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Description of new taxa, both in Scelioninae and Telenominae (Hymenoptera Scelionidae) (*)

Abstract - From material collected in Sicily, numerous taxa of Scelionid wasps have so far been identified by the author, *viz.*: *Cremastobaeus* sp., *Palpoteleia* nr. *atra* Kieffer, *Paridris* sp., *Anteromorpha* sp., *Calliscelio* sp., *Probaryconus cristatus* n. sp., *Thoron metallicus* Curtis. The first three above-mentioned genera are new to Italian entomofauna, while the others are recorded in Sicily for the first time. *Robertella dessarti* n. gen. et n. sp., belonging to Telenominae, was bred from a *Nysius* sp. infesting the flowers of *Pulicaria dysenterica* (L.).

Riassunto - Descrizione di un genere e di una specie nuovi di Telenominae e di una nuova specie di Scelioninae (Hymenoptera Scelionidae).

Su materiali raccolti in Sicilia sono state riscontrate numerose specie di Scelionidi. Tra essi è stato possibile finora identificare i seguenti taxa: *Cremastobaeus* sp., *Palpoteleia* nr. *atra* Kieffer, *Paridris* sp., *Anteromorpha* sp., *Calliscelio* sp., *Probaryconus cristatus* sp. n., *Thoron metallicus* Curtis. Di essi i primi tre generi sono nuovi per l'Italia, mentre i rimanenti sono segnalati per la prima volta anche per la Sicilia. Da *Nysius* sp. infestante *Pulicaria dysenterica* (L.), è stata allevata *Robertella dessarti* gen. n. et sp. n., appartenente a Telenominae.

Key words: Scelioninae, *Probaryconus cristatus* n. sp., Telenominae, *Robertella* n. gen., *dessarti* n. sp..

INTRODUCTION

Pulicaria dysenterica (L.) inhabits restricted marsh habitats, which may sometimes be no larger than a few square meters. In Sicily, it generally grows along small streams, where during the summer only a few scattered puddles may survive. In 2003, from June to November, in some such microhabitats, samples of flowers from this Asteracea were collected almost weekly by Dr S. Blando, in order to study the associated entomofauna. These samples, both on flowers from *Pulicaria* and on others

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from the spontaneous flora, were swept by net, again almost every week. In this paper data is provided regarding Scelionid wasps which have either emerged from parasitized bug's eggs *Nysius* sp., and laid on flowers of *Pulicaria*, or have been collected by sweeping net. In addition other material will be dealt with or mentioned; this has been collected by the author all over Sicily, either by sweeping, or using a yellow pan trap. All the specimens mentioned through the paper are preserved along my collection.

METHODS, MEASUREMENTS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The specimens, before mounting on triangular card points, were first processed at critical point dryer. For the SEM (scanning electron microscope) study the specimens were placed on stubs and sputter-coated with gold.

Drawings were made after mounting the structures on slides in Faure's liquid and by means of camera lucida mounted on a microscope.

All measurements were taken at 40x20 Wild M20 stereomicroscope.

Throughout the paper the following abbreviations are used: TF = tarsal formula; TL = total body length; TSF = tibial spur formula; T = tergite; gts = genal-temporal sulcus; mg = marginalis; ms = malar sulcus; pm = postmarginalis; st = stigmatis; ba = basalis.

Anteromorpha sp.

MATERIAL EXAMINED: 2 ♂♂ (Caccamo, Tammitta, 27.VI.79); 1 ♀ (Balestrate, Calatubo, X.81); 1 ♂ (S. Flavia, Bellacera, 12.IX.80); 2 ♂♂/1 ♀ (10.X.80), other data as before.

REMARKS. Of this genus only *A. frequens* (Priesner) has so far been recorded, in northern Italy.

Baryconus sp.

MATERIAL EXAMINED: 1 ♀ (Balestrate, "Calatubo", 11.VI.03); 1 ♀ (Casteldaccia, fiume Milicia, Corvo, 1.VIII.03).

REMARKS. The genus has never been recorded in Sicily.

Calliscelio sp.

MATERIAL EXAMINED: 1 ♀ (Balestrate, "Calatubo", VII. 1981).

REMARKS. With regard to its distribution in Italy, the same considerations apply as those for the two preceding genera.



Cremastobaeus sp.

MATERIAL EXAMINED: 1 ♀ (Casteldaccia (PA), Fiume Milicia, Corvo 2.IX.03).

REMARKS. The genus was previously unknown in Italy; according to Masner (1980), and, more recently, to Kononova & Kozlov (2001), it is also absent in the Palaearctic Region.

Gryon nicolai Mineo

MATERIAL EXAMINED: 1 ♀ (S. Flavia (PA), V. Quarara, 22.VII.03), 1 ♀ (29.VII.03), 2 ♀ ♀ (2.X.03), other data as before; 1 ♀ (Casteldaccia (PA), Fiume Milicia, Corvo 2.IX.03).

REMARKS. In all the specimens the leg coloration is egg-yellow, and different from that observed on the specimens of type material. In addition, their larger size also suggests a different, bigger host.

Palpoteleia nr. *atra* (Kieffer)

MATERIAL EXAMINED: 2 ♀ ♀ (S. Flavia (PA), Vallone Quarara, VIII/2003), 1 ♀ (Casteldaccia (PA) F. Milicia, Corvo, 1.VIII.03); 1 ♀ (2.X.03) other data as before.

HOST. Although Tettigonidae and Gryllidae are retained to be hosts of Calliscelionini, the species to which *Palpoteleia* Kieffer belongs, with regard to this genus, until now no host has been documented by other authors.

REMARKS. The genus was based, by Kieffer (1926), on *Psiloteleia atra* Kieffer. He included 4 other species in the genus, as previously described by Dodd in *Baryconus* Foerster, but only one of these, viz. *Palpoteleia simplex* (Dodd) 1914, was subsequently recognized by Galloway & Austin (1984) as belonging to *Palpoteleia*, thus confirming Masner's (1976) opinion. According to Masner (1980), although the genus is also distributed throughout the Palaearctic Region, Kononova & Kozlov (2001) did not acknowledge this finding. The Sicilian finding is, nevertheless, the first in Italy.

Paridris spp.

MATERIAL EXAMINED: + ♂ ♂ (S. Flavia, "Bellacera", 9. VII.81); 1 ♂ (1.X. 80), 1 ♂ (31.VII.80), 1 ♂ (15.VIII.80), 15 ♂ ♂ (22.VIII.80), 5 ♂ ♂ (31.VIII.80), 1 ♂ (19.IX.80), 2 ♂ ♂ / 1 ♀ (26.VI.81), 1 ♂ (15-17.VII.79); 5 ♂ ♂ / 2 ♀ ♀ (9.VII.82), other data as before; 3 ♂ ♂ (Balestrate, Calatubo, 15.V.82).

REMARKS. The genus was known in the Palaearctic Region (Kozlov & Kononova, 1990); with regard to its distribution, this has recently been dealt with (2000), but in Italy it was first mentioned by Bin *et al.* (1995). I presume that both the species

known in the Palaearctic, *i. e.*: *Paridris stenus* Kononova et Petrov and *P. leda* Kozlov et Kon., are probably present in our material.

Probaryconus cristatus n. sp.

MALE. Head and mesosoma almost black; T1-T3 reddish brown; remaining tergites dark; mandibles, radicle, basal sector of scape and femora, trochanteres, basal 1/3 of tibiae and 1st-4th tarsomeres, reddish; otherwise scape, legs, tegulae and wing venations brownish orange, whilst 3rd-12th antennomeres dark, pedicel reddish brown; eyes greyish.

Head transverse, f. a. 1.53 times wider than it is long (26:17); compound eye length 17.0 x 8.9 width; malar sulcus = 4.0, deep; interorbital space = 18.0; OOL; LOL, POL ratio as 0.8:8.0:13.4; vertex gently falling over on to occiput; gena and templea of equal width; occipital carina absent; mandibles stout, bidentate; ground sculpturing finely granulose; cheeks fan-like striate; frontal depression extended for about 2/3 the maximum width of frons, over the interantennal insertions until reaching a point in front of the anterior ocellus, moderately fluted mesad; its extension is sharply defined, the surface being smooth and shiny, the borderline being crossed by a frontal ledge, *viz.* a transverse, crest-like projection of frons between the inner orbits, almost on a level with the top of the eyes; this is deeply notched medially, where it almost touches the anterior ocellus sinuate; the lower surface outside the frontal depression is also striate; the occiput and the rest of the head, except for the frontal depression, with sparse, greyish, rather long setae, as on the eyes; radicle barely shorter than pedicel (3:4); scape about 4 times as long as it is wide (10.3:2.6); A3-A5 of the same width, while their length ratio is 6:4:5; the remaining antennomeres are less wide than those of the preceding funicles; A12 is longer than A3 (7.6:6), weakly tapering from apical 1/5.

Mesosoma f.a. 1.4 times as long as it is wide (35:25); the parapsidal furrows are obliterated by a thin, smooth carina that rises on each side of the scutal sulcus and extends forward about half way across the scutum; the parascutula furrows are deep and well defined; the scutellum is rectangular in shape, 2.5 times shorter than the mesoscutum (8:20), widely separated from the latter by deep pits; the dorsellum is very narrow, strip-like, 1/8 the length of the scutellum; the propodeum is medially divided, with the halves anterodorsally bispinose; the netrion is well developed and open above fore coxa; pronotum, anterolaterally, has a smooth, mirror-like field; the anteroventral corner of the mesopleuron is roughly punctate; episternal foveolae absent; the sculpturing on the mesoscutum and on the scutellum is granulose, with deep, dense and large puncturations, whilst on the vertex this fades out; the vestiture of the pronotum, mesoscutum and scutellum consists of long, greyish setae, which are shorter, but extremely dense on the propodeal lobes; the fore-wing reaches the apex of the metasoma, fumose, the fringe does not

surpass about 1/25 of the maximum plan width at the same point; the length ratio of marginalis, postmarginalis and stigmatis is 3:13:9, the latter at an angle of more than 30° with the postmarginalis, curving and with a large knob; the marginalis wide; the submarginalis of the hind wing is complete; the fore - and middle - femora are of about equal width; the tibial spur formula is 1,1,1: that of the hind-leg is large and bifurcate; the hind basitarsus is very long, its length ratio, with the remaining tarsomeres together is 17:20.

Metasoma spindle-like, 2.42 times as long as it is wide (72:28); the length ratio of T1-T5 is 12:19:19.5:10:7. T1 is crossed by strong percurrent costae, almost all parallel to each other, except for the lateral carinae below, on which there is a row of dense and long setae; moreover, its acrotergite is markedly elevated from the level of the remaining surface in such a way as to form a rather obtuse-angle mesad, fitting into the excavated posteromedian part of the propodeum; T2 is also costate on its median sector, though more weakly than on the preceding tergite, and with a few of its central elements surpassing half the length of the tergite; the remaining surface, as well as that of T3-T5, is smooth and shining; T4 and subsequent tergites are covered all over by greyish setae. The total body length is 2.5 mm.

MATERIAL EXAMINED: 1 ♂ (holotype) (Naro (AG) "Rocca di Mendola", 16-22.VII.1978, white trap baited with "grapamone" in vineyard).

REMARKS. For the generic diagnosis of the previously described new taxon, I followed the interpretation of *Probaryconus* Kieffer 1908, provided by Masner (1976), in a fashion similar to that of other authors, including Galloway & Austin (1984), the main reason being to avoid possible misidentification on the part of students. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the above-mentioned author strongly challenged the validity of the original description of *Probaryconus spinosus* Kieffer (type species of genus), in which Kieffer (1908) describes some minute humps near the middle of the inner orbits ("... à cet endroit se voit de chaque coté, contre le bord interne de l'oeil, 'une verhue semblable à un ocelle, une arête peu distincte réunit ces deux verrues;....."). Unfortunately, I was unable to examine the type material of *P. spinosus* that Masner (1976), it presumed has probably been lost. On the other hand, the male of *P. spinosus* is, as yet, unknown, and therefore, I assume that: *Probaryconus cristatus* Mineo could be the male of *P. spinosus*; otherwise, mostly because of the typology of its frontal crest, it might belong to another species. In both of the two hypotheses, further new material from both sexes would be necessary in order to arrive at a more reliable diagnosis. The genus was only known in northern Italy, with the type species in the form of the genus, *viz.* *P. spinosus* Kieffer. This species has also more recently been found by Kozlov & Kononova (1990) in some regions of the ex-USSR. Even if the type material, according to Masner (1976), might have been mislaid, the original description of *P. spinosus* seems to suggest that the specimen collected in Sicily must be another species.

***Robertella* n. gen. (Telenominae)**
(Figs 1-5)

DIAGNOSIS (Female and male). A slender body, much more elongated in the female.

Head transverse; frons moderately convex, with distinct depression, but unmarginated; central keel rising from antennal insertions and stopping below end of depression, clypeus fused with labrum; bidentate mandible, with outer teeth longer and stronger than inner ones; eyes rather large, with minute scattered hairs; *ms* deep and dilated before reaching lower edge of eye; *gts* deep only across gena, curving upwards becomes superficial across the temple, fading out before reaching top of eye; antenna 11-segmented with clava of 4 antennomeres; no trace of occipital carina; conjunction line complete.

Mesosoma longer than it is wide; mesoscutum sharply dropping off to pronotum; parascutal furrows not so deep, slightly upwardly curved, incomplete from both apices; scutellum and dorsellum subrectangular in shape, the latter markedly declivous on subquadrate propodeal lobes, which are then completely exposed; wing narrow with *bs* on the fore one sclerosed; *pm* very long, more than 7 times as long as *mg*; *st* with big knob; fore tibiae short, otherwise legs slender with TSF 1-1-1; TF 5-5-5; netrion fused.

Metasoma of female more or less 2 times as long as it is wide; T1 bulging, unsculptured; T2 and subsequent tergites unsculptured on basal sector, but crossed, each on its own relative apical sector, by longitudinal percurrent, foldings of cuticle.

TYPE SPECIES: *Robertella dessarti* n. sp. (described below).

INCLUDED SPECIES: *Robertella* (from *Telenomus*) *nysivora* (= *nysivorus*) (Huggert) n. comb. and much probably also *Robertella* (from *Telenomus*) *floridana* (= *floridanus*) (Ashmead) n. comb.

DISTRIBUTION: Italy, USA.

DISCUSSION. *Robertella* n. gen. may be compared with the slender members of *Telenomus* and above all with those which posses a genal-temporal sulcus, like: *T. nysivorus* Huggert, 1983 (= *ovivorus* Ashmead 1893 nec Rondani 1879), *T. sulculus* Johnson, 1983, *T. antennalis* (Kozlov) 1973, etc; with regard to the shape of propodeal lobes in Telenominae, they are either like those of *T. nysivorus* and of *T. floridanus* Ashmead 1893, or of members of *Eumicrosoma* Gahan (cfr. Masner, 1980, fig. 12; Johnson, 1984, fig. 51). It should also be pointed out that Johnson (*l. c.*) retains that the subquadrate shape of the lobes is to be considered an apomorphic characteristic. Nevertheless, the main morphological feature supporting the *Robertella* genus as a new one, refers to the striking allocation of sculpturing on tergites, starting from T2. Here, contrary to what is usual, either in Telenominae, or in members of other subfamilies of Scelionid wasps, in which any possible sculpturation always originates from the basal margin of the relative tergite, on *Robertella* n. gen., in both sexes, this begins from the $\pm 1/3$ posterior sector of the relative tergite. In addition, the type of sculpturing observed on tergites of *Robertella* appears, as already mentioned, as longitudinal foldings of the cuticle, which is unique in Telenomini. It is worth pointing out

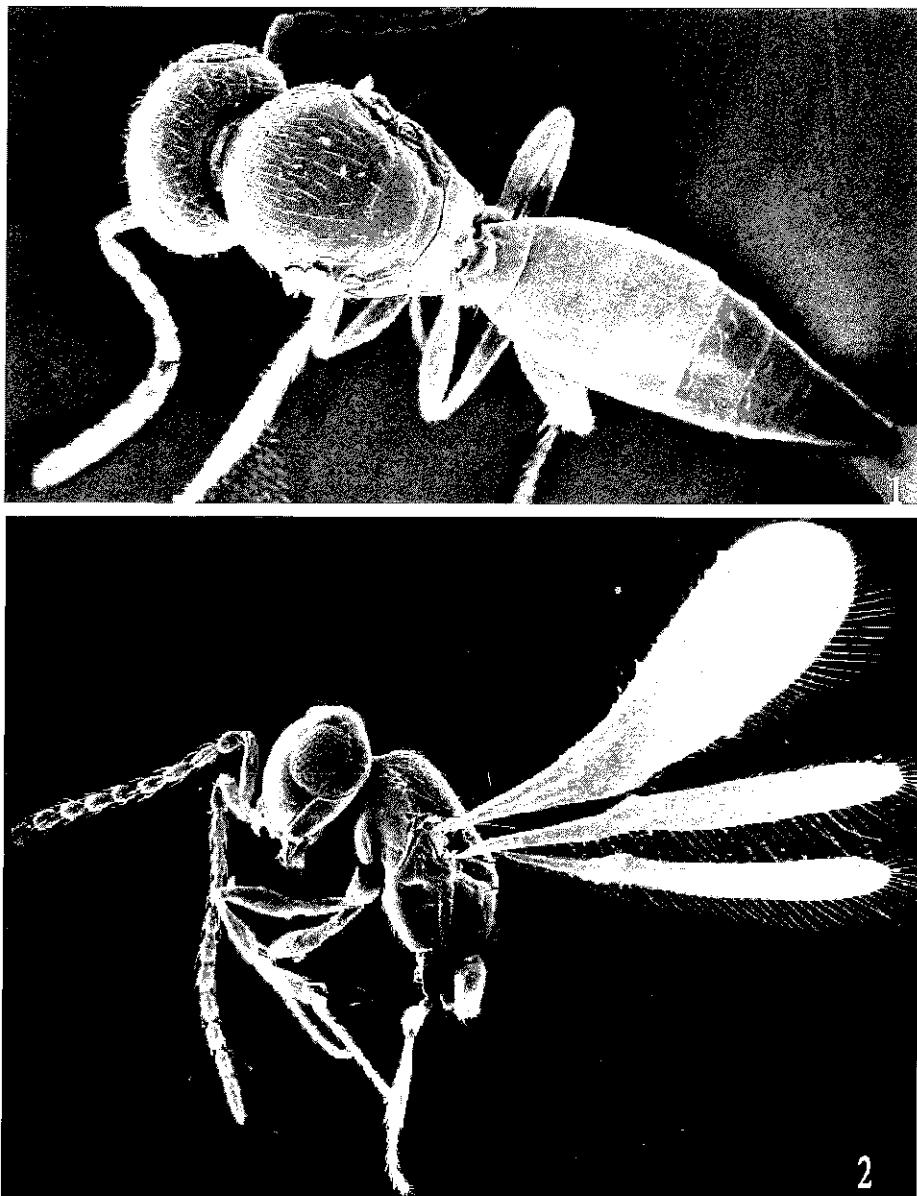


Fig. 1 - *Robertella dessarti* Mineo: female (1) (x 175); male (in profile) (2) (x 128).



Fig. 2 - *Robertella dessarti* Mineo: head of male (1) (x 553); head and mesosoma of female (2) (x 530).

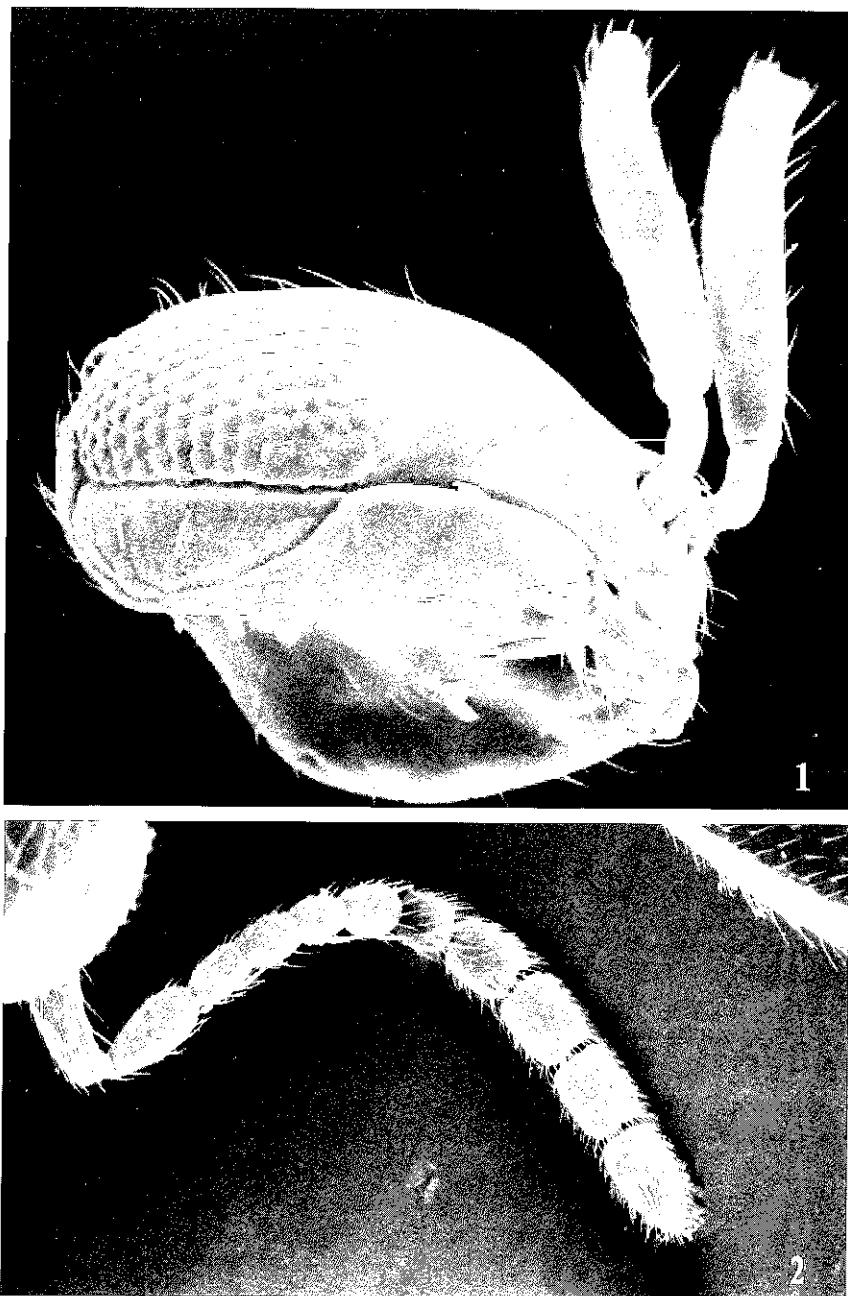


Fig. 3 - *Robertella dessarti* Mineo: head of female (1) (x 473); female antenna (2) (x 419).

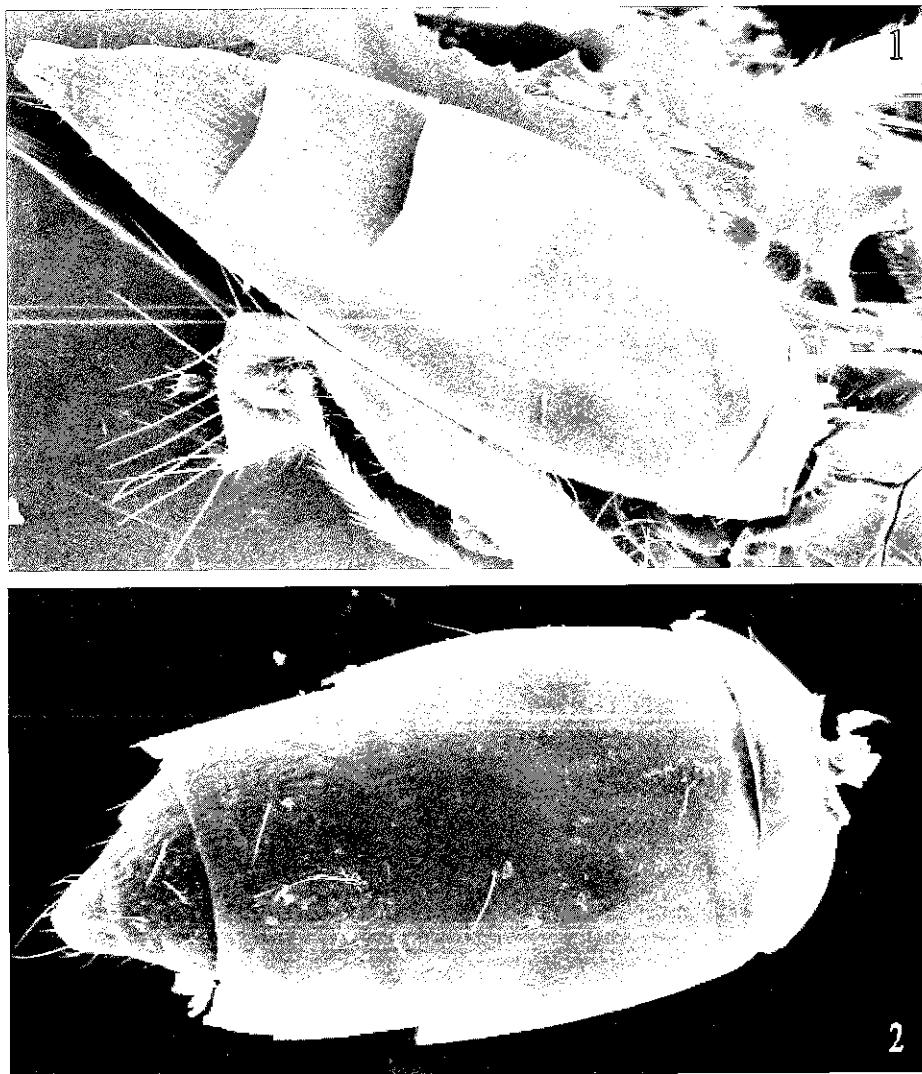


Fig. 4 - *Robertella dessarti* Mineo: female metasoma (1) (x 385); male metasoma (2) (x 495). Note that the sculpture is present on apical sector of relative tergites from T2.

that when the metasoma is cleared with KOH (10%), the bulges in the foldings disappear, so that the surface of the tergites is completely smooth. This peculiar feature can be better observed on T2, owing to its not being telescoped. Because of its wide distribution, I incline to presume that a large cluster of *Robertella* would be found in the future.

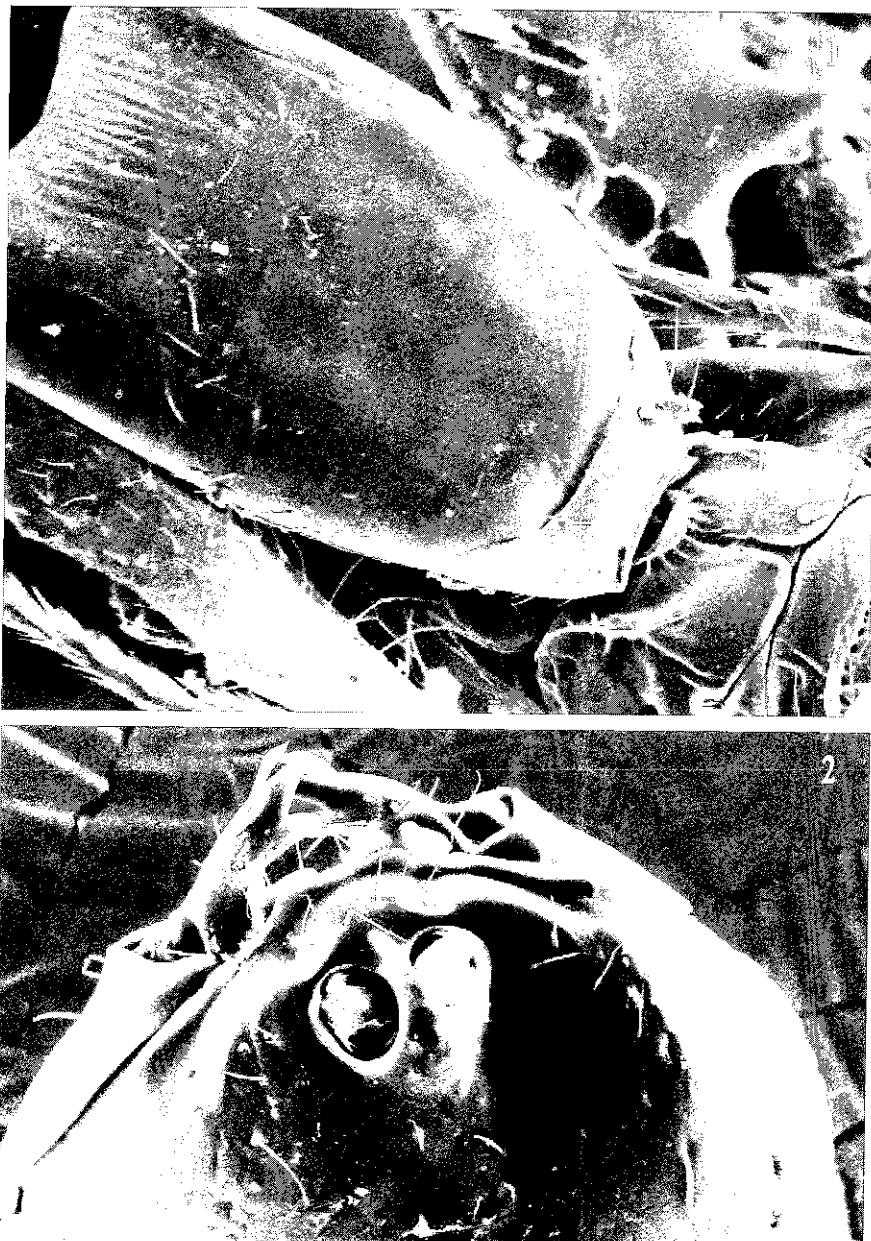


Fig. 5 - *Robertella dessarti* Mineo: details of mesosoma and metasoma showing the shape of propodeal halves and sculpture on T2 (1) (x 441); details of head showing the shape of clypeus and mandible (2) (x 1002).

DERIVATIO NOMINIS. *Robertella* is a diminutive of the name of my beloved daughter Roberta, and thus the genus is feminine.

***Robertella dessarti* n. sp.**

(Figs 6-7)

DIAGNOSIS. The previously-mentioned features are sufficient to distinguish this species from the other known members of Telenomini.

Holotype female. TL = 0.78 mm. Head and mesosoma dark brown; antennae, legs, wing venations, tegulae and metasoma brown; trochanteres, tips of femora and tibiae, 1st-4th tarsomeres, mandibles, radicle and tips of scape, pale brown; wing plans dirty water-coloured; eyes greyish.

Head seen from above, 3 times as wide as long (12:3.9), not very wide across temples; vertex moderately elevated, but without transverse keel, falling roundly on to occiput, which is not concave; head, seen from the front, as wide as it is long (12:12); compound eye longer than it is wide (7:5), with extremely short scattered hairs; interorbital space as long as eye height (7:7); malar sulcus much less than eye height (7:3). Frons gently convexing from above central keel to anterior ocellus, without transverse ledge; frontal depression shallow, vaguely delimited; central keel extending not more than the length of antennal radicle, stopping a little below mid point of eyes; ocelli arranged in a low triangle, the lateral ones less distant than their diameter from inner orbits; preocellar pit absent; for clypeus, mandibles and antenna see Figs 3.2, 5.2; sculpturing of head see Figs 1, 2.2, 3.1.

Mesosoma 1.4 times as long as it is wide (14:10); mesoscutum very weakly depressed on posterior 1/4; scutellum slightly truncate on apical margin; dorsellum a little longer at meson, much more declivous than scutellum; inner margins of propodeal lobes rather wide apart; fore-wing amygdaliform, not surpassing tip of metasoma in the event of T3 - T6 not being retracted; *mg* short and wide, less than half of *st* length; *pm* about 7.5 times as long as *mg*; longest marginal cilia of fore-wing 1.43 times less than the width at that point; hind-wing with complete submarginal vein, very narrow, its greatest width 0.71 times less than the length of fringe at that point; meso and metapleural carinae as well as episternal foveae, absent; nucha very short, viewed from above 3 weak outdistancing costae connected at each propodeal halve are seen for other characteristics and sculpturing see Fig. 2.2.

Metasoma, although variable in length, because of T3 - T6 telescoping, it is never less than 2 times its maximum width (25L:9W) (n=14); T1, T2 (length to width) in relative proportions as, 2L: 8W; 9W:13L T1 unsculptured number of lateral and sublateral setae 2, 1 respectively (n=18); T2-T6 crossed on the relative apical surface by dense, percurrent and almost parallel folds; in T2 → T5, their length ratio with that of relative tergite is as follows 4:13; 4:10; 3:5.7; 2:5; the unsculptured surface of T3-T6 is never exposed; ovipositor length percurrent from anterior margin of T2 to the end of metasoma.

Other characteristics are illustrated in Figs 1, 7.

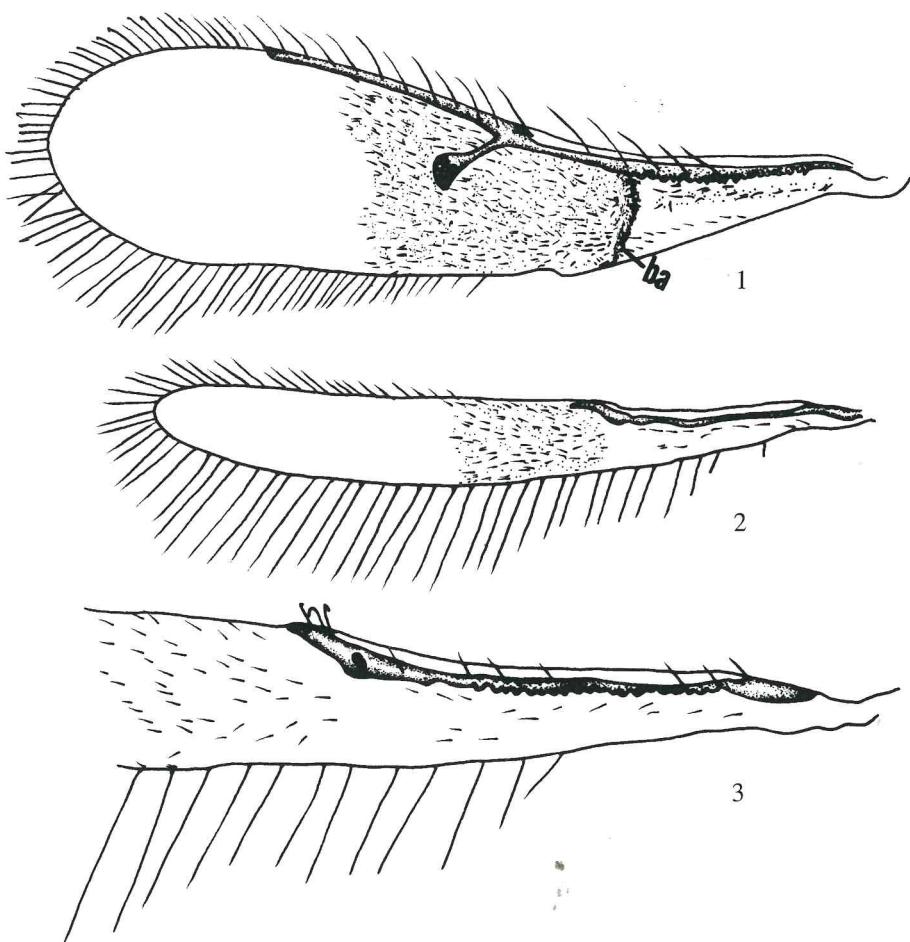


Fig. 6 - *Robertella dessarti* Mineo (female): fore wing (1); hind wing (2) and detail of the same, at higher magnification (3).

Allotype male. TL = 0.63 mm. Colouration of body and appendages as in female. Apart from sexual characteristics, the other main distinguishing features are the following: shape and length of eye different from that of female; metasoma, always much less elongated than in female (18L:25L); T1, T2 in relative proportions as: (16L:6.0W; 9L:8W) the folds on posterior sector of tergites T2-T6 are barely visible, and shorter than in the female; the unsculptured surface of T3-T6 could be retracted; antennae, wings and genitalia see Figs 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 7.

MATERIAL EXAMINED: 1 ♀ holotype and 1 ♂ allotype (22.VII.03 "Vallone Quarara", S. Flavia (PA) "Bellacera", ex eggs of *Nisius* sp. (Lygaeidae), laid on flowers of *Puli-*

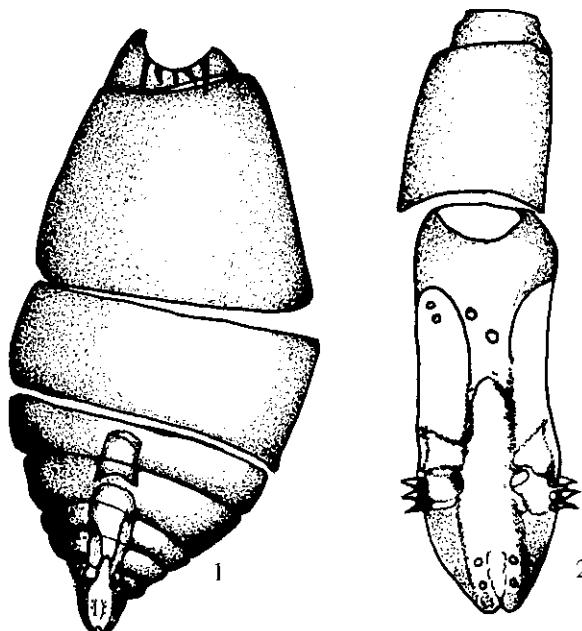


Fig. 7 - *Robertella dessarti* Mineo (male): metasoma (in ventral aspect) showing the size of copulatory organ (1); copulatory organ at higher magnification (2).

caria dysenterica (L.); paratypes: 2 ♀♀/9 ♂♂, other data as previously stated; 12 ♀♀/ 28 ♂♂ (during August 2003) other data as previously stated; furthermore the following additional material: 14 ♂♂/21 ♀♀ (2.X.03); 2 ♀♀/1 ♂, other data as previously stated; 4 ♂♂ (Partinico, Nocella river, by sweeping net on grass, 18.VII.03), 7 ♂♂ (8.IX.03 other data as previously stated; 2 ♀♀ (Sclafani Bagni (PA) Fontana Murata, summer 1977), 1 ♀ (Naro (AG), 8.VI-6/7/78, "Ciccoglio"); 1 ♀ (6-23.VII.78), other data as previously stated; 1 ♀ (Villafranca Sicula (AG), 29.VII.78); 1 ♀ (15.VIII.79, S. Flavia, Bellacera), 4 ♂♂ (20.VII.79), 1 ♂ (30.VII.79), 3 ♂♂/ 1 ♀ (18.VIII.79), other data as previously stated.

DISTRIBUTION. The findings in various localities and microhabitats allude to infesting plants other than *Pulicaria dysenterica*.

REMARKS. In a subsequent paper further details will be given regarding the bionomics of *Robertella dessarti* Mineo, and the host from which it was bred during the summer of 2003. *R. dessarti* is a sister species of *R. nysivora* from which mainly differs by the number of the teeth on mandible, that in the latter are 3. It also results by the examination (n.= 44 females), made from Masner (2004, *in littoralis*). *R. dessarti* in the shape of propodeal halves also resembles to *Telenomus floridanus* (see Johnson, *l.c.*).

VARIABILITY. The adults of both sexes, emerging from the afore-mentioned host eggs in August, had a darker body coloration; many specimens, mostly females, had completely smooth and shiny propleura; some females shared the apical margins of T2 and T3, weakly incised mesad.

DERIVATIO NOMINIS. The species is named after the most accomplished Hymenopterologist Dr Paul Dessart.

***Thoron metallicus* Curtis**

MATERIAL EXAMINED: 1 ♀ (Casteldaccia (PA), Fiume Milicia, Corvo, 2.IX.03).

REMARKS. Before this discovery the genus was unknown in Sicily. *T. metallicus* was known to parasitize the eggs of *Nepa cinerea* L. (Heteroptera: Nepidae) (Kozlov & Kononova, 2001); since the members of this species live swimming in marshes, the habitat where our specimen was caught matches the one where its probable hosts lives.

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