



ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

EXAMINING THE POPULATION STRUCTURE AND PHYLOGEOGRAPHY OF *Podarcis cretensis* IN CRETE, GREECE

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The wall-lizard *Podarcis cretensis* is distributed on the island of Crete and its surrounding islets. The taxon was recently elevated to the species level due to the fact that the Cretan populations (*P. erhardii* in that time) were paraphyletic with respect to *P. peloponnesiacus*. Here, we employed both microsatellite loci and mitochondrial DNA to examine the population structure and the phylogeographic patterns of the Cretan wall-lizard based on Bayesian Inference approaches. Samples of the species *P. levendis*, *P. peloponnesiacus*, and *P. erhardii* were also included in the present study mainly as outgroup but also as putative source populations. Based on the microsatellite dataset, strong population structure was detected that not only discriminates samples at the species level but also revealed within species population structure for *P. cretensis* and *P. peloponnesiacus*. The chronophylogenetic analyses place the differentiation of the Cretan wall-lizard at Pliocene probably triggered by the paleogeography of the area, i.e. the Pliocene islands of Crete. Under a holistic approach followed in this study the molecular data were combined with the results of species distribution modelling assisting in the elucidation of the biogeographic history of the Cretan wall lizard.