

ON SOME BARK-INHABITING PSEUDOSCORPIONES (ARACHNIDA)
FROM ISRAEL*

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ABSTRACT

Four species of bark-inhabiting pseudoscorpiones are recorded from a survey on forest and ornamental trees and shrubs in Israel.

KEY WORDS: Pseudoscorpiones, bark inhabitants, Israel.

Thirty six species of pseudoscorpiones (Arachnida) were recorded from Israel by Beier (1963) and Mahnert (1974). Eight of these are bark inhabitants, namely: *Dactylochelifer kussariensis* (Daday), *D. pallidus* Beier, *Hysterochelifer tuberculatus* (H. Lucas), *Rhacochelifer corcyrensis bicolor* (Beier), *R. longueungiculatus* Beier, *R. peculiaris latissimus* Beier (Cheliferidae), *Atemnus? syriacus* (Beier) (Atemnidae) and *Chernes rhodinus* Beier (Chemetidae).

This note reports on the collection, in the last decade, of bark-inhabiting species, associated with forest and ornamental trees and shrubs in Israel. Two methods were applied for obtaining the material: (a) beating branches of live trees and shrubs, and (b) collectin and checking stems and branches, mostly of damaged plants.

Altogether, four bark-inhabiting species were found. One of them, *Rhacochelifer corcyrensis*, is of wide distribution and occurs on many plants, conifers and broadleaved trees as well; the three others were found occasionally. One species, *Hysterochelifer gracilimanus*, and one subspecies, *R. corcyrensis corcyrensis*, are new to the Israeli fauna. All the collected species belong to the Cheliferidae. The material is deposited in the Museum d'Histoire naturelle, Geneve, and in the Department of Entomology, A.R.O., Bet Dagan, Israel.

1. *Rhacochelifer corcyrensis corcyrensis* (Beier)

The species is widely distributed in the eastern Mediterranean, from Italy to Turkey, and is mentioned also from the islands of Crete, Rhodes and Cyprus. Three subspecies have been distinguished: *bicolor* Beier, 1963, from Israel; *procerus* Mahnert, 1978, from the island of Djerba (Tunisia); the specimens studied here belong clearly to the nominate subspecies: tarsus of leg I of the male 2.2-2.5 times longer than wide, its apical lateral angle being rectangular. The ssp. *bicolor* is probably limited to the southern, drier regions of Israel.

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MATERIAL EXAMINED. Many specimens were found in Israel in the Coastal Plain, Samaria, the Judean Foothills and the Jordan Valley, on the following plants: *Acacia farnesiana*, *Ailanthus altissima*, *Atriplex halimus*, *Calycotome villosa*, *Laurus nobilis*, *Nerium oleander*, *Phillyrea latifolia*, *Pinus* spp., *Pistacia* spp., *Populus* spp., *Rhamnus alaternus*, *Thuja orientalis* and *Vitex agnus-castus*.

The deutonymphs were found at the beginning of July, the tritonymphs from mid July to the end of September, and the adults from the beginning of March until mid December. Size: 1.5-2.2 mm.

2. *Rhacochelifer? maculatus* (L. Koch)

The precise identification of the specimens was impossible, because they were dry and damaged, but the length of pedipalps and the presence of bigger granulas on the pedipalpal femur might justify this tentative name. The species is widely distributed in the Mediterranean region.

MATERIAL EXAMINED. Three specimens collected under the bark of *Pinus brutia* at 'En Zetim (Upper Galilee), on 20.I.1977, feeding probably on the larvae of bark beetles. Size: 2.2-3 mm.

3. *Hystochelifer cyprius* Beier

Originally described from Cyprus, the species has subsequently been recorded from the Ionian and Aegean islands, Lebanon and Turkey. Already mentioned from Israel by Beier (1963).

MATERIAL EXAMINED. Specimens occasionally found in the Hula Valley, Lower Galilee, Coastal Plain and Samaria, on *Casuarina cunninghamiana*, *Eucalyptus gomphocephala*, *Pistacia atlantica*, *Quercus ithaburensis*, *Styrax officinalis* and *Ulmus* spp.

The deuto- and tritonymphs were found in the second half of March, and the adults at the beginning of February, end of March, mid June and mid August. Size: 2.6-4 mm.

4. *Hysterochelifer gracilimanus* Beier

This is the first record of this species from Israel. Until now it has been found only in southern Anatolia and the Greek island of Chios, under the bark of pine trees.

MATERIAL EXAMINED. 1♂ and 1♀ found under the bark of *Pinus halepensis*, in Sha'ar haGay (Judean Mts.), on 30.V.1977, feeding probably on the larvae of bark beetles. Size: 2-3 mm.

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