

Blastobasis tarda Meyrick, 1902 an alien species from Australia new to Italy (Lepidoptera: Blastobasidae)

Manuela Pinzari & Mario Pinzari

Abstract

Blastobasis tarda Meyrick, 1902, an alien species from Australia was found for the first time in Italy.

Keywords: Lepidoptera, Blastobasidae, *Blastobasis tarda*, Italy.

Blastobasis tarda Meyrick, 1902 una especie exótica de Australia nueva para Italia
(Lepidoptera: Blastobasidae)

Resumen

Blastobasis tarda Meyrick, 1902, una especie exótica de Australia fue encontrada por primera vez en Italia.

Palabras clave: Lepidoptera, Blastobasidae, *Blastobasis tarda*, Italia.

Blastobasis tarda Meyrick, 1902 una specie aliena dall’Australia nuova per l’Italia
(Lepidoptera: Blastobasidae)

Riassunto

Blastobasis tarda Meyrick, 1902, una specie aliena proveniente dall’Australia, è stata trovata per la prima volta in Italia.

Parole chiave: Lepidoptera, Blastobasidae, *Blastobasis tarda*, Italia.

Introduction

As part of the research for the study of the fauna of Lepidoptera in central Italy, the results of which are summarized in the bibliography of some published works (Pinzari, 2019; Pinzari & Pinzari, 2019a, 2019b, 2021a; Pinzari et al. 2018, 2019), in 2019 the “Biodiversity of the Lepidoptera of the Presidential Estate of Castelporziano” project was launched under direction of Manuela Pinzari. The goals are the monitoring of the species already known for the study area and the complete and detailed knowledge of the fauna of the Estate. Interesting data already resulted from our first samplings and recently have been published in Pinzari & Pinzari (2021b).

Materials and Methods

The specimens were attracted by 160 W mixed white light lamp near the ringing center at

Torpaterno within the Presidential Estate of Castelporziano on the Roman coast in Italy. The study area is a mixed pine forest with *Quercus* sp. nearby the Torpaterno pond within a partly cultivated, but of high nature value area, value (Tinelli et al. 2012).

The species identification was carried out by examining the genitals of both sexes. The genitalia were boiled in 10% potassium hydroxide solution for few minutes. After taking photographs of the genital parts, these were glycerol-preserved into microtubes. These were closed with vinyl glue that is easily soluble in water and put under the specimen itself. The specimens were deposited in Mn and M. Pinzari collection in Rome (Italy).

Blastobasis tarda Meyrick, 1902, is an Australian species that has spread to New Zealand and then was imported into the North America. Here, it was found in 2009 in various localities in California in the surroundings of San Diego (Landry et al. 2013). In Europe, *B. tarda* was discovered in 2002 in the south of France in the Maritime Alps but it was described as *Neoblastobasis ligurica* Nel & Varenne, 2004. Successively, it was recorded in other localities in France, becoming locally common in Eze, Beaulieu and Cap Ferrat (Varenne & Billi, 2008) and also in Borgo in Corsica (Varenne, 2013). Its spread in Europe rapidly increased and Barton (2015) reports it from Cyprus (Rennwald, 2020).

Biology: J. Nel obtained adults of *B. tarda* from some dates collected on the ground under *Phoenix* sp. plants in the Parc du Mugel in La Ciotat (France). He also regularly collects the adults, of very variable size, with a UV trap in the garden of his home next to some *Phoenix porphyrocarpa* palms that produces clusters of orange dates (Personal Communications by email, 14-1-2020).

Results

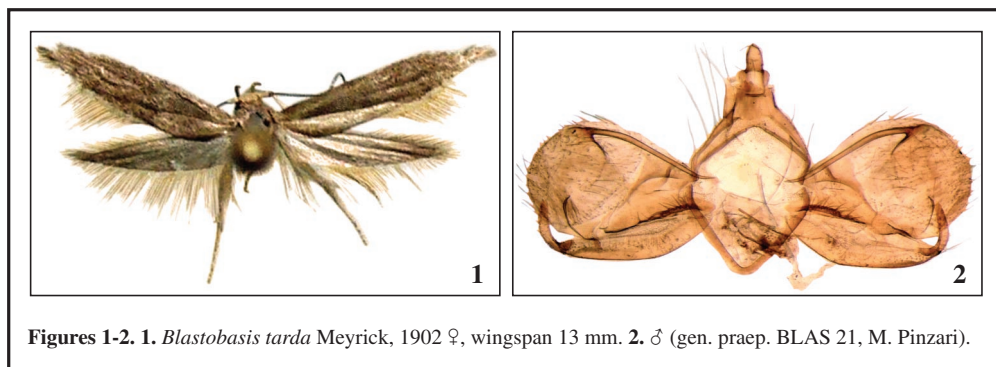
Blastobasis tarda Meyrick, 1902 (Figures 1-2)

Blastobasis tarda Meyrick, 1902. *Trans. R. Soc. S. Aust.*, 26, 170

TL: AUSTRALIA, Rosewood and Brisbane, Queensland; Newcastle and Sydney, New South Wales
= *Neoblastobasis ligurica* Nel & Varenne, 2004. *R. A. R. E.*, 13(1), 25

LT: FRANCE, Alpes Maritimes, Cagnes-Sur-Mer, Moulin du Loup

Records: 1 ♂ (gen. prep. BLAS 21, M. Pinzari), Torpaterno, 18-IV-2019, 1 ♀ (gen. prep. BLAS 22, M. Pinzari), Idem, 25-VII-2019, lux, Mn Pinzari & M. Pinzari leg.



Figures 1-2. 1. *Blastobasis tarda* Meyrick, 1902 ♀, wingspan 13 mm. 2. ♂ (gen. praep. BLAS 21, M. Pinzari).

Remarks: The Australian species *Blastobasis tarda*, as already reported in France, may pose significant problems for date palm crops. In Italy, the date palms are cultivated in Sicily and Calabria but exclusively for ornamental use because on our territory it does not bear fruit. In Sicily, date palms represent an ornamental element historically inserted in the urban landscape. The alien species *Blastobasis tarda* could add itself to the dangerous action by *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus* (Olivier, 1790) on date palms. Fortunately, it is not present in North Africa, where date palms of excellent quality are normally grown.

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