

The jumping plant-lice (Hemiptera: Psylloidea) of Los Monegros region (Spain, Zaragoza)

Daniel Burckhardt¹ & Javier Blasco-Zumeta²

- ¹ Naturhistorisches Museum,
Augustinergasse 2,
CH-4001 Basel, Switzerland.
² c/.Hispanidad, 8,
50750 Pina de Ebro, Zaragoza

Psylloids or jumping plant-lice are a small group of plant sap-sucking Hemiptera which are generally highly host-specific during their larval development. Adults are winged resembling minute cicadas and measure between 1 and 10 mm in length. They are characterized by their large metacoxae which are rigidly fused to the metathorax and which contain the large muscles for jumping. The larvae are strongly dorso-ventrally flattened and are usually on the growing parts of their host plants (Burckhardt, 1994; Ossiannilsson, 1992).

The superfamily contains some 2500-3000 described species world-wide and is most diverse in the tropics and in south temperate regions. Over 500 species are known from the Palaearctic (Klimaszewski, 1973) which reflects the better faunistic knowledge of this region compared to others. Psylloids are well-adapted to xeric conditions and are species-rich in the Mediterranean and adjacent eremic regions of North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia (Burckhardt, 1989; Burckhardt & Mifsud, 1998; Gegechkori & Loginova, 1990). Information on the Mediterranean psyllid fauna is uneven. Almost two hundred species have been recorded from Italy (Conci *et al.*, 1993, 1996), which is currently the best studied Mediterranean country with respect to its psyllid fauna. The Spanish fauna was revised by Ramirez Gómez (1956a, b, 1960). Unfortunately, Ramirez Gómez' papers lack precision, and his collection was destroyed, which makes some of the records doubtful. Subsequently additional species were described or new records were added in revisions or faunal records focusing on other regions. There is no recent publication summarising all the records. Currently there are 119 psyllid species known from Spain (mainland 87; Balearic Islands 19; Canary Islands 25).

During a survey of the insect fauna of the Los Monegros region well over thirty species of Psylloidea were sampled. A detailed list and discussion will be given elsewhere (Burckhardt & Blasco-Zumeta, in prep.). The aim of the present paper is to draw the attention to two aspects. 1. The psyllid fauna of the Iberian Peninsula is only insufficiently known. Psylloids are certainly not exceptional in this respect.

Thorough surveys as the one done at Los Monegros help to improve this. 2. Two species, viz. *Eurotica distincta* Loginova and *Cacopsylla saligna* (Loginova), are known otherwise only from Central Asia (Lauterer & Burckhardt, 1997; Ribera & Blasco-Zumeta, 1998). These disjunct distributions suggest that the xeric fauna (and flora) of Los Monegros is an old relict and is not due to man-made changes. For this reason in particular, the Los Monegros has a high conservation priority, on a national as well as European level.

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