

# A record of *Mundochthonius styriacus* Beier, 1971 (Pseudoscorpiones, Chthoniidae) in Denmark

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The pseudoscorpion *Mundochthonius styriacus* Beier, 1971 is reported new to Denmark. Recently, specimens were discovered among unidentified material in the collections of the Zoological Museum of Copenhagen. Notes on the external characters, habitat and distribution are given.

Key words: Pseudoscorpiones, Chthoniidae, *Mundochthonius styriacus*, Denmark, distribution, habitat.

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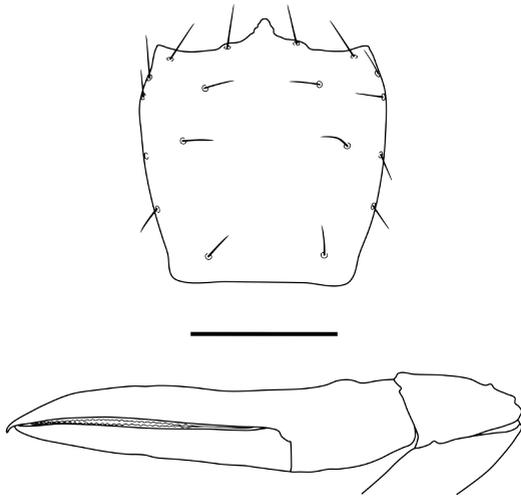
## Introduction

*Mundochthonius styriacus* Beier, 1971 is a member of the family Chthoniidae having just a few genera in Northern Europe. It is unique among the Chthoniid pseudoscorpions in this region by being eye-less with no visible eyespots. It is also a very pale species, possessing a conspicuous, triangular and slightly serrated epistome (Figure 1). The pedipalp of both sexes has a small dorsal bulge as seen in retrolateral view (Figure 2). Teeth of both fingers and epistome are very small and hardly discernible in the stereomicroscope at 80 x magnification. Apart from the single locality in Denmark it is known from just one locality in Germany, two in Austria, and one in Czech Republic (here actually several places, all in the vicinity of Prague), according to Stáhlavský & Ducháč (2001). Thus, the Danish locality is the fifth known and advances the northern limit of the species by 600 km. The paucity of records may indicate that the species either is rare, easily overlooked or both. At all sites it has been found in hollow stems (Stáhlavský & Ducháč 2001). These authors report the species from

various tree species: horse-chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), small-leaved lime (*Tilia cordata*), European beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), European ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), and hybrid poplar (*Populus x canadensis*). At the Danish locality at Vallø (SZ) it was found inside a common oak (*Quercus robur*).

## The record

During revisionary work in the collections of the Zoological Museum of Copenhagen (ZMUC) two very small unidentified pseudoscorpions were found. The specimens were collected more than 30 years ago at Vallø Deer Park by an unknown collector. A note on the label stated, “*Found among dead wood in a hollow oak stem*”. Despite small size the genital organs were fully developed. After some e-mail exchange with Volker Mahnert the species was identified to *Mundochthonius styriacus*, corresponding very well to the original description of Beier (1971). It is a tiny species, the adult male measure slightly less than 1 mm, the female about 1.2 mm. Thus it is distinctly smaller than the Book Scorpion *Cheiridium*



**FIGURES 1–2.** *Mundochthonius styriacus* Beier, 1971 1. Prosoma of male with prominent epistome and 18 setae (one has broken off). Scale bar 0.2 mm. 2. Outline of left female pedipalp in retrolateral view. Scale bar 0.2 mm.

*museorum* (Leach, 1817), which used to be the smallest Danish pseudoscorpion measuring 1.3–1.4 mm, according to Legg & Jones (1988). The small size of the species is also striking (Figure 3) when compared to the size of the relatively small pseudoscorpion, *Chthonius ischnocheles* (Hermann, 1804).

### Material

1♂1♀ SZ (Zoological District South Zealand): Vallø Deer Park, 55.4083°N, 12.2094°E, 6 June 1985; Leg. unknown, coll. ZMUC.

### Comments

The pseudoscorpion fauna at Vallø is fairly well investigated due to the presence of *Anthrenochernes stellae* Lohmander, 1939, listed



**FIGURE 3.** The tiny, pale and blind *Mundochthonius styriacus* Beier, 1971, female (left), male (center), and with *Chthonius ischnocheles* (Hermann, 1804) for size comparison (right).

in Annex IV of the EU Habitat Directive. The status and trend of this species is monitored regularly at its known localities. Several other pseudoscorpion species have been found at the locality: *Chthonius tetrachelatus* (Preyßler, 1790), *Chernes cimicoides* (Fabricius, 1793), *Dinocheirus panzeri* (C.L. Koch, 1837), *Lamprochernes chyzeri* (Tömösváry, 1882), *Lamprochernes nodosus* (Schrank, 1803), *Pselaphochernes scorpioides* (Hermann, 1804), *Cheiridium museorum* (Leach, 1817), and *Chelifer cancroides* (Linnaeus, 1758), the latter two species in stables at the estate. Despite being a well-worked locality *M. styriacus* has only been found once, however since it is very small and perhaps also somewhat transparent it may be difficult to spot in a tray with sifted rotten wood, a general problem with the tiny members of *Mundochthonius* (Zaragoza & Harvey 2005). Being found as far north as Denmark indicate that the species may also occur in the British Isles and in the other Scandinavian countries and collectors of pseudoscorpions are encouraged to keep an eye out for this species.

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