

### A case of multiple predation on the Levant Mole Rat by

*Vipera palaestinae* WERNER 1938

(Reptilia: Serpentes: Viperidae)

On 14 March 1981 a traffic victim was found in the form of a Palestinian Viper, *Vipera palaestinae* WERNER 1938, on the railway-tracks in the neighbourhood of Rehovot, Israel. The victim, an adult viper with a length of approximately 80 cm, was beheaded by a passing train, leaving the head and 15 cm of the body at one side of the track, the rest at the other side.

The swollen body of the viper was an invitation to press on it and to our great surprise this resulted into three specimens of the Levant Mole Rat, *Spalax ehrenbergi*. All the Mole Rats were still well preserved and measured between 8 and 9 cm.

The Levant Mole Rat is a wellknown subterranean rodent, leaving its burrows only occasionally. The presence of three juvenile specimens in the belly of that viper means almost without doubt that the snake had voluntarily entered the burrows of the Mole Rats and killed the specimens encountered. A rather curious case of multiple predation.

Die Magenuntersuchung einer etwa 80 cm großen *Vipera palaestinae*, die durch Überfahren getötet worden war, erbrachte drei kurz zuvor verschlungene 8 bis 9 cm große Blindmäuse, *Spalax ehrenbergi*. Die Viper hatte diese an eine unterirdische Lebensweise weitgehend angepaßten Wühler zweifellos in ihren zum Teil recht tief gegrabenen Gängen aufgesucht.

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