

Predatory bore-holes in shells of terrestrial snails: Roth has priority

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J. R. Roth observed larvae of beetles, 'gnawing' holes in shells of terrestrial snails to eat the animals inside, well over a century before Schilthuizen et al. independently concluded that this kind of predation occurs.

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While reporting on beetles of the genus *Drilus*, acting as parasites of pulmonate terrestrial snails of the genus *Albinaria* Vest, 1867, by perforating the snail's shell and eating the animal inside, Schilthuizen et al. (1994) overlooked the fact that 139 years earlier, Roth (1855) had already published detailed observations of the same phenomenon. Roth (1855: 19), referring to a paper of Petit de la Saussaye (1852) on predators of snails in general, wrote (in Latin): "but new is a method which I observed, which I would hardly have believed if I had not seen it repeatedly. Armored with forceful mandibulae, the larva of a certain *Drilus* species gnaws through the wall of the last and the penultimate whorl of the shell and forces the animal away, which tries to escape from the trap." Schilthuizen et al. had not observed active, boring, beetle larvae but solely found them inside perforated *Albinaria* shells and concluded that the predators most probably had made the holes in the shell wall.

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