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External morphology and osteology of *Darevskia rudis* (Bedriaga, 1886), with a taxonomic revision of the Pontic and Small-Caucasus populations (Squamata: Lacertidae)

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Abstract

A broad sample of *Darevskia rudis* from the main part of its range was reviewed with regard to external morphology (discriminant, UPGMA, MST and ANOVA analyses) and osteology. *Darevskia bithynica* is raised to species rank, with two subspecies: *D. b. bithynica* and *D. b. tristis*. The other subspecies are fairly similar (*D. r. rudis* being the most different). Two singular populations are described as subspecies: *D. r. mirabilis* **ssp. nov.** from Kaçkar Mountains, geographically adjoins the otherwise different *D. r. bischoffi* and *D. r. bolgardaghica* **ssp. nov.**, which is geographically isolated but that seems to be very closely related to *D. r. obscura*.

Key words: Morphometry, osteology, discriminant analysis, Turkey, *Darevskia*, *D. rudis*, *D. bithynica*, species rank, *mirabilis* **ssp. nov.**, *bolgardaghica* **ssp. nov.**

Introduction

Camerano (1877) first described *Podarcis depressa* Camerano, 1877, an obscure synonymy that included several species, from Trabzon, Turkey and Tiflis, Georgia (in part, *Darevskia rudis*). *Darevskia rudis* (Bedriaga, 1886) was first described as *Lacerta depressa* var. *rudis* from the samples collected from Batumi. Boettger (1892) described the samples obtained from Batumi and Tbilisi as *Lacerta muralis* var. *depressa* f. *modesta* Boettger, 1892. Boulenger (1904) interpreted this taxon as *Lacerta muralis* var. *rudis*, an incorrect point of view also adopted by Nikolsky (1905).

Werner (1902) included the samples collected from Uludağ, Turkey in the species *Lacerta depressa*. The researcher also pointed out the significant similarity between these samples and the Tbilisi and Batumi samples studied by Bedriaga (1886). The samples from Uludağ were assigned to *Lacerta muralis* var. *chalybdea* by Boulenger (1904). In the research conducted by Mehely in 1909, the presence of *Lacerta saxicola* [now *D. saxicola* (Eversmann, 1834) sensu lato, hence including several other currently valid *Darevskia* taxa] species, which was first described by Eversmann (1834) and which was not accepted until then since it was interpreted as conspecific with *L. muralis* [now *Podarcis muralis* (Laurenti, 1768)] (Boettger 1892; Boulenger 1904), was pointed out and the *rudis* form was interpreted as a subspecies of *L. saxicola*. Mehely (1909) also indicated that the samples obtained from Amasya and Uludağ were different to the known forms and defined *Lacerta saxicola bithynica* Mehely, 1909. Boulenger (1913a, 1920) combined the subspecies *L. s. bithynica* and *L. s. armeniaca* Mehely, 1909 described by Mehely (1909) and interpreted them as *Lacerta muralis* var. *chalybdea*. Nikolsky (1913) was also mistaking in