

***Neotypus melanocephalus* (Hymenoptera: Ichneumonidae): the first record of a parasitoid wasp attacking *Maculinea teleius* (Lycaenidae)**

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Abstract. A *Maculinea teleius* (Bergsträsser, 1779) pupa was found near Meszes (NE-Hungary) in a *Myrmica scabrinodis* Nylander, 1846 nest. Some hours later emerged a wasp that proved (det. K. Horstmann) to be *Neotypus melanocephalus* Gmelin, 1790 (Ichneumonidae). The wasp with the exuvium and specimens of the host ant are deposited in the Hymenoptera Collection of the Hungarian Natural History Museum (25.vii.2002; Meszes; leg. A. Tartally). It would be desirable to obtain more *Neotypus* specimens from *M. teleius* pupae to test if the wasp really is *N. melanocephalus*, or a form of *N. pusillus* Gregor, 1940, or even a new cryptic species of *Neotypus*.

Key words. *Neotypus*, *Maculinea*, *Myrmica*, Ichneumonidae, Lycaenidae, parasitoid, Hungary.

The larvae and pupae of four of the five European species of *Maculinea* van Eecke, 1915 butterflies are known hosts of parasitoids from the Ichneumonidae family. The two cuckoo *Maculinea* species for which the caterpillars are fed by worker ants (Thomas & Elmes 1998) have *Ichneumon* sp. parasitoids. *Ichneumon eumerus* Wesmael, 1857 was recorded as a parasitoid of *M. rebeli* (Hirschke, 1904) and the same or a sibling *Ichneumon* species attacks *M. alcon* ([Denis & Schiffermüller], 1775) as well (Thomas & Elmes 1993; Munguira & Martin 1999; Sielezniew & Stankiewicz 2004; Thomas, Fitton & Hilpert, pers. comm.). Two of the three *Maculinea* species, of which the caterpillars are predators of ant broods (Thomas & Elmes 1998), have *Neotypus* parasitoids: *N. pusillus* Gregor, 1940 was bred from *M. nausithous* (Bergsträsser, 1779) (Thomas & Elmes 1993) and another *Neotypus* sp. from *M. arion* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Thomas, Wardlaw & Fitton, pers. comm.). So far as known, each of these parasitoids is host-specific to a single *Maculinea* species, but until now no parasitoid wasp of the predatory *M. teleius* (Bergsträsser, 1779) was known.

Maculinea species and their parasitoids are of high interest to evolutionary and conservation ecology because of their extreme adaptations to a myrmecophilous life-style and because all are rare and globally endangered (IUCN 2004; Hochberg et al. 1996; Munguira & Martin 1999). The larvae of these butterflies feed briefly on specific foodplants before being adopted by *Myrmica* ants (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) in which colonies they live as social parasites for 11–23 months (Thomas & Elmes 1998). *Neotypus pusillus* oviposits on young *M. nausithous* larvae on the larval foodplant while *Ichneumon* spp., perhaps in response to the different population structure found in cuckoo species, penetrate *Myrmica* nests to seek *Maculinea* larvae (Thomas & Elmes 1993). These parasitoids both emerge from host pupae inside ant colonies and are presumed to have similar specialisations to those described for *I. eumerus* (Thomas et al. 2002) to escape unharmed from nests.

Between 2000 and 2003, hundreds of *Myrmica* nests at eight sites were examined for caterpillars, pupae, and exuvia of *M. teleius* to measure host specificity and to investigate whether parasitoids of this butterfly occur in the Carpathian Basin, Hungary.

Twenty-four caterpillars, one exuvium, and eight pupae of *M. teleius* were found at five sites. One of the pupae contained a parasitoid. This was collected on 25 July 2002 near the village of Meszes (NE-Hungary; Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County) in a marshy meadow with a profusion of *Sanguisorba officinalis* (I intentionally do not give the exact location as a precaution against collectors; only two more pupae were found there but these were not parasitized). The pupal cases of *M. teleius* and *M. nausithous* are hard to distinguish, but this pupa was found in a *Myrmica scabrinodis* Nylander, 1846 nest within one meter from a *S. officinalis* plant. *My. scabrinodis* is the main host ant of *M. teleius* in Europe (Thomas et al. 1989; Stankiewicz & Sielezniew 2002; Tartally & Csősz 2004) and no other species of *Maculinea* nor any other foodplant of *Maculinea*, occur at this site (Varga, pers. comm.). Moreover, *M. nausithous*, the only other *Maculinea* species that uses *S. officinalis*, is not known from NE-Hungary (Bálint 1996). Based on this evidence, this pupa was identified as *M. teleius*. Some hours after collection, a wasp hatched from this pupa. The wasp with the exuvium and specimens of the host ant (*My. scabrinodis*) were placed into a small vial with 75% ethanol. The full sample is deposited in the Hymenoptera Collection of the Hungarian Natural History Museum (25.vii.2002; Meszes; Tartally leg.). The wasp was sent to Dr. Klaus Horstmann (Theodor-Boveri-Institut für Biowissenschaften, Würzburg) for determination; it proved to be *Neotypus melanocephalus* Gmelin, 1790, a species that had not previously been recorded as a parasitoid of any *Maculinea* host (Thomas, pers. comm.).

There are several known *M. nausithous* populations infected by *N. pusillus* that co-occur with *M. teleius* in Europe, but in those studied in the Rhône valley (France), there is strong evidence that *N. pusillus* never parasitizes *M. teleius* (Thomas, pers. comm.). It would be worth checking more widely whether *N. pusillus* uses only *M. nausithous* as a host or whether it can infect *M. teleius* too. This is important because *N. melanocephalus* has, at times, been synonymised with *N. pusillus*; but current studies in the EU 'MacMan' programme suggest that *N. melanocephalus* is a cryptic sibling species (Thomas, pers. comm.), a phenomenon well known in parasitoid taxa (Godfray 1994). It would be desirable to obtain more *Neotypus* specimens from *M. teleius* pupae and to test whether this wasp really is *N. melanocephalus*, or a form of *N. pusillus*, or even a new cryptic species of *Neotypus*. If, as I suspect, it is both a good species and specific to *M. teleius*, then, like other parasitoids of *Maculinea*, it will by definition be rarer and more threatened than its host, and its populations will be in greater need of conservation (Hochberg et al. 1996; Thomas et al. 2002).

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Enikő Tóth, Dr. Jeremy A. Thomas, Dr. Klaus Horstmann, Sándor Csősz, and Dr. Zoltán S. Varga for their help. The research was funded by the EC within the RTD project "MacMan" (EVK2-CT-2001-00126).

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Autor(en)/Author(s): Tartally András

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