

Tutor's evaluation of the PhD studies and of the thesis of Olga Ameixa

Olga Ameixa was born in 1975 in Ferreira do Alentejo, Portugal. She completed her university studies of agriculture at the University of Algarve in Portugal. During these studies, she also worked as a researcher at the Faculty of Engineering of Natural Resources of the University of Algarve and at the producers' organization Tavifruta, in Tavira, Portugal as an IPM specialist. This provided her with a very good theoretical and practical background. Her main interests involve ladybird and carabid communities, their population dynamics and life histories, and the relationship between agricultural practices and biodiversity.

In 2007, she joined my team at the Biodiversity Research Centre, which is one of the few centres of excellence supported by the Czech Ministry of Education. Initially she was supported by the money that she received as a grantee of her project *Behavioural responses of Diglyphus isaea to plant volatiles*, which was financed by the ESF program Behavioural Ecology of Insect Parasitoids, later she worked with me in my international project AGRIPOPEs, also financed by the ESF. Starting from 2011, she works with me on the project *Consequences of insect invasions for plant-insect interactions mediated by volatile organic compounds*, funded by ESF in the EuroVol program. Hence, her involvement in three ESF-funded projects (in one of them as a grantee) in the recent years is really exceptional.

In 2007, Olga enrolled PhD studies at the University of South Bohemia under my supervision. The topic of her thesis is *Trends in insect biodiversity in a changing world*. Here she got the opportunity to combine her achievements gained during her work on the international projects named above with other research that she performed exclusively for her Thesis. Consequently, the scope of her Thesis may seem to be rather broad and split into many topics. On the other hand, however, thanks to the financial support coming from these projects, she was not limited by money for field and laboratory work and therefore her results in terms of the amount of data collected are exceptionally rich for a PhD student.

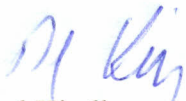
During her PhD studies, Olga was actively involved in teaching of my math courses and in the introductory practical training of chemistry at the University of South Bohemia. From 2009, she is regularly giving lectures in the course *Protected areas of the World* at the Charles University, and in the same course at the University of South Bohemia; she also gave a lecture in the course *Hot Issues in Environmental Sciences* at the Charles University. She was supervising one MSc. student during 2009-2010.

Olga presented her results as oral presentations during the international conferences Ecology of Aphidophaga 10 (Athens, Greece, 2007), International Congress of Entomology (Durban, South Africa, 2008), International Symposium on Aphids (Catania, Italy, 2009), Behavioural Ecology of Insect Parasitoids: A Perspective (Palermo, Italy, 2009), European Congress of Conservation Biology (Prague, Czech Republic, 2009), IOBC/WPRS Harmonia Meeting (Engelberg, Switzerland, 2009), Ecology of Aphidophaga 11 (Perugia, Italy, 1 regular and 1 plenary oral presentation). She also attended the International Symposium on Biological Control of Arthropods (Christchurch, New Zealand, 2009, poster) and the International Congress for Conservation Biology (Edmonton, Canada, 2010). She attended several meetings of the AGRIPOPEs team in France and Germany and performed study stays at the Lab. Agro-Ecol., ENFA, Toulouse, France (2007), Univ. Nottingham, England (2008), University of East Anglia, Norwich, England (2008), and a longer stay at the Wageningen University (2009 – 6 weeks, financed by the host university).

Olga's Thesis consists of seven papers, five of which are already published: two of them in internationally acknowledged journals, two as chapters in books published abroad. The sole fact that these papers successfully passed the strict reviews now usual in such journals and books, speaks volumes. Apart from these papers, she published two other papers, not included in the Thesis, in international journals: one in the Journal of Insect Behavior in 2007 and another one in the Journal of Horticultural Science & Biotechnology in 2008. Several other papers are in the pipeline. I feel that her findings published in all these papers represent a really good contribution to science and put forward a lot of new ideas.

During her studies she has shown enormous skills in empirical research (both in the field and in the laboratory), based on her previous experience from Portugal, and an exceptional patience and consistence in data mining. I can confirm that Olga Ameixa has performed the ability to work independently in science and publish her empirical results. The amount and quality of the papers she has published vastly exceeds that of a PhD student. As the tutor, I appreciate above all her enthusiasm for scientific work and skills in the laboratory and field work. She has fulfilled all the requirements of the PhD studies. I am unequivocally recommending her thesis for defense and feel she should be awarded the title "PhD".

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