

Podarcis hispanica (STEINDACHNER, 1870)

Iberian wall lizard

Lagartixa-ibérica

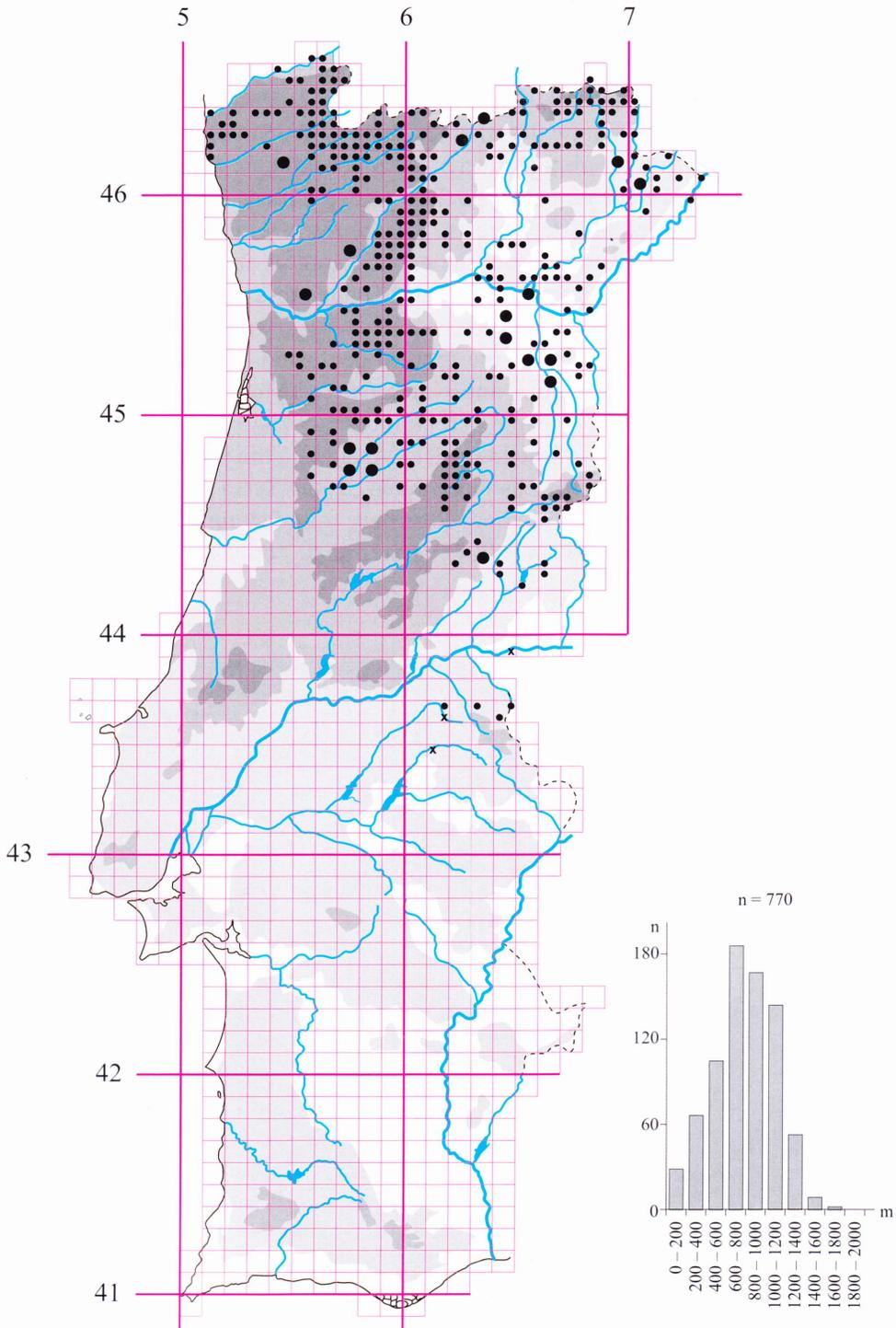
The *Podarcis hispanica* complex is in need of a comprehensive revision. Genetic analyses by SÁ-SOUSA (2000a) and HARRIS & SÁ-SOUSA (2001) demonstrated that *P. hispanica* in Portugal “is composed of two genetically distinct clades”. SÁ-SOUSA referred to these two forms, which occur in Portugal almost always parapatrically, as *P. hispanica* type 1 (northwest Iberian form), and *P. hispanica* type 2 (southwest Iberian form). These had usually been distinguished in previous literature as *P. hispanica hispanica* and *P. hispanica vaucheri* (BOULENGER, 1905), respectively, but the genetic studies showed that the south Iberian and northwest African populations referred to under this name are in fact not identical.

The *Podarcis hispanica* complex occurs on the Iberian Peninsula (except the northernmost border area), in southwestern France, and North Africa (Morocco, north Algeria, north Tunisia). In Portugal the border line and potential contact zone between both forms runs from Espinho through the valley of the lower Rio Vouga, via the junction of the Rios Dão and Mondego, Pampilhosa da Serra, Castelo Branco, to the Serra do Ramiro. In the Serra de São Mamede south of the Rio Tejo both forms are found sympatrically, but only exceptionally also syntopically. SÁ-SOUSA (2000a) stated that, “only one example from



Fig. 186: *Podarcis hispanica* type 1; Serra do Alvão. Photograph by M. SCHROTH.

Podarcis hispanica 1



Marvão showed an intermediate pattern between both forms". *Podarcis hispanica* is absent from the islands right off the coast. Although a lot of cartographic work still needs to be done in order to obtain a detailed picture of the distribution pattern nationwide, the results obtained to date indicate that distribution and population densities vary substantially with the regions. Besides areas with high densities (e.g. mountains north of the Rio Mondego and Rio Douro, in the Serra de São Mamede and Serra de Sintra; particularly in the rocky zones of the ridges and summits), there are those where it is found only occasionally or not at all (e.g. parts of the Trás-os-Montes and the Beira Baixa, but in particular in the Alentejo and the largest portion of the Algarve).

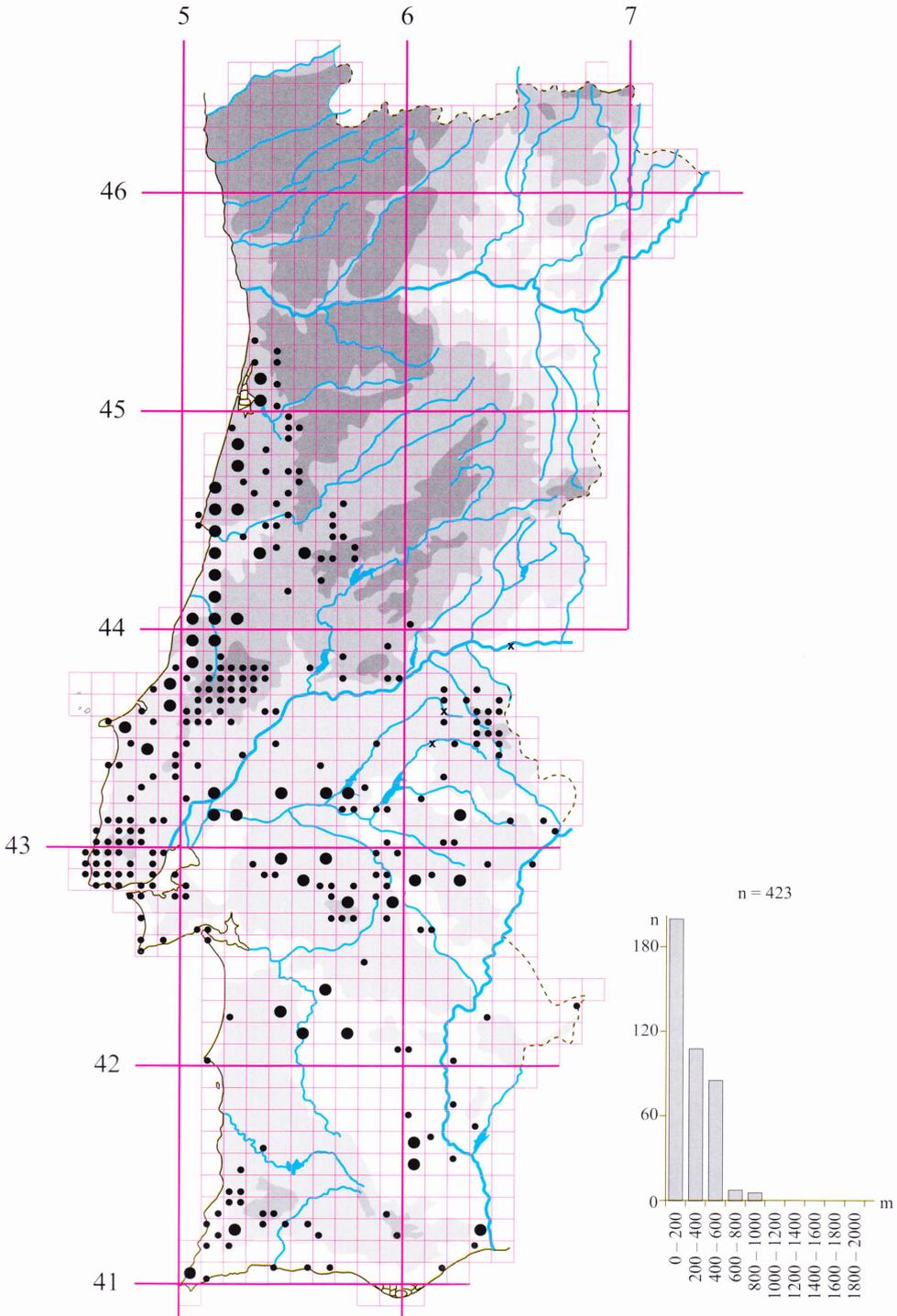
This wall lizard inhabits all bioclimatic zones of the country, ranging from extremely precipitation-rich mountains to the semi-arid zones of the Algarve coast. Its vertical distribution in Portugal extends from sea level to an altitude of 1925 m (Torre, Serra da Estrela, LESPARRE in litt. 1999). In Spain *P. hispanica* ascends to the summit region of the Mulhacén/Sierra Nevada (3480 m alt.) (PLEGUEZUELOS 1986) and thus shows by far the widest vertical distribution range of all reptiles inhabiting the Iberian Peninsula.

Podarcis hispanica inhabits a wide spectrum of natural and semi-natural habitats: margins of trails, rock formations, clearings and open tree stocks in *Pinus* woods near the coast, oak forests with dense undergrowth; in the south of the country predominantly rivulate copses. Here it not rarely climbs trees to heights of 5 meters above the ground to find a suitable basking site. In semi-open and open country it presents itself as a predominantly petricolous inhabitant of open fruit tree groves, garrigues, macchia and heaths, in parcelled agricultural areas, and may be found right in the center of human settlements, living on just about any and all rock structures imaginable (rock faces, boulder fields, lapas, gravel banks on rivers, walls, stone bolts, bridges, walls of draw wells, clearings around mining operations, mills and villages, castles, scree deposits at reservoir dams; public parks within towns, garden walls, railtrack gravel, etc.). Littoral populations occur on both eolian and firm sand dunes, as well as on sheer cliffs with a wealth of crevices, quay walls, citadels, and fishing settlements.

Podarcis hispanica displays a high degree of flexibility that enables it to also adjust to rapidly changing environmental circumstances. It is therefore threatened only in regions where biotopes are altered to an extent where they do not comply with the minimum requirements of this lizard any more (e.g. reforestation with monocultures, certain forms of intensified agriculture, modern urbanization with unnatural building materials and in a fashion that eliminates protective retreats for lizards; restoration of old buildings involving the elimination of spaces between bricks etc., and the use of poisonous chemicals for the eradication of natural wall vegetation).

References: BARBADILLO et al. (1999), FARIA (1991), FERRAND DE ALMEIDA & FERRAND DE ALMEIDA (1986), FERRAND DE ALMEIDA et al. (2001), GLANDT et al. (1998), GODINHO et al. (1999), LOUREIRO et al. (1996), MALKMUS (1979a, b, c, 1981b, 1982a, 1984b, c, 1985b, 1986/87, 1987c, 1990a, b, 1991c, 1992b, 1993b, 1995a, 1997a, b, 1999a, 2002, 2002b, 2003a), MALKMUS & SCHWARZER (2000), MOREIRA et al. (1994), PARGANA et al. (1985), PÉREZ-MELLADO (1997b), RAIMUNDO (1995), SÁ-SOUSA (2000a), SEGURADO (1994), SCHWARZER (1998), TEIXEIRA (1997).

Podarcis hispanica 2



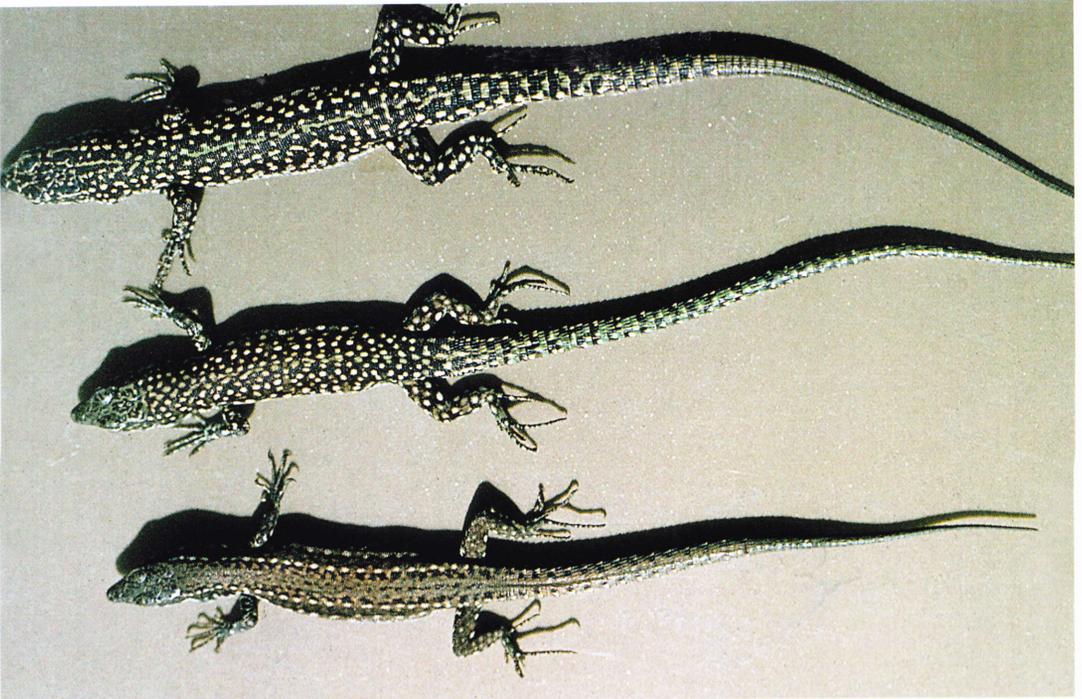


Fig. 187: *Podarcis hispanica* type 1; Serra de Cornélio. Photograph by R. MALKMUS.



Fig. 188: *Podarcis hispanica* type 1; Serra de São Mamede. Photograph by M. SCHROTH.

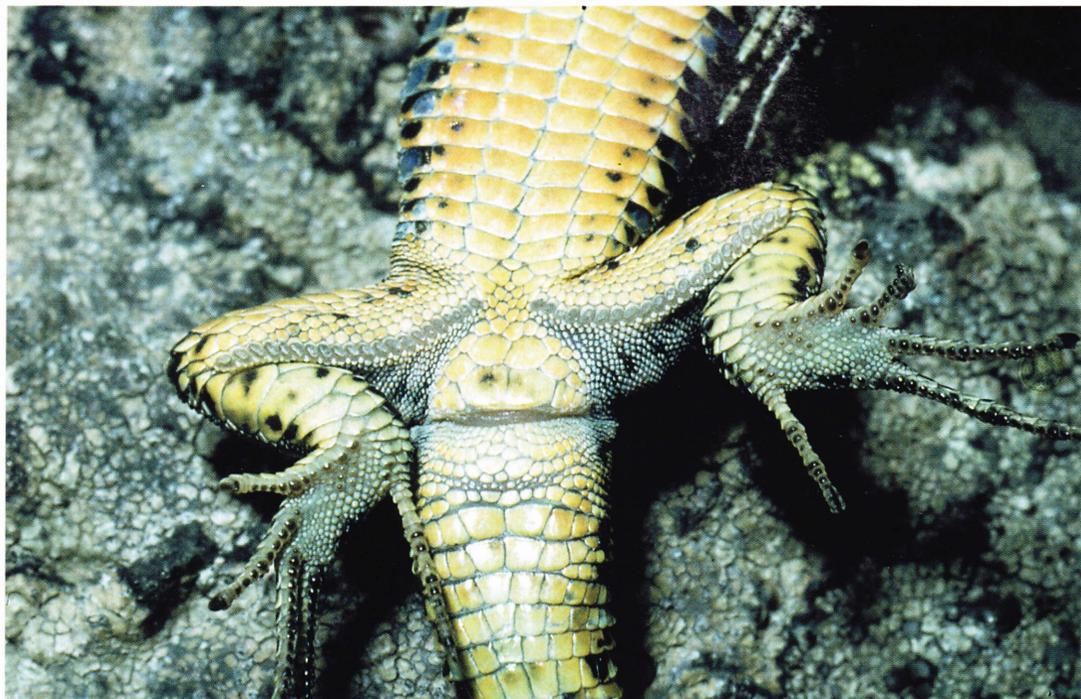


Fig. 189: *Podarcis hispanica* type 1, anal region; Serra de São Mamede. Photograph by M. SCHROTH.



Fig. 190: *Podarcis hispanica* type 1; Serra da Estrela, near Manteigas. Photograph by R. MALKMUS.



Fig. 191: *Podarcis hispanica* type 2; Serra de Sintra. Photograph by R. MALKMUS.



Fig. 192: *Podarcis hispanica* type 2; Espinhaço do Cão (near Pincho). Photograph by R. MALKMUS.



Fig. 193: *Podarcis hispanica* type 2; valley of Rib. de Odeceixe. Photograph by R. MALKMUS.



Fig. 194: *Podarcis hispanica* type 2; Mina de S. Domingos, east of Mértola. Photograph by R. MALKMUS.