

**The Occurrence of *Thaumetopoea processionea* L. (Lep.: Thaumetopoeidae)
on Mt. Hermon**

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The south-eastern oak processionary caterpillar (*Thaumetopoea processionea pseudosolitaria* Daniel) has been found on Mt. Hermon.

In a survey of the entomofauna of woody vegetation on Mt. Hermon in mid June 1992, 18-mm-long processionary caterpillars, believed to be *Thaumetopoea processionea* L., were observed on *Quercus boissieri* trees growing at an elevation of 1300 m. Because the nearest occurrence of this European insect is known from northern Anatolia, at a distance of more than 1000 km, the caterpillars were taken to the laboratory located in the coastal plain of Israel. After 2 weeks they ceased feeding, and 2 days later entered the soil for pupation. Adults emerged 2 months later. Surprisingly, the moths were not like *Th. processionea*, but rather resembled *Th. solitaria* Frr., a common pest of *Pistacia* trees in Israel (5). Adults were provisionally identified by the second author as *Th. processionea pseudosolitaria* Daniel. This taxon was first described in 1951 (2) in Macedonia and is known also from Sicily, Greece and Turkey (2,3). The distribution of the nominal form is central and southern Europe, from Portugal to Moldavia and northwest Turkey (1), where it is considered as a pest of young oak stands, and a nuisance to humans, because of the urticarian hairs of the larvae (4). Some hikers on Mt. Hermon – after resting or passing near the infested trees – suffered from symptoms of urticaria.

Further taxonomical studies are required.

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