

A beetle named Marco Polo

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The new species, *Hycleus marcipoli*. Credit: Marco A. Bologna

A team of Chinese and Italian scientists has joined efforts to provide a key to the understudied phaleratus group of blister beetles. During their research the scientists have also discovered a new species from the genus *Hycleus*, which they named after Marco Polo, as a tribute to their collaboration during the Ph.D. studies. The study was published in the

open access journal *ZooKeys*.

The phaleratus group to which the new [species](#) *Hycleus marcipoli* belongs, is part of the Meloidae family commonly known as the blister beetle family. The representatives of this group get their unpleasant name from their defensive mechanism which includes secretion of a blistering agent.

The name of the new species was inspired by the Chinese - Italian collaboration during this research. Marco Polo (1254-1324), was a Venetian explorer who, during a long period of permanence in China in the late XIII century (1271-1284), established the first well documented relationships between the Chinese and European worlds and opened western culture to the wide and rich Chinese heritage.

"We were extremely happy to discover a [new species](#) during our studies of the Chinese species of the genus *Hycleus*. We were wondering for a while how to name it until we came up with the idea to name it after Marco Polo a historical figure which represents the beginning of [collaboration](#) between China and the West. " comments Dr Marco A. Bologna from the Università degli studi Roma Tre, Italy.

More information: Pan Z, Monica C, Bologna MA (2014) A new Eastern Asian *Hycleus* and key to the Chinese species of the phaleratus group (Coleoptera, Meloidae, Mylabrini). *ZooKeys* 463: 11-19. [DOI: 10.3897/zookeys.463.8261](#)

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