

***Cantharis rufifrons* (Marseul, 1864) bona species  
(Coleoptera: Cantharidae)**

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**Abstract.** After an assiduous, but vain research of the holotype of *Cantharis fuscipennis* (Mulsant, 1862), in the present note, I discuss the valid name to be given to the Sicilian population known by that name, which was found to be *Cantharis rufifrons* (Marseul, 1864). The nomenclatural acts here proposed are: *Cantharis rufifrons* (Marseul, 1864) bona species, *Telephorus fuscipennis* Marseul, 1864 = *Cantharis rufifrons* (Marseul, 1864) syn. nov., *Telephorus fuscipennis* Mulsant, 1862 nomen dubium, *Cantharis fuscipennis* var. *neptunius* Baudi in Ragusa, 1893 = *Cantharis rufifrons* (Marseul, 1864) syn. rest., *Cantharis fuscipennis* v. *rufifrons* a. *ambigua* Fiori, 1914 = *Cantharis rufifrons* (Marseul, 1864) syn. rest. Other names appear only as nomina nuda: *Cantharis fuscipennis* Dejean, 1821 (already mentioned as *nomen nudum* in Sherborn 1922-32), *Cantharis fuscipennis* Dejean, 1833, *Cantharis fuscipennis* Dejean, 1836, *Cantharis fuscipennis* Herrich-Schäffer, 1840, *Cantharis fuscipennis* Ghiliani, 1842, *Cantharis fuscipennis* Berge, 1847, *Telephorus fuscipennis* Gaubil, 1849, and *Telephorus fuscipennis* Gistel, 1856.

## INTRODUCTION

*Cantharis fuscipennis* “Dalmatia”, is cited as *nomen nudum* in Dejean (1821: page 36; 1833: page 105; 1836: page 118), in Herrich-Schäffer (1840: 13 “*Cantharis fuscipennis* D.”), in Berge (1847: 133 “*Cantharis fuscipennis* Dej.”), and Gaubil (1849: 115 “*Telephorus fuscipennis* Dejean Cat., species in Gaubil collection”); given resumed later by Gistel (1856: 177-178), which also informs us coming from the Peninsula “Haemi” (Balkan) - Thracian Mountains and, in particular, from Dalmatia - western border of the Dinaric Alps but with the exception of Serbia and Bosnia. The species was probably caught by Dejean himself (1821: iv) around 1817, and was subsequently formally described, referring to *Cantharis rustica* Fallén, 1807, by Mulsant (1862: 187, reprint: 243), on a female specimen of Dalmatia from the Reiche collection. This specimen (the Holotype) can no longer be traced in any way, since the Mulsant collection has been badly preserved during the years, and it has been completely destroyed (R. Constantin personal communication), while the Reiche collection is divided between Geneva (arrived *via* Melly collection), where the species in question is not present (G. Cuccodoro personal communication), and Paris (the specimens of Reiche are now in the Bourgeois collection, Malacodermata section) where there are 5 specimens (Figs. 1-3) of *Cantharis fuscipennis* but all of them coming from Sicily (A. Taghavian-Azari personal communication) and therefore, I obviously did not examine the holotype described by Mulsant.

*Cantharis fuscipennis* Dejean was finally cited of Sicily: plain of Catania, by Ghiliani (1842: 32), and subsequently redescribed by Marseul (1864: 25-26, 15 in the key) where in the same work, but some lines first (Marseul 1864: 25, 14 in the key), describes always from Sicily, also *Telephorus rufifrons* (= *Cantharis rufifrons*), the latter posteriorly considered a synonym-variety of *C. fuscipennis* (e.g. Ragusa 1873: 236; Bertolini 1872-1878: 130; Stein & Weise 1877: 99; Heyden et al. 1883: 113, 1891: 214, 1906: 288; Fiori 1914: 1-5; Hicker 1925: 499, Luigioni 1929: 604; Porta 1929: 51-52; Delkeskamp 1939: 61, 1977: 81; Moscardini 1968: 68-69; Kazantsev & Brancucci 2007: 242).

Therefore, since the two names *C. fuscipennis* of Dalmatia and Sicily refer to two separate taxa, the error of which was made for the wrong determination due to the similar coloration, we have the problem of the valid name to attribute to the Sicilian population (ICZN 1999 Article 49.), the discussion of which is the subject of this note.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

For the original labels of the Bourgeois collection, only the basic and non-integral data are listed here. The other specimens (some without black spots in the pronotum referring to “variety” *fuscipennis*), shown below, are stored in Fabrizio Fanti’s collection at Piazze (SI). In brackets I enter the data of difficult interpretation, and still refer to the photo (Fig. 5).

## RESULTS

### *Cantharis fuscipennis* (Mulsant, 1862)

(Figs. 1-5)

**Coll. Bourgeois:** (pics MNHN Paris, A. Taghavian-Azari)

5 exx. with specific identification label “*T. fuscipennis*//Muls.”: of which two specimens labelled “*Telephorus*//*fuscipennis* .Muls.//Mollip. 187.//*Sicilia*” with 4 additional cards “*nigripes*//[?icher]//*Sicilia*//*Mannerh.*” “*Sicilia.*” “*Ménetr.*” “♂.” and the other three from: “*Sicile*”, “*Sicilia*”, and collected by “*E. Ragusa*” from “*Monte Madonie*” made in 18“74”.

### *Cantharis rufifrons* (Marseul, 1864)

(Figs. 1, 6-8)

**Coll. Bourgeois:** (pics MNHN Paris, A. Taghavian-Azari)

2 exx.\* with specific identification labels “*T. rufifrons*//*Mars.*” and “*Cantharis*//*rufifrons*?//*Mars.*”: of which one from the collections of “*E. Ragusa*” “*M. R. Belg.*” from “*Castelbuono 5 et 6.73*”, and one from “*Sicilia*”.

\*The sample labelled Sicily, which has not been extracted, given its small size, is most likely to refer to *Cantharis praecox* Gené, 1836.

**Other specimens:** 1 ♂, 3 ♀♀, Cesarò - Bivio Bronte (ME), 1.v.2014, 731 m, Altadonna leg.; 9 exx., Madonie - Carbonara (PA), 22.v.2015, Muscarella leg.; 1 ex., Nebrodi - Capizzi



Fig. 1. Overview of specimens of *Cantharis fuscipennis* (Mulsant) and *C. rufifrons* (Marseul) of the Bourgeois collection.

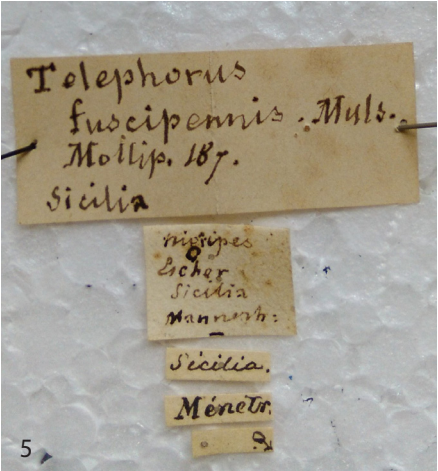


Fig. 5. Original label of a *Cantharis fuscipennis* specimen of the Bourgeois collection.



Fig. 2. Dorsal view of a *Cantharis fuscipennis* specimen (♂) of the Bourgeois collection.

Fig. 3. Ventral view of a *Cantharis fuscipennis* specimen (♂) of the Bourgeois collection.

Fig. 4. Detail of the head and pronotum of a specimen of *Cantharis fuscipennis* of the Bourgeois collection.



Fig. 6-8: 6- Dorsal view of a specimen of *Cantharis rufifrons* of the Bourgeois collection. 7- Ventral view of a specimen of *Cantharis rufifrons* of the Bourgeois collection. 8- Original label of a *Cantharis rufifrons* of the Bourgeois collection.

(ME), 1.v.2014, 750 m, Altadonna leg.; 1 ex., Ficuzza - Valle Arcera (PA), 12.v.2015, Muscarella leg.

## DISCUSSION

Gemminger & Harold (1869: 1665 and 1671) consider the two species still separate (*fuscipennis* and *rufifrons*), then considered synonymous by Ragusa (1873: 236) and Bertolini (1872-1878: 130). Subsequently Baudi in Ragusa (1893: 38) describes the variety *neptunius* and Fiori (1914: 4-5) the aberration *ambigua*. Given the loss of the Holotype, it is not possible to find out with certainty what kind of Mulsant specimen could be reported. Bourgeois (1884-1892: 111) and Ragusa (1893: 37) inform us that with the name *fuscipennis* in the ancient collections, was indicated for mistake, the form *immaculicollis* of *C. fusca* Linnaeus, 1758 (see also Romano 1849). Moreover, Baudi (1872: 101) synonymized *C. fuscipennis* Dej. of Dalmatia, saying it different from *fuscipennis* of Mulsant, with the *Cantharis pellucida* (“*Thel. pellucidus* Fabr.”), a nomenclatural act apparently remained unknown in subsequent works and catalogues. Company (1863: 658 “*Cantharis fuscipennis*, Dej *Dalmatia*”) quotes even for the Department of the Pyrenees Orientales in France, while personally I have also seen determined as *fuscipennis* Mulsant some specimens of *Cantharis livida* Linnaeus, 1758.

Since *C. fuscipennis* Mulsant is no longer traceable and that the Sicily’s population known as “*fuscipennis*” is clearly another species, well-characterized by aedeagus and endemic to the island, and which in all the Italian Peninsula is also vicariated by the similar *Cantharis paganettii* (Flach, 1907) with which it has also been confused in the years (see Fanti 2014: 66 and 68-69), I propose to consider as a valid name (as already suggested in Fanti 2014: 66) of the Sicilian population itself, *Cantharis rufifrons* (Marseul, 1864), which is the first available name in the literature.

I did not look for the type of *Cantharis rufifrons* Marseul (probably still in the Fairmaire collection at Paris) but over the years the synonymy between the two species (*fuscipennis* and *rufifrons*) has never been questioned and in Sicily *Cantharis rufifrons* cannot be confused with other species, with the exception of *Cantharis praecox* Gené, which is, however, of considerably smaller dimensions and has longer antennae and especially differently shaped in antennomers II, III and IV. These characters, which are all clearly expressed in the original descriptions that Marseul provides of *C. rufifrons* (Marseul 1864: 25) and *C. praecox* (Marseul 1864: 51).

## NOMENCLATURAL ACTS

*Cantharis rufifrons* (Marseul, 1864) **bona sp.**

*Telephorus rufifrons* Marseul, 1864: 25, 14 (in the key). Locus typicus: “Sicile” (Fairmaire).

= *Telephorus fuscipennis* Marseul, 1864: 25-26, 15 (key) *nec* Mulsant, 1862: 187 (243 reprint) **syn. nov.**

[we can regard it as a variety, with head and pronotum red]

= *Cantharis fuscipennis* var. nov. *neptunius* Baudi in Ragusa, 1893: 38 [synonymous in Fiori 1914: 3-4]. **syn. rest.**

[variety with black head behind the eyes and pronotum with two longitudinal black lines. Identical to *rufifrons*]  
= *Cantharis fuscipennis* v. *rufifrons* a. *ambigua* Fiori, 1914: 4-5 **syn. rest.**  
[pronotum without black spots. Identical to *fuscipennis*]

*Telephorus fuscipennis* Mulsant, 1862: 187 (243 reprint) **nomen dubium**

*Cantharis pellucida* Fabricius, 1792

= *Cantharis fuscipennis* Baudi, 1872: 101 [nomenclatural act remained unknown]  
[is the “species” of Dejean, described (is however homonym of *fuscipennis* Mulsant, 1862) and synonymized by Baudi himself, that write to be different to *fuscipennis* Mulsant)]

*Cantharis fuscipennis* Dejean, 1821: 36 *nomen nudum* (cited as *n. n.* by Sherborn 1922-32: 2590)

*Cantharis fuscipennis* Dejean, 1833: 105 *nomen nudum*

*Cantharis fuscipennis* Dejean, 1836: 118 *nomen nudum*

*Cantharis fuscipennis* Herrich-Schäffer, 1840: 13 *nomen nudum*

*Cantharis fuscipennis* Ghiliani, 1842: 32 *nomen nudum*

*Cantharis fuscipennis* Berge, 1847: 133 *nomen nudum*

*Telephorus fuscipennis* Gaubil, 1849: 115 *nomen nudum*

*Telephorus fuscipennis* Gistel, 1856: 178 *nomen nudum*

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