albacete, Spain. E-mail: agrypnus@gmx.es

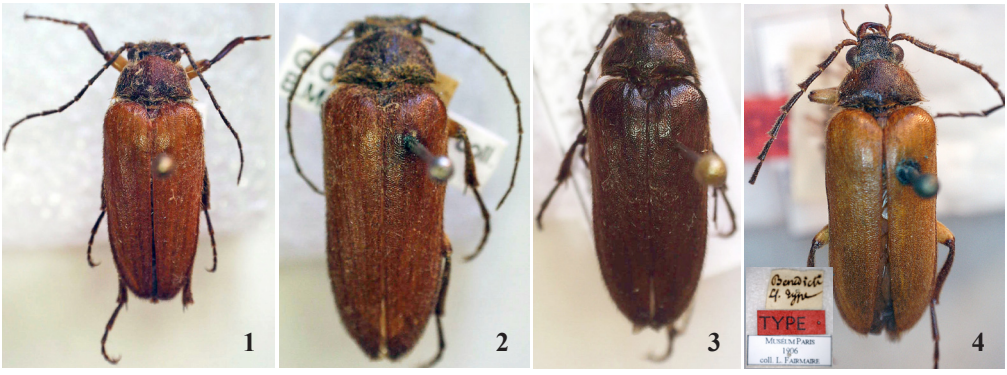

Figure 1-4: *Cebrio* (*Cebrio*) *benedicti*. **1-3**: Specimens from Malta; **4**: syntype.

segment ending in digitized asymmetric tip. Pronotum with an arched anterior edge and almost straight posterior angles, somewhat pointed but not prolonged; scutellum reed-shaped, sunk from the elytra, elongated, and rounded at base, with obsolete striae, rounded apex and raised and narrow marginal groove. Outer edge of protibia not denticulated with narrow metafemur. Aedeagus with the parameres narrower and shorter than the middle lobe.

The variable morphological characteristics of the species include those associated with coloration; thus, the pilosity on elytra is of a yellow colouration in the type material whereas, the Maltese specimens are mostly dark. The pronotum is generally entirely dark brown to black in colour but in one specimen a more overall reddish coloration was observed. Coloration of antenna is also somewhat variable from light brown to dark brown or almost black. The length of the specimens from Malta range from 15.95 to 18.10 mm

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