

One more record of *Lacerta viridis* (LAURENTI, 1768), from Macedonia

Imbalanced knowledge of the distributions of species, known as Wallacean short-fall, masks important information and thus alters biogeographical scenarios (WHITAKER et al. 2005).

The region of Macedonia in northern Greece, an area encompassing ecosystems typical of the Balkans and central Europe, represents no exception to this rule, as do great parts of the mainland of Greece. The main ecological feature that makes Macedonia distinct from the rest of the country is the presence of numerous freshwater bodies. Thanks to the abundance of large rivers, rivulets and lakes that support lush vegetation, the herpetofauna of Macedonia comprises many species that require high humidity, such as the Green Lizard, *Lacerta viridis* (LAURENTI, 1768) (STRIJBOSCH 2001).

Lacerta viridis, one of the most widespread lacertid lizards in Europe, is believed to range throughout the mainland of Greece, though its presence on the Peloponnese is debatable (NAULLEAU 1997; ARNOLD 2004). According to predictions, *L. viridis* should be widespread all around the Greek region of Macedonia (ONDRIAS 1968; CHONDROPOULOS 1986). Nevertheless, this lizard was reported so far only from the Nestos River (BUTTLE 1989), the Peninsula of Athos (CYRÉN 1935), Prespes National Park (CLARK 1992; IOANNIDIS & BOUSBOURAS 1997), the Vrontous Mountains (ARNDT 1993), Mount Olympus, the Peninsula Sithonia at Chalkidiki and Zagliveri at Thessaloniki (MAYER & TIEDEMANN 1982). The majority of these records refer to western Macedonia.

During a field survey in June 2011, the authors recorded an adult *L. viridis* close to the village of Kleisoura, in the vicinity of Kastoria (40°32'37.13"N, 21°27'55"E, 1231 m a.s.l.). The individual was seen to bask on the top of a big rock and captured by noose. It was a fully developed female bearing the typical six longitudinal rows of ventral scales and the distinct serrated collar. The belly was yellowish without any marks and two narrow whitish stripes surrounded by dark brown spots ran across the

dorsal side. The individual (snout-vent-length: 109 mm, body mass: 44.5 g, regenerated tail 32 mm) was preserved in alcohol and added to the Herpetological Collection of the Museum of Natural History of Crete (accession number MNHC 80.3.61.136) (Fig. 1).

In the field, there can be some difficulties to distinguish *L. viridis* and *L. trilineata* BEDRIAGA, 1886 which share many morphological characters (FRÖR 1979) and even hybridize in the areas where they are sympatric (NETTMANN 2001 and references therein). For the identification of the individual caught on the basis of head features, the authors followed NETTMANN & RYKENA (1984) and ARNOLD (2004): there were 15 temporal scales and the rostral scale barely reached the nostril, unlike the corresponding characters of *L. trilineata*.

Lacerta viridis is well-known for its genetic diversity (NETTMANN & RYKENA 1984; JOGER et al. 2001). GODINHO et al. (2005) and BÖHME et al. (2007) reported that most genetic divergence was found in the south of the distribution range. Namely, three distinct lineages occurring in the south-eastern Balkans corresponding to *L. v. viridis*, *L. v. meridionalis* CYRÉN, 1933, *L. v. guentherpetersi* RYKENA, NETTMANN & MAYER, 2001 (RYKENA et al. 2001) as well as a fourth lineage for which no subspecies name is available. Earlier studies suggested the presence of such variability and acknowledged the important differentiation of the Greek populations of *L. viridis* (KELLER & VASSILAKAKI 2001; MAYER & BEYERLEIN 2001). New populations, like the one discovered here, may help to unravel the systematics of the green lizards of the Balkans.

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Fig. 1: Female *Lacerta viridis* (LAURENTI, 1768) (MNHC 80.3.61.136) from close to the village of Kleisoura, in the vicinity of Kastoria, Macedonia, Greece (40°32'37.13"N, 21°27'55"E, 1231 m a.s.l.).

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