MOLECULAR PHYLOGENY OF VALENTIN'S LIZARD, *Darevskia valentini*, (BOETTGER, 1892) REVEALS NEW GENETIC LINEAGES AND MAY SUGGEST TAXONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION

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Darevskia valentini is the most widely distributed species among the Caucasian rock lizards but the phylogenetic relationship among geographically distant populations is poorly known. We sequenced several mitochondrial (12S rRNA, COI and cyt b) and nuclear (MC1R and cmos) genes from 75 individual samples collected across Central and Eastern Turkey. In total, 349 bp of 12S rRNA, 615 bp of COI, 743 bp of cyt b of mtDNA and 620 bp of MC1R, 326 bp of cmos of nDNA were obtained. Additionally, 34 individuals from Georgia and Eastern Turkey were genotyped for 10 microsatellite loci. Phylogenetic analyses (ML and BI) produced trees with similar topologies including well-supported clades. One clade found in the area of Lake Van is clearly separated from others on the phylogenetic tree, and the respective population formed distinct STRUCTURE and PCA clusters in the microsatellite data. Our results may suggest that *D. valentini*, one of the most complex species in *Darevskia* genus, needs taxonomical revision at the subspecies level.

Acknowledgements: This study is based on Kamil Candan's Ph.D. thesis supported by Dokuz Eylül University (project no. 2017.KB.FEN.039), and in part by the TÜBİTAK grant 216Z189 (in Turkey) and the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation (in Georgia). Panagiotis Kornilios has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Sklodowska-Curie grant agreement No 656006 (Project Acronym: CoPhyMed).