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Endogean and cavernicolous Coleoptera of the Balkans. XIV. *Melledobythus bilandzijae*, new genus and species of cavernicolous Bythinini (Staphylinidae: Pselaphinae) from the Island Mljet, Croatia

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Abstract

Melledobythus bilandzijae, new cavernicolous genus and species of the tribe Bythinini is described from the island of Mljet, Croatia. A detailed morphological study is presented. The new genus belongs to the phylogenetic lineage of small and anophthalmous Bythinini that lack sutural elytral striae.

Key words: Coleoptera, Staphylinidae, Pselaphinae, Bythinini, *Melledobythus*, Croatia, taxonomy, biospeleology

Introduction

The cavernicolous fauna of the Balkan Peninsula has received much attention in recent years, and many new taxa have been described, especially in the order Coleoptera. One of best studied groups is the subfamily Pselaphinae (Hlaváč et al., 2008) which is very abundant mainly in the Dinaric mountain range. Bythinini, together with Amauropini, are one of the most important groups of Pselaphinae that have been adapted for living in a subterranean habitat in the west Palaearctic region. They occur from northern Africa (Jeannel, 1956), the Iberian Peninsula (Besuchet, 1974), France (Jeannel, 1950), Italy (Poggi, 1992), and through the Balkans (Hlaváč et al., 2008) to Turkey (Besuchet, 1978).

The collecting effort of members of the Croatian Biospeleological Society, Zagreb (CBSS) on the Adriatic island of Mljet, brought the discovery of a new genus and species of the tribe Bythinini which is described here.

Material and methods

Dry-mounted specimens were examined with a Leica S8APO stereo-microscope with diffuse lighting at magnifications up to 128x. Drawings of the aedeagus were made using a camera lucida attached to a Zeiss microscope. Electron micrographs were produced using a JEOL 6380 LV scanning electron microscope. Label data are cited verbatim, with author's notes in square brackets. The following symbols are used: [p], [h] denotes printed or hand-written labels respectively, '/' separates different labels.

The head length was measured from the occipital constriction to the anterior margin of the frontal rostrum; the elytral length was measured along the suture. Width refers to the maximum width of each body part. The body length is the combined length of the head, pronotum, elytra, and abdomen.

The terminology applied here follows Chandler (2001), except we use 'ventrite' instead of 'sternite' when discussing the thoracic structures. The material is deposited in the collection of Branko Jalžić in the CNHM—Croatian Natural History Museum, Zagreb, CBSS—Croatian Biospeleological Society, Zagreb and the private collection of Peter Hlaváč (PHCP).

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