



The wasp genus *Olixon* Cameron in Madagascar: first record and description of two new species (Hymenoptera: Rhopalosomatidae)

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Abstract

Two new species, *Olixon toliaraensis* **sp. nov.** and *Olixon martini* **sp. nov.** (Hymenoptera: Rhopalosomatidae) are described from Madagascar. They represent the first record of this genus from this island. The two species are morphologically similar, but *Olixon toliaraensis* **sp. nov.** is mainly characterized by an indentation of the apicolateral carina of the head and a vertex with a weak medial impression. *Olixon martini* **sp. nov.** lacks these characters. Photos of the new species, drawings of the diagnostic characters, a distribution map, and an updated key to the *Olixon* of the world are provided.

Key words: Hymenoptera, Vespoidea, Rhopalosomatidae, *Olixon*, Madagascar, Province Toliara, first record, new species

Introduction

The parasitic wasp family Rhopalosomatidae is poorly known and rarely collected (Maes et al. 1993), especially the genus *Olixon*. The Rhopalosomatidae belong to the Vespoidea (Brothers & Carpenter 1993, Brothers 1999), but the exact phylogenetic position is still uncertain. Brothers (1975, 1999) relates them to the Pompilidae, but this is weakly supported.

The family contains two fossil and four extant genera: *Mesorhopalosoma* has one described species from the Santana Formation of Brazil, Lower Cretaceous (Darling & Sharkey 1990). The second fossil genus, *Proopalosoma*, is described by Dlussky & Rasnitsyn (1999) from the Middle Eocene of the United States (Washington). *Liosphex* has one species in Southeast Asia and another occurring from Eastern United States to South Brazil. *Paniscomima* with seven species is described from Africa and Southeast Asia. The 17 species of *Rhopalosoma* have a New World distribution. The wingless genus *Olixon* has nine described species and occurs in the following geographic regions: Eastern Australia, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Eastern United States, Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe, and South Africa (Fernández & Sarmiento-M. 2002). *Olixon* has not yet been recorded from Madagascar.

Within Rhopalosomatidae, the genus *Olixon* is unusual and differs in many characters from the other genera (Townes 1977). The hindwings are reduced or even absent. The paddle shaped forewings are small and do not extend beyond the apex of tergite II. The compound eye is elliptic and has an unmodified inner margin – not notched as in other Rhopalosomatidae. The ocelli are reduced to markedly small punctures or are lacking. The propodeum has a large apicolateral tooth on each side. The front femur is swollen. Also, a stridulatory