Journal of Insect Biodiversity and Systematics
ISSN: 2423-8112
2026 | 12 (04), 849–857
Website: https://jibs.modares.ac.ir
Contents list: https://www.biotaxa.org/jibs
https://doi.org/10.48311/jibs.12.04.849

Original Article

A new species of *Vectevania* Cockerell, 1922 (Hymenoptera: Gasteruptiidae: Aulacinae) from late Eocene Rovno amber

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https://zoobank.org/urn:lsid:zoobank.org:EBAF60BF-2E66-439D-B222-B450E9154935

Academic Editor
Mostafa Ghafouri Moghaddam

Received
August 07, 2026

Revised
October 03, 2026

Accepted
October 04, 2026

Published online
October 06, 2026

ABSTRACT. *Vectevania rovno* **sp. nov.** is described based on an incomplete inclusion in late Eocene Rovno amber. It is the second species of *Vectevania*. The other, *Vectevania vetula* Cockerell, 1922, was described in the roughly coeval Bembridge Marls of the Isle of Wight (southern England). *Vectevania* is attributed to the evanioid family Gasteruptiidae and subfamily Aulacinae. Its triangular forewing cell 1mcu is unique in the Aulacinae, with both 1-M and cu-a entering its narrow end. Gasteruptiidae is the 24th hymenopteran family determined to the species level from Rovno amber fauna.

KEYWORDS: Fossil insects, Evanioidea, Priabonian, Bembridge Marls

Citation: Rasnitsyn, A.P. & Perkovsky, E.E. (2026) A new species of *Vectevania* Cockerell, 1922 (Hymenoptera: Gasteruptiidae: Aulacinae) from late Eocene Rovno amber. *Journal of Insect Biodiversity and Systematics*, 12 (04), 849–857.

INTRODUCTION

Gasteruptiidae s.l. (including the extant Gasteruptiinae and Aulacinae – Rasnitsyn 1988), is today a minor wasp group (six genera and 681 species; Aguiar et al. 2013), but it was far more abundant and diverse during the Cretaceous, with a rather complicated and debatable systematics in need of revision (cf. Rasnitsyn 1988; Engel 2006, 2013; Engel & Wang 2016; Li et al. 2018; Jouault et al. 2022; Álvarez-Parra & Huang, 2024). Resolving this is outside the scope of this short paper, and so we take the conservative view of Rasnitsyn (1988).

Vectevania vetula Cockerell, 1922 was described as a monotypic genus of Evaniinae (then equivalent to the currently defined superfamily Evanioidea) from the Bembridge Marls of the Isle of Wight (southern England), which is now considered latest Eocene (Hooker et al. 2009). It was re-described as a possible, somewhat aberrant member of the gasteruptiid subfamily Aulacinae (Rasnitsyn 2013) and was later proposed, incorrectly in our opinion, to form a family of its own (Li et al. 2018). The fossil reported here is the first record of a close relative of that enigmatic insect. It is noteworthy because Rovno amber, along with other northern European succinites (Baltic, Bitterfeld and Danish amber), is close to the Bembridge Marls in age (middle-late Priabonian) (Iakovleva 2023; Ross et al. 2026; Eskov et al. 2026), and as the Rovno amber source area is thought to have had the warmest climate among these amber forests (Mänd et al. 2018; Perkovsky et al. 2025; Shamshev et al. 2025; Zakrzewska et al. 2025).

Warm winters in southern England in the late Eocene are supported by various evidence, such as the abundance of species of the tropical ant genus *Oecophylla* spp. in the Bembridge Marls (Anthopov et al. 2014). Some thermophilic elements of the Bembridge Marls fauna are surprising; for example, two

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ISSN 2423-8112 – **Published by** Tarbiat Modares University | **Owner** The Entomological Society of Iran

specimens of the thermophilic subfamily Gumillinae (Neuroptera) (Perkovsky & Makarkin 2020), their only known occurrence is the Cenozoic. This subfamily is represented today by only two species, known by one specimen each from northern South America (Martins et al. 2016). At the same time, one specimen of an aberrant mastotermitid termite (Isoptera) is known from Baltic amber in a syninclusion with the ant *Liometopum* Mayr, 1861 (Engel et al. 2007), although *Mastotermes anglicus* Rosen, 1913 is abundant in the roughly coeval Bembridge Marls. This cannot easily be explained by taphonomy, as the size of Eocene mastotermitids does not prevent their being trapped in resins (Perkovsky & Vasilenko 2020). That is, the abundance of mastotermitids in the Bembridge Marls is consistent with milder winters than in the Priabonian amber forests (Radchenko & Perkovsky 2021).

Vectevania was probably a parasite of xylophagous insect larvae (Rasnitsyn 2013). Nearly all Aulacinae hosts belong to Cerambycidae, Buprestidae and Xiphydriidae. Fossil Xiphydriidae are unknown, Cerambycidae are strangely absent (or very rare), and Buprestidae are common in the Bembridge Marls (Kirejtshuk et al. 2019); Buprestidae are very rare in succinites (Tamadera & Yamamoto 2026). Buprestidae are unknown in Rovno amber (Legalov & Perkovsky 2026), but Cerambycidae are represented by four genera (Haug et al. 2023; Vitali 2023; Vitali & Perkovsky 2023; Legalov et al. 2024).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Late Eocene (Priabonian) Rovno amber was deposited in the Volhynian Uplift (Chemyreva et al. 2024) and is mined in the Rovno, Volyn, and Zhitomir Oblasts of Ukraine (Eskov et al. 2026). The piece examined with the inclusion was mined at the Pugach quarry, Klesov, the most studied Rovno amber deposit (Mitov et al. 2021; Perkovsky et al. 2024). The amber piece is 2.6× 0.8× 0.6 mm and weighs 1 gram. Photographs were taken using a Leica® Z16 APO microscope equipped with a Leica® FLEXACAM C1 camera and processed by LAS Core software. The material examined is deposited in the Schmalhausen Institute of Zoology (SIZK; Kiev, Ukraine).

RESULTS

Class Insecta Linnaeus, 1758

Order Hymenoptera Linnaeus, 1758

Superfamily Evanioidea Latreille, 1802

Family Gasteruptiidae Ashmead, 1900 (1837)

Vectevaniidae: Li et al. 2018, p. 834: unavailable under ICZN #13.1.1. (see Discussion for details).

Subfamily Aulacinae Shuckard, 1841

Genus *Vectevania* Cockerell, 1922

Vectevania: Cockerell 1922:33. Type species. *Vectevania vetula* Cockerell, 1922

Vectevania rovno sp. nov.

https://zoobank.org/urn:lsid:zoobank.org:act:81D5C174-3765-43C5-BC87-F72EE5FBA5A8

[Fig. 1]

Material examined. **Holotype** SIZK K-31127, Klesov, Rovno amber, late Eocene; imprint of the incomplete lower surface of the insect on a piece of amber including partial head, mesosoma, leg and metasoma bases, and wings except apical parts.

Etymology. Named for the Rovno amber Lagerstätte.

Diagnosis. Head with high occipital carina. Propleurae short, not forming a distinct neck. Forewing as preserved in ordinary Aulacinae, except for a small triangular cell 1mcu with 1-Rs and cu-a entering at its base (both 1-M and 1-Cu rudimentary). Forewing length to pterostigmal apex ca. 4.4 mm. First metasomal segment narrow with straight sides.

Description. Sex unknown. Head large, with occipital carina high. Propleurae short, not forming a neck. Legs ordinary as preserved, fore tibial spur wide, slightly arching. All visible veins appear tubular with sharp edges. Possible difference in vein coloration cannot be ruled out by preservation. Forewing with costal space wide, pterostigma semicircular, with 2r-rs at its mid length, 1r-rs lost, 1-Rs long, arching, distant from pterostigma for half its length, 1-M rudimentary, 1-Rs+M twice as long as 2-Rs+M, Rs not preserved distal of 2-Rs+M, 2-M about as long as 1-Rs, 3-M very short, 2r-m restored as near opposite 2r-rs on Rs (possibly a result of deformation), M+Cu arching, 1-Cu rudimentary, 1m-cu short, oblique, 2m-cu slightly distal to 2r-m, cu-a almost coinciding with 1-M, oblique, A sinuate. Hind wing ordinary for Aulacinae, except all visible veins appear tubular. Metasoma unknown except that first segment elongate, narrow, with straight lateral margin and distinct boundary between tergum and sternum. Length of forewing up to pterostigmal apex ca. 4.4 mm.

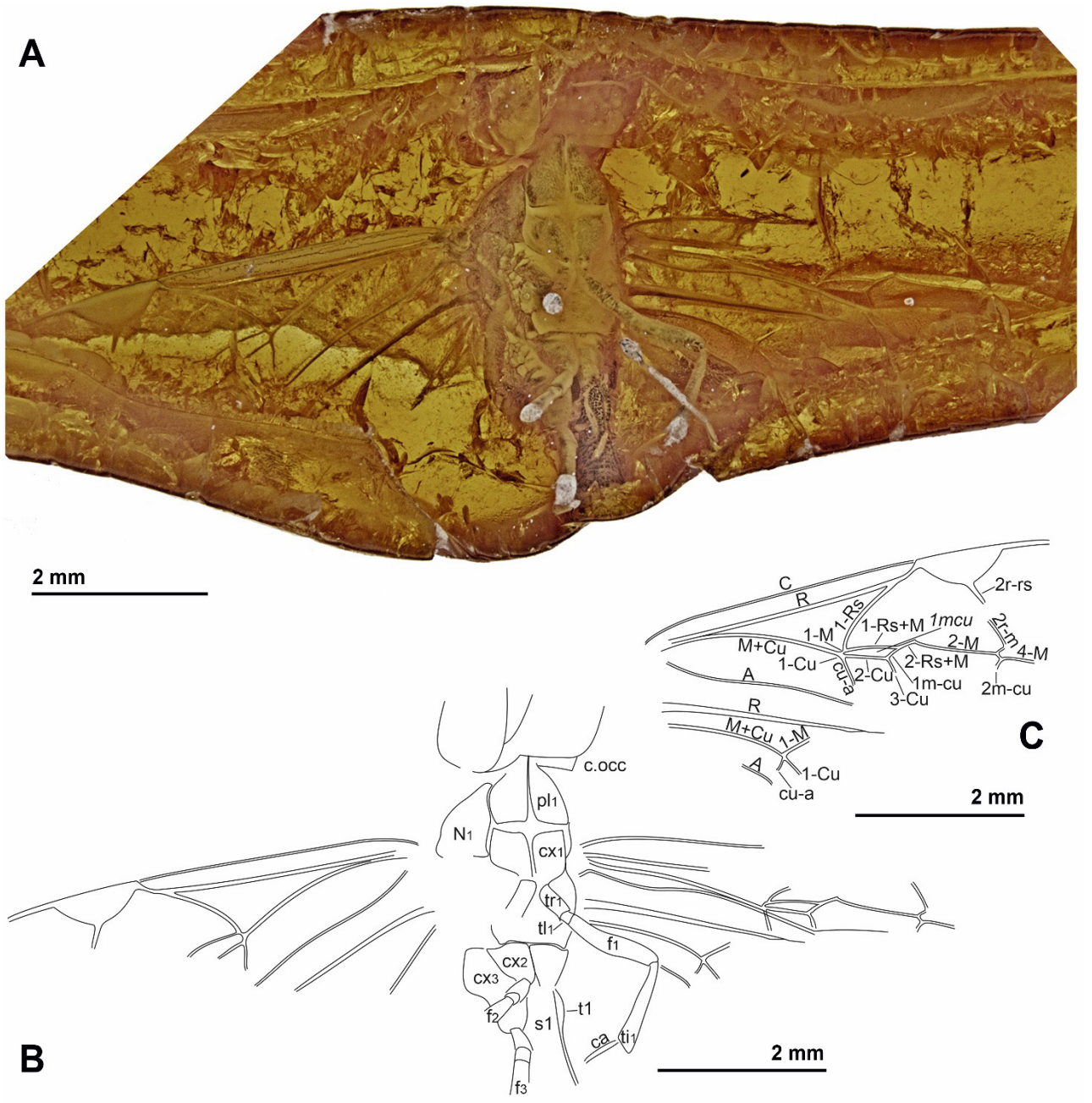


Figure 1. *Vectevania rovno* **sp. nov.** Holotype SIZK K-31127. **A.** General view; **B.** Line drawing. **C.** Wing venation restored based on right and left wings. Vein name abbreviations in Roman font, cell names italicized (*1mcu*).

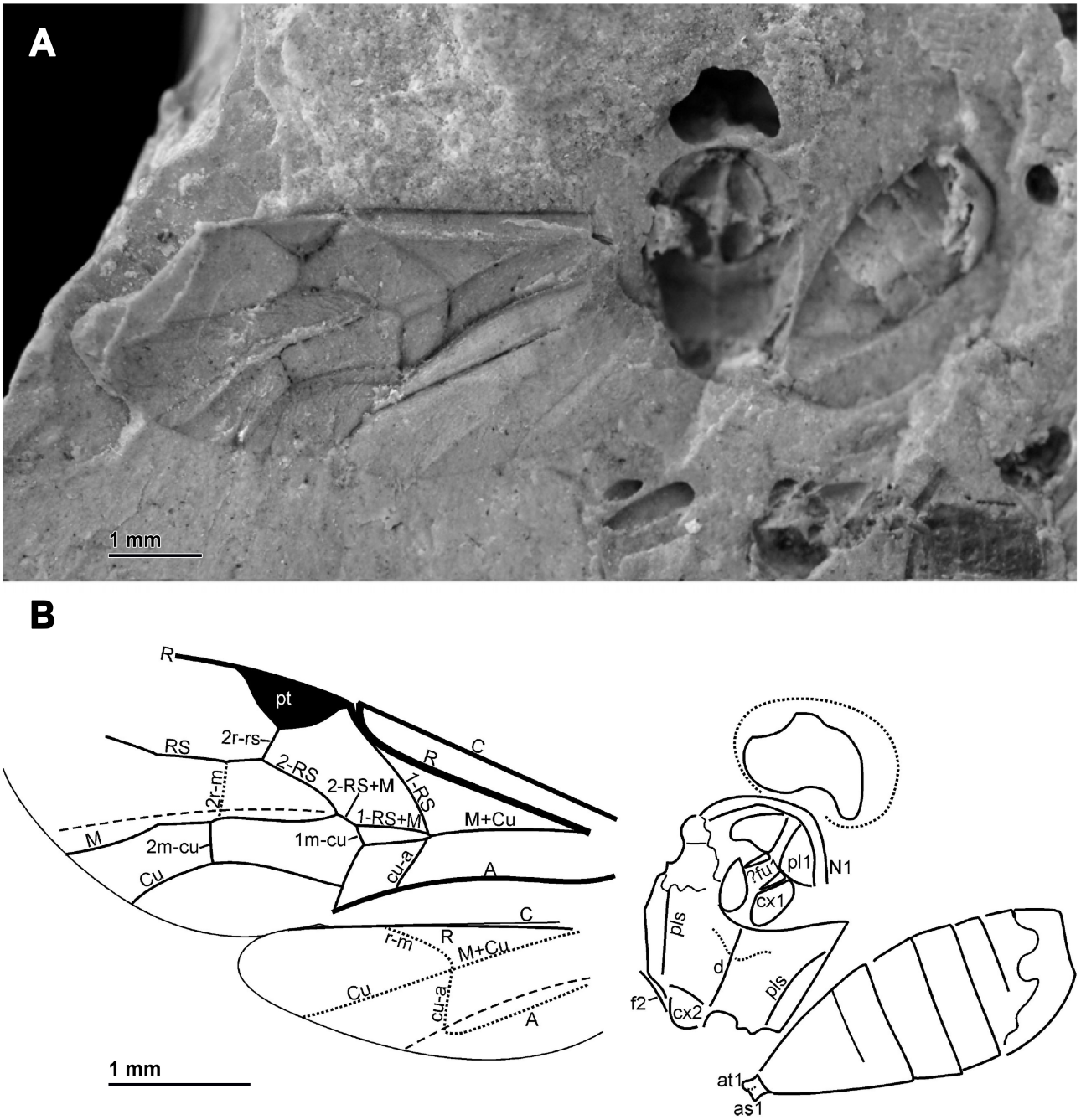


Figure 2. *Vectevania vetula* Cockerell, 1922. Holotype In.20535. **A.** Photograph of the fossil; **B.** Line drawing. Spectral wing veins (not colored and expressed in relief only, as defined by Mason 1986; cf. Huber & Sharkey 1993) are also shown by dots, membrane folds by dashes; dotted lines on the body indicate the very tentative head contour and the bend between lower and anterior faces of mesopectus. Vein nomenclature is standard; other symbols: *at1, as1* – acrotergite and acrosternite of the first metasomal segment, *d* – discrimen (line of invagination of the thoracic sternum as defined by Ferris 1940; cf. Matsuda 1970), *f2* – margin of mid femur, ?*fu1* – supposedly parts of prothoracic furca, *N1* – fore margin of pronotum, *pls* – pleural suture; *cx1, cx2, pl1* – entrances into cavities of, respectively, fore and mid coxae and of propleura. From Rasnitsyn (2013), with permission.

Remarks. The new species is assigned to the family Gasteruptiidae and subfamily Aulacinae based on its characteristic semicircular pterostigma and particularly on the general pattern of its forewing venation, which is practically identical to that of *Vectevania vetula* Cockerell (Fig. 2), including the unusual form of cell 1mcu and surrounding veins (see diagnosis). An apparently striking venational difference in the form of cross vein 2r-m (inclined basad towards 2r-rs rather than being subvertical and distant from 2r-rs) could be post-mortem deformation expectable in the generally damaged wings of the

only available specimen of *V. rovno* **sp. nov.** Only a larger wing size (ca. 4.4 mm up to pterostigmal apex, vs. 3.2 mm in *V. vetula*) and the different form of the partially preserved first metasomal segment (narrow, with straight sides, vs. distinctly wider and with sides convex in *V. vetula*, cf. Figs 1 and 2) appear to be reliable differences between the new species and *V. vetula*. Striking is a high occipital carina of the new species: unfortunately, it cannot help in comparing the new species to the type one, for the respective part of the head is not visible there.

The narrow first metasomal segment with straight rather than convex sides is important, because the unusually wide first metasomal segment of the type species was one of the main reasons to question attribution of the genus to Aulacinae (Rasnitsyn 2013).

DISCUSSION

The suprageneric classification of Gasteruptiidae s.l. is currently unresolved (e.g., see Engel 2017; Li et al. 2018; Jouault et al. 2022). We particularly question the tribal attribution of genera by many authors and follow Jouault & Nel (2021) in considering the tribal level of Aulacinae to be unresolved. Li et al. (2018, p. 834, fig. 24) proposed the family name Vectevaniidae: 'In our analyses, *Vectevania* forms a single clade that is a sister group to Aulacidae + Baissidae. Potentially, it should be set up as a new family, Vectevaniidae'. However, their figure 24 shows no synapomorphies supporting the clade, i.e., diagnostic of the family as required by ICZN #13.1.1., as it is not 'accompanied by a description or definition that states in words characters that are purported to differentiate the taxon'. Therefore, Vectevaniidae Li et al. 2018 is unavailable.

Gasteruptiidae is the 24th hymenopteran family, and *Vectevania* is the 107th genus, determined to the species level from Rovno amber fauna (Perkovsky et al. 2026; this paper). Thirty-four out of 63 Rovno amber non-ant hymenopteran genera (54.0%) and 62 of 84 non-ant species (73.8%) are unknown from Baltic amber (Perkovsky et al. 2026; this paper). The SIZK collection includes more than 3850 hymenopterans, half of them ants (our data). To date, 84 species of non-ant hymenopterans are known from Rovno amber compared with 337 species known from Baltic amber by 2009 (Weitshat & Wichard, 2010). Like ants (Dlussky & Rasnitsyn 2009), non-ant Hymenopterans are represented in Rovno amber mainly by a few common species, with almost all other species known from isolated finds (our data). Rovno specimens, such as the one described in this article, are of no interest to collectors and can only be identified by studying large, unbiased collections, such as that at the Schmalhausen Institute of Zoology. Most of them will be lost to science forever unless the size of such collections can be significantly increased (Perkovsky et al. 2026).

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The authors confirm their contribution to the paper as follows: A.P. Rasnitsyn: Writing - original draft, writing - review & editing, taxonomic expertise, scientific illustration; E.E. Perkovsky: Conceptualization, writing - review & editing, resources, funding acquisition, material preparation, specimen examination. The authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

FUNDING

E.E. Perkovsky's research was supported by a SARU fellowship for 2026 funded by the 'Orient's Fund '.

AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIAL

The type specimen listed in this study is deposited at the Schmalhausen Institute of Zoology, Kiev and is available from the curator, upon request.

ETHICS APPROVAL AND CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

This study only included fossil arthropod material, and all required ethical guidelines for the treatment and use of animals were strictly adhered to in accordance with international, national, and institutional regulations. No human participants were involved in any studies conducted by the authors for this article.

CONSENT FOR PUBLICATION

Not applicable.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

GENERATIVE AI STATEMENT

No generative AI tools was used in the preparation of this article.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful S. Bruce Archibald (University of British Columbia) for editing the English, and anonymous reviewers for the useful comments and suggestions.

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گونه‌ای جدید از جنس *Vectevania* (Hymenoptera: Gasteruptiidae: Aulacinae) از کهربای روونوِ، دوره ائوسن پسین

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دریافت: ۱۶ مرداد ۱۴۰۵
ویرایش: ۱۱ مهر ۱۴۰۵
پذیرش: ۱۲ مهر ۱۴۰۵
انتشار: ۱۴ مهر ۱۴۰۵

چکیـده: گونهٔ جدید *Vectevania rovno* **sp. nov.** بر اساس نمونه‌ای محصورشده و ناقص در کهربای روونوِ مربوط به ائوسن پسین توصیف شد. این دومین گونهٔ شناخته‌شده از سردهٔ *Vectevania* است. گونهٔ دیگر، *Vectevania vetula* Cockerell, 1922، از مارن‌های تقریباً هم‌دوره بمبریج در جزیرهٔ وایت، واقع در جنوب انگلستان، توصیف شده است. سردهٔ *Vectevania* به خانوادهٔ Gasteruptiidae و زیرخانوادهٔ Aulacinae، هر دو از Evanioidea، نسبت داده می‌شود. سلول مثلثی mcu۱ در بال جلویی این گونهٔ، در بین سایر گونه‌های Aulacinae منحصر به فرد است؛ رگبال‌های M–۱ و cu-a هر دو به انتهای باریک این سلول وارد می‌شوند. خانوادهٔ Gasteruptiidae بیست و چهارمین گروه زنبورسانانی است که از فون کهربای روونو تا سطح گونه شناسایی شده است.

واژگـان کلیدی: حشرات فسیل، زنبورهای دم‌پرچمی، اشکوب پریابونین، مارن‌های بمبریج