TAXONOMICAL STATUS AND PHYLOGENETIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE "ATTICUS" AND "THOMASI" CHROMOSOMAL RACES OF THE UNDERGROUND VOLE *MICROTUS THOMASI* (RODENTIA, ARVICOLIDAE).

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The phylogenetic relationships between the "atticus" and "thomasi" chromosomal races of the underground vole *Microtus thomasi* was investigated through cytogenetic analysis (C-banding, FISH with satellite and telomeric sequences), mtDNA molecular phylogeny (cytb, Dloop, ND2 genes) and inbreeding experiments. The "atticus" chromosomal race consists of three geographically distinct populations in North Peloponnesus, Attiki and Evia Island, while the "thomasi" consists of several populations in the Greek mainland. Our research work indicated that the "atticus" populations from Attiki and Evia Island are genetically distinct (2.9% divergence for cytb gene), geographically and reproductively isolated from the "atticus" of North Peloponnesus and the "thomasi" populations, resulting in two distinct lineages, which probably derived from different glacial refugia of Southern Greece. We suggest that the lineage, consisting of the populations from Attiki and Evia Island, should be considered as a valid species, named *Microtus atticus*, including two chromosomal races, "atticus" and "evia". On the contrary, the ex-"atticus" populations from North Peloponnesus, belonging to the same mitochondrial lineage with the other "thomasi" populations, should be considered as a distinct chromosomal race of *Microtus thomasi*, named "peloponnesiacus".