

First record of *Batracobdella euxina* (Hirudinea: Glossiphoniidae) in Europe

Clemens Grosser and Vladimir Pešić

With 2 figures

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Batracobdella euxina Neubert & Nesemann, 1995 was collected in a spring near Krumovgrad. This is the first finding in Bulgaria and Europe respectively and the only record of this very rare leech outside of Turkey.

1 Introduction

Batracobdella euxina was described by Neubert & Nesemann (1995) on the basis of two specimens from Turkey, holotype from Malkara near Bursa and the paratype from a stream near Ankara; both places are situated in the Asian part of Turkey. Further information about the distribution of this Glossiphoniid is unknown (Nesemann & Neubert 1999, oral communication Nesemann 2006). This finding is the third specimen of this species worldwide, the first in Europe and the most western of its geographical range.

2 Material and methods

Material: 1 specimen, 25-04-2006, Bulgaria, Eastern Rhodopes Mts., Krumovgrad, vill. Rabovo, spring; leg. V. Pešić, det. C. Grosser; Coll. C. Grosser.

Methods: The leech was collected from the stony substrate where it was found attached. It was transferred into 10 % ethanol, then washed to remove the mucus and preserved in 75 % ethanol. The material is deposited in the collection of the first author.

Identification (Fig. 1, 2): The preserved specimen was identified by means of the following features, given by Neubert & Nesemann (1995): the size about 10 mm in the length and 5 mm in the width (contracted, rolled up); one pair of eyes; the area around the eyes as far as the upper lip is lightened; dorsally, there are numerous very remarkable and light papillae on each annulus in more or less one transverse row; the cranial sucker has ventrally one median and one pair of marginal deep folds; the colouration of the dorsal surface of the preserved specimen is brownish; paramedian or other stripes are absent.

The colouring and size are similar to that of *Batracobdelloides moogi* Neesemann & Csányi, 1995. This species is also found in the Balkans, particularly in Montenegro (Grosser & Pešić 2005), but these do not have prominent papillae.

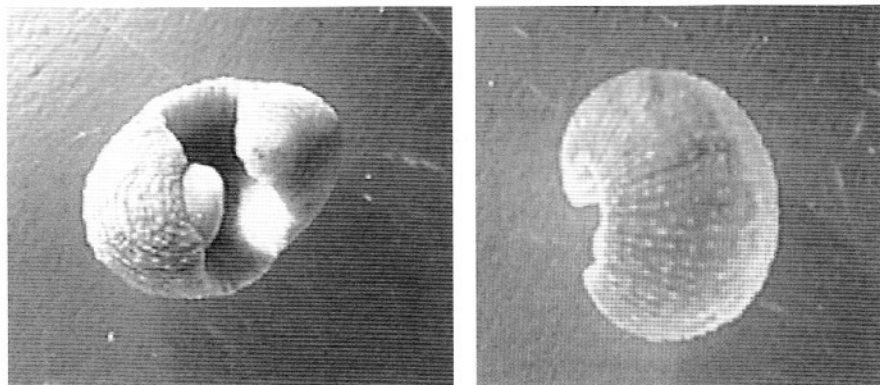


Fig. 1, 2: *Batracobdella euxina* from a spring in the Rhodopes, Bulgaria

3 Locality

The sampling place is an catched spring (used as a cattle drinking trough), without vegetation; bottom covered with partially decomposed organic matter.

4 Discussion

The distribution of *Batracobdella euxina* is unknown. This finding in Bulgaria is in the geographical vicinity of the locus typicus. In future we can expect that faunistic inventories will yield a considerable increase in knowledge about the distribution of *B. euxina* in the Near and Middle East region. Further, it is possible that the western boundary of its geographic range runs onto the Balkans (Bulgaria or even further west?).

Further records are most likely in connection with more intensive treatment and registration of the freshwater fauna in this region, because *Batracobdella euxina* is a very remarkable and striking species. Regarding the patchy distribution, the endangerment of *B. euxina* cannot be estimated. However, sites where the species is found should be protected, mainly against habitat destruction.

References

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Addresses of the authors: Clemens Grosser, Lipsiusstraße 35, D-04317 Leipzig, hirudinea@web.de, www.hirudinea.de

Dr. Vladimir Pešić, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Sciences, Department of Biology, University of Montenegro, Cetinjski put bb., CG-81000 Podgorica, Montenegro, pesicv@cg.yu

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