

The status of *Lacerta mostoufii* Balouch, 1977 (Reptilia: Lacertidae)

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Abstract: A presumed paratype of *Lacerta mostoufii* Balouch, 1977 deposited in the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle (Paris) is a mislabelled, probably Iranian, specimen of *Lacerta praticola praticola*. The type material in the Iranian Museum of Natural History (Tehran) is lost. The validity of *L. mostoufii* therefore remains unclear, and new visits to the type localities and new specimens are needed before the species can be accepted.

Kurzfassung: Sammlungsmaterial, das im Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle (Paris) als Paratypus von *Lacerta mostoufii* Balouch, 1977 gekennzeichnet war, erwies sich als vermutliche *Lacerta praticola praticola*. Das Typen-Material im Iranischen Museum of Natural History (Teheran) ist nicht auffindbar. Die Validität von *L. mostoufii* bleibt daher unklar, und neue Untersuchungen am Typus-Fundort mit neuen Aufsammlungen sind nötig, um die Art anzuerkennen.

Key words: *Lacerta mostoufii*, Lacertidae, systematics, taxonomy, Iran, Middle East.

Introduction

The species *Lacerta mostoufii* was described by BALOUTCH (1977) from the southeastern Iranian province of Baluchistan: the type specimen, a male, was collected near the village Deh Salm (holotype, MMTT 1582), and two juveniles, designated as paratypes, in the Malek Mohammad mountains (paratypes, MMTT 1583-84) located in the northern and central Lut Desert respectively. No other specimens are known and the localities are remarkably isolated, being at least 500 km distant from those of any congeners. Moreover, except for *Lacerta (Omanosaura) cyanura* Arnold, 1972 and possibly some *Lacerta (Omanosaura) jayakari* Boulenger, 1887, the dry desert biotope is very untypical for *Lacerta* s.l..

Though the original paper on *L. mostoufii* by BALOUTCH is usually dated 1976, the issue was actually printed on February 28, 1977. Therefore the species should be referred to as *Lacerta mostoufii* Balouch, 1977.

Material and discussion

The report of a new taxon of *Lacerta* so far outside the known range of the genus is of greatest interest and it is important to establish its status and relationships. Attempts to borrow the animals from the Iranian Museum of Natural History, Tehran (Muzé-ye Melli-ye