

INTRODUCTION

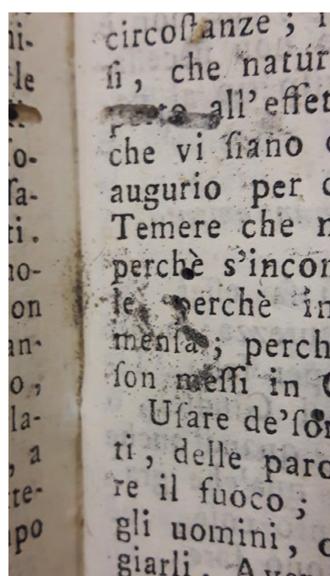
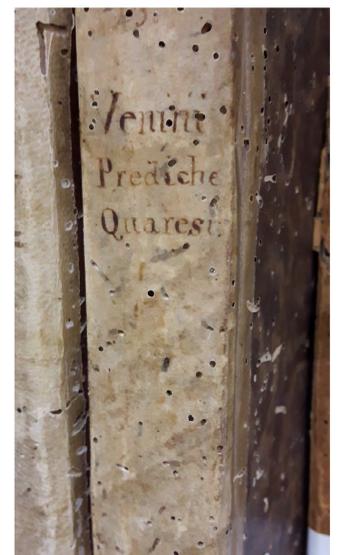
An infestation of Anobiid beetles was recently found in a library of the University of Milan. The adults present a body of dark brown colour, completely covered with short pubescence, with a length ranging from 2 to 3.5 mm, and the last three articles of the antenna enlarged. The larvae are whitish and have a size of about 5 mm at the end of larval stage. Part of morphological traits did not match those of the common Anobiid species infesting books, therefore we proceeded to the species identification based on morphological and anatomical examination in accordance with Español (1992) and Toskina (2003). Specimens were classified as *Gastrallus pubens* Fairmaire.



DAMAGES

Infested books were found in several shelves in the reading room of the library of History and Historical Documentation, University of Milan. The reading room contains about 1800 books, including rare ancient and valuable ones, stored in 13 metal cabinets with grille doors. All books were checked and aesthetic and structural damages were observed on 4.5% of books, especially on the oldest ones.

The infestation was caused by *G. pubens*. Damages were characterized by larval activity mainly on bookbinding, so that larvae can integrate the diet with substances of animal or vegetal origin present in the glues. A large amount of debris frass was noticed on shelves and inside tunnels in oldest books. Several dead adults were also found on shelves and among books.



The infested books presented many holes, made by new-emerged adults, and several tunnels made by larvae, also altering the readability of some pages. The loss of information due to the poor readability of the volumes is an enormous damage for book heritage, especially true for rare and valuable books.