

## First record of the Nearctic sycamore seed bug *Belonochilus numenius* (Hemiptera: Heteroptera: Lygaeidae) from Greece

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The sycamore seed bug *Belonochilus numenius* (Say, 1832) (Lygaeidae: Orsillinae) is a Nearctic seed bug, native to Canada, USA and Mexico, which has recently expanded its range in much of Europe (Gessé *et al.* 2009; Protić & Šeat 2016). It has so far been recorded from the following countries: Spain (Palma de Mallorca, first European record), France (mainland and Corsica), Italy, Austria, Portugal (Azores), Monaco, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, Switzerland, Serbia, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Kulijer & Miljević 2016; Protić & Šeat 2016). In Europe, all stages of *B. numenius* feed on the seed balls of various species and hybrids of ornamental plane trees (*Platanus* spp.). Although not damaging to the trees, outbreaks of *B. numenius* are considered a public nuisance and this species has achieved urban pest status in Spain (Riba *et al.* 2015).

On July 3, 2017, a female specimen of *B. numenius* from Salamis Island, Greece was photographed (Fig. 1) by V. Koutsoukos in a garden in the suburban area of Paloukia (37°57'46.82"N, 23°30'52.77"E, 24 m a.s.l.). Although the specimen was unfortunately not collected, the unique morphology of this species makes it easy to distinguish from native *Orsillus* spp. Several diagnostic characters discernible from the photograph (Fig. 1), such as the overall elongate habitus, the distinct colouration, and the anteocular length of head being three times the length of eye (Gessé *et al.* 2009), confirm that the photographed specimen indeed represents *B. numenius*. Sex was assigned based on the shape of the distal part of the abdomen (Fig. 1).

The area surrounding Paloukia consists of fields covered with phrygana, *Pinus halepensis* and *Juniperus*. Although there were no plane trees in the immediate area where the specimen was found, several ornamental plane trees exist in a radius of 2 km. Examination of those trees did not yield additional specimens, although they might have been overlooked due to their habit of staying on/in the seed balls which were high up on the trees. The specimen may have been dispersing in search for additional host plants, in congruence with previous studies (Carapezza & Cusimano 2014). Several collecting efforts by L. R. Davranoglou in parks in central Athens and in semi-natural habitats in the Athens suburbs (Tatoi, Nea Erythra) were unsuccessful in obtaining additional specimens, suggesting that this species may be in its early phase of invasion, at least in the southern parts of the country. Its presence in Salamis is not unexpected, given it is the country's second largest port. The distribution of this species in Greece will hopefully be elucidated by further collecting efforts.



**Figure 1.** Adult female of *Belonochilus numenius* from Salamis, Greece.

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