

References

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Magdalis memnonia Gyll. (Col., Curculionidae), a Weevil New to Britain

By A. A. ALLEN, B.Sc., A.R.C.S.

Whilst on a visit here recently, Mr P. J. Hodge, of Ringmer, Sussex, showed me a very large black *Magdalis* that he had taken off grass in Friston Forest, near Eastbourne, on 12th June of this year, and which he and his friend Mr R. D. Dumbrell of Polegate, Eastbourne, had made out from Reitter (1916, *Faun. Germ.*, **5**: 125-6) to be *M. memnonia* Gyll.—a species previously not known to inhabit Britain. I have since fully satisfied myself of the correctness of this determination. In the Continental keys the beetle at once 'runs down' to *memnonia* among the rather numerous species of the genus, of which at 5-9 mm. in length (without rostrum) it is, at least in mid-Europe, easily the largest. Among our fewer species, its size, together with other characters, should make it recognisable almost at a glance—only large specimens of *carbonaria* L. normally exceeding 5 mm. Mr Hodge's example of *M. memnonia* is a female of 7 mm.

The salient features of the species are as follows:—

Entirely deep black above, surface between the punctures shiny. Scape of antennae quite unlike that of *M. carbonaria*, being much longer and thinner and strongly curved in the region of the apical thickening (straight in *carbonaria*). Pronotum long, subconical, smooth, thickly punctate, sides without trace of lateral tubercles or of constriction towards base; posterior angles projecting backward but not sideways. Elytra a little widened behind, the base of each raised into a curved compressed keel much stronger than in *carbonaria*; their sculpture characteristic, the striae being catenate (chain-like) with deeply impressed linear-oblong punctures well separated by transverse bar-like shining intervals; interstriae with punctures irregularly uniseriate, and so densely crowded as to leave only narrow raised rim-like shining interspaces. Mid-femoral tooth larger than the others (at least in this specimen).

M. memnonia belongs to the subgenus *Magdalis* s.str., the members of which are practically restricted to Coniferae; but which (though comprising the bulk of the genus) included only two¹ certainly known as British up to now, namely *phlegmatica* Hbst. and *duplicata* Germ. These however are both dull dark blue or greenish-blue species peculiar to the Scottish Highlands. Quite apart from its superior size, the elytral sculpture—which presents a strongly rugulose aspect—renders the species under notice unmistakable.

Reitter (l.c.) records *M. memnonia* as general on diseased pines throughout Germany, and Horion (1951) gives its distribution as all central and southern Europe up to Denmark—where it is reported by Hansen (1965) as rare. The wood in Sussex where the insect was taken is planted with conifers, some of them in a sickly condition, so that its breeding there is a high probability. The occurrence of a single example only is without significance because the captor, unaware at the time of the interest of his find, did not revisit the locality; but we hope to establish the fact of its breeding next year. *M. memnonia* must be regarded as an introduction or, possibly, a natural immigrant, and like a number of such species may well spread to other areas—indeed it may already have done so. It need not, however, be feared as a potential pest, since it does not appear to attack healthy trees.

¹*M. violacea* L., as I shall show later, cannot be admitted to our list without further evidence.

63 Blackheath Park, London, S.E.3. 3.xii.71.

Notes and Observations

HELIOTHIS ARMIGERA HUBN IN DORSET. — The paucity of moths in my trap in Surrey during October decided me to give the West Country a try, despite the late date. I journeyed down to Charmouth on 25th Oct. I stayed at a place I knew well from my fossil hunting days, that overlooks the river mouth and has grounds within 200 yards of the cliffs. There are fine old *Macrocarpus* trees in the garden.

I ran a Robinson trap on the tennis court and found time on arrival, to work out an ivy run.

Hopes of late *Lithophane leautieri*, Boise. were raised and lowered by the irritating habit of *L. ornitopus*, which sat about on the macrocarpus trunk as if they had just emerged.

Throughout the next three nights moths were plentiful to both light and ivy. *Phlogophora meticulosa* Linn. averaged 50 per cent night and *Agrochola lota* Clerck. was also very common. An unexpected visitor to the trap was *Griposia aprilina* Linn. of which three were taken, though oak is very scarce in the district.



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