

**ANCIENT SCORPIONS OF GREECE: DNA PHYLOGENY OF
EUSCORPIUS (SCORPIONES, EUSCORPIIDAE)**

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The scorpion genus *Euscorpilus* Thorell, 1876 (Scorpiones: Euscorpiliidae) includes a number of very common Mediterranean species. However, their systematics is inconclusive, and *Euscorpilus* of Greece have been largely misidentified and misunderstood. We are presenting the first molecular phylogeny of the Greek *Euscorpilus* species using sequence data from four genes, mtDNA (16S rRNA, COI, and COII) and nuclear ITS-1. Phylogeographic analysis of *Euscorpilus* across the Eastern Mediterranean region and adjacent areas (over 100 populations), focusing on Greek fauna, revealed high variation, deep clade divergences, and cryptic species. At least 14 species of the genus *Euscorpilus* are present in Greece, some of which are yet undescribed (including island and mainland endemics). We discuss phylogenetic relationships and biogeographic scenarios for *Euscorpilus*, which follow ancient geological events in the Aegean basin. Most important is sympatric existence of two or three species, sometimes morphologically “cryptic” but belonging to distinct, old DNA lineages.