

## SHORT COMMUNICATION

### First record of the caper fly *Capparimya savastani* (Martelli, 1911) (Diptera: Tephritidae) in Cyprus

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Flies of the genus *Capparimya* (Bezzi, 1920) (Diptera: Tephritidae) are predominantly found in the Afrotropical zoogeographical realm (De Meyer & Freidberg 2005). The caper fly, *Capparimya savastani* (Martelli, 1911), is the only species penetrating into the Palearctic and has been reported from various countries of the Mediterranean Basin, namely from Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy (Sicily), Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Spain and Tunisia, as well as other from other Middle Eastern and South Asian countries (Iran, Jordan, Oman, Pakistan and Yemen) (Donati & Belcari 2003; De Meyer & Freidberg 2005; Merz *et al.* 2006; Miranda *et al.* 2008; Papachristos *et al.* 2009; Moussa & Yammouni 2014; El Harym & Belqat 2017; Mohamadzade Namin & Korneyev 2018) (Fig. 1).

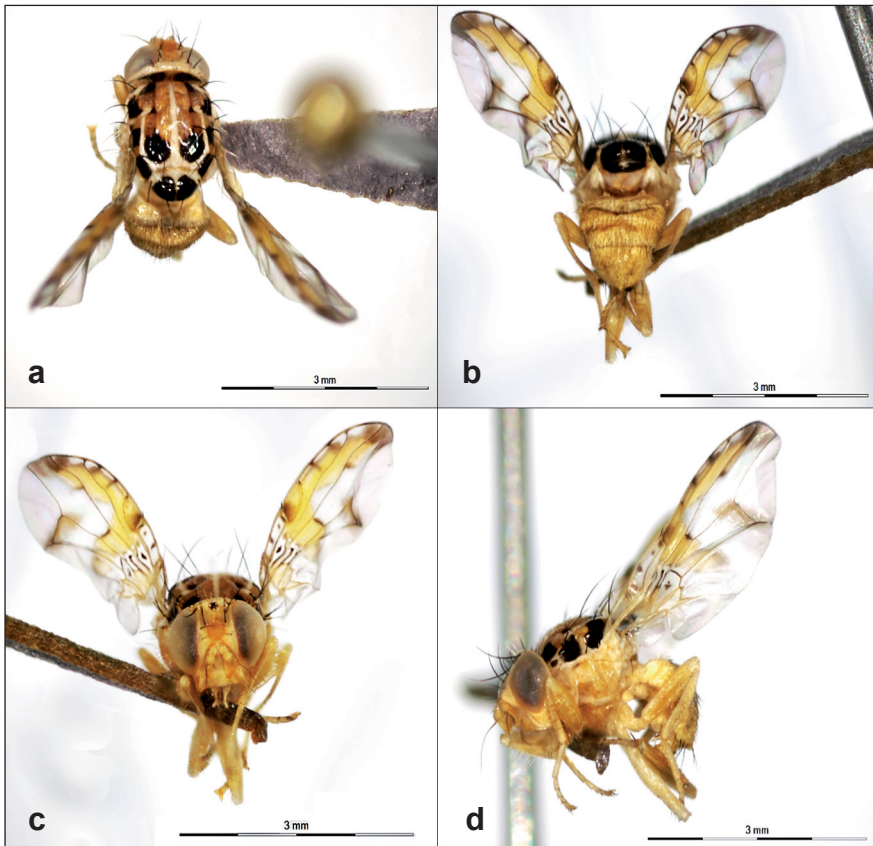


**Fig. 1:** Current distribution of *Capparimya savastani* (Martelli, 1911) in the Mediterranean Basin.

The caper fly is associated with *Capparis* spp. (Capparidaceae), with the larvae developing in both flower buds and fruits (Longo & Siscaro 1987; De Meyer & Freidberg 2005). As many as six generations per year have been reported, with the population density reaching its maximum in summer (Longo & Siscaro 1987).

Two specimens of *C. savastani* were collected in Cyprus and deposited at the Museum of Zoology, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece (ZMUA): 1♀ Paphos, Kato Paphos, Archaeological site [34.7588°N 32.4168°E], alt. 10 m, 1–31.viii.2017, J. Demetriou (voucher code: ZMUA DIP 004); 1♂ Cyprus, Paphos, Lasa, Vrisi Romanou [34.9288°N 32.5290°E], alt. 540 m, 26.viii.2019, J. Demetriou (voucher code: ZMUA DIP 003) (Fig. 2).

The specimens were identified under a stereomicroscope as *C. savastani* using the key of De Meyer and Freidberg (2005), and confirmed by Dr Marc De Meyer (Department of Biology, Royal Museum for Central Africa, Belgium) through the



**Fig. 2:** Male *Capparimyia savastani* (Martelli, 1911), Paphos, Lasa village, dorsal (a), posterior (b), anterior (c) and lateral (d) views. Scale bars = 3 mm.

inspection of photographic material. These findings constitute the first record of this species in Cyprus. A direct association of the caper fly with its host plant was not made at this time, as the specimens were caught by sweeping in both encounters. However, *Capparis spinosa* var. *canescens* (Linnaeus, 1753) is common in the island (Christofides 2017) and can be found in large numbers in proximity to the collection sites. In many Mediterranean countries, caper plants are cultivated and their stalks, leaves and buds are also collected from wild plants, being considered a dainty when pickled, and therefore infestation of the plant by the caper fly may have an adverse economic impact (White & Elson-Harris 1992). As the species is strongly dependent on its host plant, it is also expected to be found in other Mediterranean countries such as Turkey and Syria, where caper plants are abundant and the climate is similar to that of already infested countries (e.g. Cyprus, Greece, Lebanon and Israel).

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