

First record of *Hierodula transcaucasica* Brunner von Wattenwyl (Mantodea: Mantidae: Mantinae: Paramantini) in Albania

Primera cita de *Hierodula transcaucasica* Brunner von Wattenwyl
(Mantodea: Mantidae: Mantinae: Paramantini) en Albania

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Abstract. The first record of *Hierodula transcaucasica* from Albania is reported. Additional information on the distribution of the species is given.

Key words: Dictyoptera, distribution, Mediterranean Region.

Resumen. Se presenta la primera cita de *Hierodula transcaucasica* de Albania. Se da información adicional acerca de la distribución de la especie.

Palabras clave: Dictyoptera, distribución, Región Mediterránea.

The mantis genus *Hierodula* Burmeister, 1838 contains more than 100 species, mostly reported from Africa, Asia and Australia (Patel and Singh 2016; Otte *et al.* 2018; van der Heyden 2018).

So far, *Hierodula transcaucasica* Brunner von Wattenwyl, 1878, commonly known as Giant Asian Mantis, has been reported from Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan (Battiston and Massa 2008; Ehrmann 2011; Ghahari and Nasser 2014; Patel and Singh 2016; Pushkar and Yepishin 2016; van der Heyden 2018). Recently, the species is spreading in the area of the Greek islands (Battiston *et al.* 2017; van der Heyden 2018). Its possible presence on the island of Crete was discussed by van der Heyden (2018).

On 2-X-2018, Aleksander Golemaj observed and photographed a female specimen of *H. transcaucasica* in an abandoned garden in a northern suburb of Vlorë in southern Albania (Figs. 1, 2 and 3). Two of the photographs were first published in the online database iNaturalist (Golemaj 2018).

The specimen was captured and taken home by Aleksander Golemaj. Three days later, on 5-X-2018 at about midnight, the female was observed building an ootheca and laying eggs (Fig. 4).

As *H. transcaucasica* has not been reported from Albania in scientific publications yet, the record reported in this note is the first one for this country.

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Figures 1-4. Female specimen of *Hierodula transcaucasica* Brunner von Wattenwyl, 1878. 1. Lateral view, Vlorë, Albania, 2-X-2018. 2. Dorsolateral view, Vlorë, Albania, 2-X-2018. 3. Dorsal view, Vlorë, Albania, 2-X-2018. 4. With ootheca, Vlorë, Albania, 5-X-2018. (Photographs: Aleksander Golemaj).

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