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Second record of *Pseudimares aphrodite* H. Aspöck et U. Aspöck, 2009 (Neuroptera, Myrmeleontidae)

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ABSTRACT Some adults of *Pseudimares aphrodite* H. Aspöck et U. Aspöck, 2009 were observed and photographed while attracted by light in Southern Morocco, in August 2009 and 2011. Only the typus of this species, a male, was known previously from South Morocco too. Moreover the genus *Pseudimares* Kimmins, 1933 is perhaps the most enigmatic taxon among Neuroptera Myrmeleontidae. Its second species *Pseudimares iris* Kimmins, 1933 from Southern Iran is known also only in the type series, a male and a female. What little information we know about *Pseudimares* is reported.

KEY WORDS Neuroptera; Palparinae; Morocco; *Pseudimares iris*.

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During a herpetological field survey in Southern Morocco, on August 23rd 2009, two of the Authors (GMMM and RLV), just before the midnight, observed an adult of a spectacular species of antlion with very characteristic eye-spotted wings (Figs. 1-3). The specimen was attracted by the lights of a house (Fig. 4) located 6 km North of Aouinet Torkoz (also called Aouinet Lahna) (Assa-Zag, Guelmim-Es Semara, Morocco).

Two years later, during a further herpetological trip in the same place on August 25th 2011, one of the authors (GMMM) observed other adults (3-4 or perhaps more). Despite the fact that no specimen was collected, the identification of the antlion as the recently described species *Pseudimares aphrodite* H. Aspöck et U. Aspöck, 2009 is absolutely sure.

The genus *Pseudimares* Kimmins, 1933 is perhaps the most enigmatic taxon among Neuroptera Myrmeleontidae. Until now only three specimens were known, two of *Pseudimares iris* Kimmins, 1933 from Southern Iran and one of *P. aphrodite* from Morocco. Its aspect is so unusual that, when D. E. Kimmins, at the British Museum, received the first specimen of *P. iris*, he thought it was an artifact (H. Aspöck & U. Aspöck, 2009). Only after receiving a second specimen he decided to describe the new genus and new species.

Currently *Pseudimares* would belong to the tribe Pseudimarini in the subfamily Palparinae but its phylogenetic position is uncertain (Markl, 1954; Stange, 2004). The two species are easily distinguished by the color pattern of the wings.

The specimens of *P. iris* were from "Masjid-i-Sulaimaniah" [Masjed Soleyman, also Masjed-e Soleymān, Masjid-i-Sulaiman, and other translite-rations] the capital of Masjed Soleyman County, Khuzestan Province, Iran.

The male was collected with a light by Dr. Jamieson on August 1929, while the female was found dead on a verandah by Dr. S. V. P. Pill on September 7th 1932 (Kimmins, 1933).

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Figures 1-3. Specimen of *Pseudimares aphrodite* H. Aspöck et U. Aspöck, 2009 by light 6 km North of Aouinet Torkoz (Assa-Zag, Guelmim-Es Semara, Morocco) August 23rd 2009.
Figure 4. Landscape at the same locality (all photos by Gabriel Martínez del Mármol Marín).

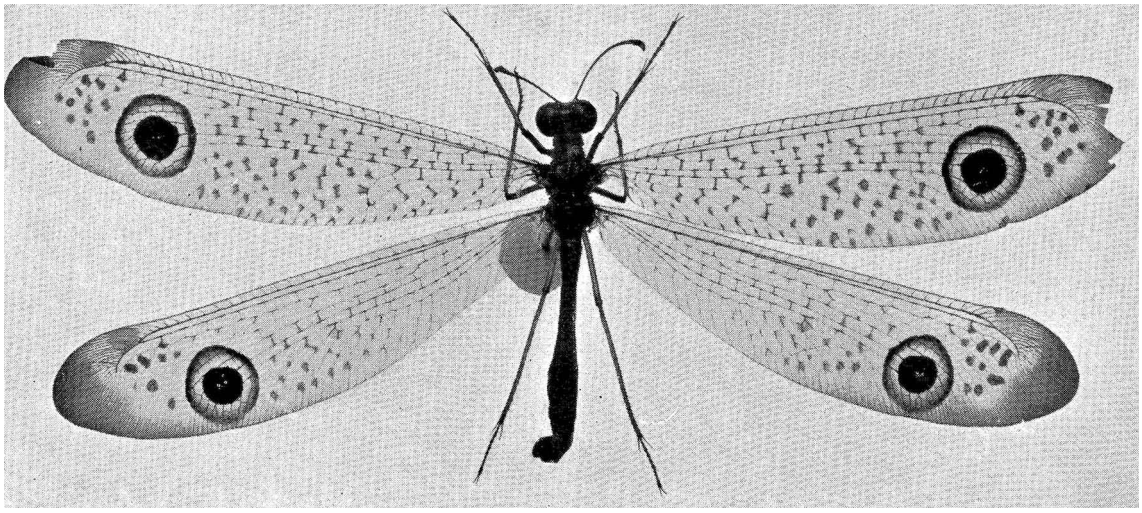

Figure 5. Type of *Pseudimares iris* Kimmins, 1933. Photo by original paper (Kimmins, 1933).

The only known male of *P. aphrodite* is from the Coastal Mountains about 20 miles north of Agadir (Souss-Massa-Draâ, Morocco) (the authors do not provide the exact locality in order to protect a species which is potentially vulnerable).

The collectors, Axel Steiner & Rolf Bläsius, found the specimen with a light, at around 10 pm, on August 6th 2008. The small-scale biotope, 230 m asl, is characterized by relatively lush vegetation, but it is limited by dry, rocky slopes (H. Aspöck & U. Aspöck, 2009).

In light of the discovery of a second locality 200 km South from the locus typicus, our record slightly broadens our knowledge about the genus *Pseudimares*. More important are some common traits in all available data that permit us to put forward some hypotheses. The adults of both species fly in August and are nocturnal or, at least, attracted by light. Also the dead female was found on a date compatible with this statement (beginning of September) and probably, having been found on a verandah, was attracted by light.

Both habitats recorded for the Moroccan species are characterized by relatively rich vegetation biotopes like oases or gardens. There is no information about the habitat of *P. iris*, but the presence of a verandah gives evidence of the presence of a garden. At least in South Morocco oases surrounded by xerophilous slopes seem to host very interesting Neuroptera fauna, see for example Badano & Pantaleoni (2012).

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