

Annotated review of the Cantharidae and Malachiidae (Coleoptera) of the Maltese Islands

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Abstract. The Cantharidae and Malachiidae (Coleoptera) of the Maltese Islands are reviewed. Six species of the family Cantharidae are listed, two of which are new for the Maltese Islands: *Cantharis praecox* Gené, 1836, and *Malthinus latirufus* (Pic, 1901). *Malthinus pseudoscriptus* Wittmer, 1971, syn. nov. is synonymized with *Malthinus scapularis* Marseul, 1878. Male last abdominal segments of *Malthodes cameroni* (Pic, 1903) are illustrated for the first time. Fourteen species of the family Malachiidae are listed, four of which are new for the Maltese Islands: *Sphinginus lobatus* (Olivier, 1790), *Attalus sicanus* Erichson, 1840, *Ebaeus ruffoi* Pardo, 1962, and *Axinotarsus pulicarius* (Fabricius, 1775). *Attalus melitensis* var. *testaceipes* Pic, 1903, syn. nov. is synonymized with *Attalus sicanus* Erichson, 1840.

Key words. Coleoptera, Cantharidae, Malachiidae, Palaearctic region, Malta, taxonomy, new synonyms, distribution

Introduction

Malta, Gozo and Comino, together with some minor islands, constitute the Maltese Archipelago situated in the Central Mediterranean Basin. Malta, with a total surface area of 245.7 km² is the largest island, followed by Gozo with an area of 67.1 km². In total, the landmass of the Maltese Islands is about 316 km². The resident population numbers about 400,000, representing one of the highest population densities in the world with over 1,200 persons per square kilometre. The islands are aligned in a northwest-to-southeast direction and located in the Sicilian Channel approximately 96 km from Sicily, 320 km from Tunisia and 330 km from Tripolitania (Libya). Despite an intense impact of humans, the Maltese Islands still harbour