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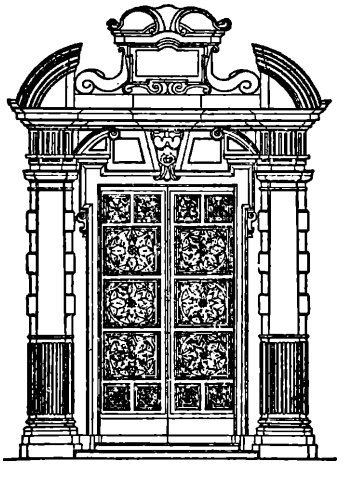

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ABSTRACT

To avoid misleading or controversial interpretations of the present taxonomic status of *Liolaemus ruizleali* Donoso Barros and Cei, 1971, the original description of its holotype is carefully compared with the morphological characters of *Liolaemus rothi* Koslowsky, 1898. No differences are shown by such a careful checking, thus the taxonomic status of *Liolaemus ruizleali* as a synonymous of *Liolaemus rothi* is again supported by unquestionable kinds of evidence.

INTRODUCTION

In a former paper (Cei and Scolaro, 1987) the real status of the poorly known *Liolaemus ruizleali* Donoso Barros and Cei, 1971, was analyzed and discussed. On the basis of a careful discriminant analysis (Foucart's method, 1982) it was possible to point out the "composite" origin of this species, never found again in its "terra typica" since its description. The holotype (IBA-UNC 483) was identified as a male adult specimen of *Liolaemus rothi* Koslowsky, 1898, a quite abundant and very variable iguanid lizard of the Somuncurá Meseta, Rio Negro. This statement was also supported by the evident color picture of the living holotype at the moment of its capture (color plate 1b: Cei and Scolaro, 1987). The other types belong either to *Liolaemus rothi* (paratypes IBA-UNC 482-1 and 482-2) or to *Liolaemus kingi somuncurae* Cei and Scolaro, 1981 (paratypes IBA-UNC 484-2 and 484-3; MZUC 8793 and 12060) being their identity also stressed by the color pictures of the living specimens from the same color plate.

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In spite of several kinds of evidence supporting these conclusions, some readers of our former paper (Etheridge: pers. comm.; Laurent: pers. comm.) advised about a somewhat contrasting comparison between the morphological characters currently referred to *Liolaemus rothi* and the characters of the holotype such as reported and published in the original description. In order to compare and comment the original description and checking our present classification of the holotype as a specimen of *Liolaemus rothi*, the present note was carried out.

MORPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS AND COMMENTS

Figure 1 shows a photographic report of the holotype (IBA-UNC 483) and a paratype (IBA-UNC 482-1), both ascribed to *Liolaemus rothi*, from the collection of the Instituto de Biología Animal, Universidad Nacional de Cuyo (Mendoza, Argentina). Figure 2 represents other paratypes referred to *Liolaemus kingi somuncurae* (IBA-UNC 484-2 and 484-3) from the same collection. The sentences commented were used in the original description of the species *Liolaemus ruizleali* (holotype); they are typed spaced and analyzed below.

1. general form stout; adpressed limb reaching axilla: both are characters of *Liolaemus rothi*, as shown by the photographic evidence and by the same personal observation of the specimen.

2. tail a little longer than length of head and body: it is evident in the figures, being the tail longer than body length in *L. rothi*, a strongly autotomic lizard.

3. cheeks prominent: evident in the photographic plate, and a peculiar character of *L. rothi.*

4. upper head scales rather large, wrinkled: character of *L. rothi*, being the condition "wrinkled" a probable subjective impression of the author of the description.

5. rostral broad, two times as long as high: it corresponds to the same character in *L. rothi.*

6. one azygous frontal separated from interparietal by a pair of small frontoparietals; interparietal same size as parietals: all characters of *L. rothi*, but in the specimen IBA-UNC 483 (holotype), two pairs of frontoparietals (not a pair) may be observable (Fig. 3).

7. subocular expanded; a single series of scales between labials and subocular: all trivial characters, evident in *L. rothi.*

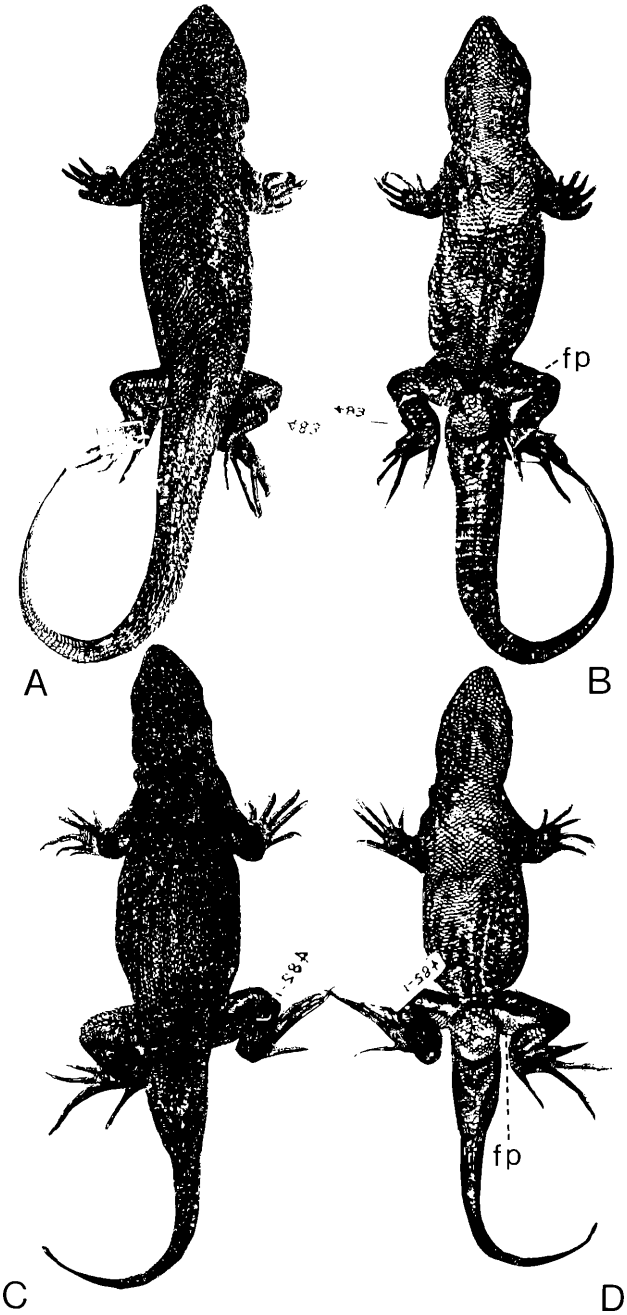

Fig. 1 - A. Holotype of *Liolaemus ruizleali* (male) N° 483. IBA-UNC: dorsal view; B. ventral view C. Paratype of *Liolaemus ruizleali* (female) N° 482-1. IBA-UNC: dorsal view; D. ventral view. (A, B: referable to the living specimen of Fig. 1b, p. 183, Boll. Mus. reg. Sci. nat. Torino 5(1), 1987); (C, D: referable to the living specimen of Fig. 3b, p. 183, Boll. Mus. reg. Sci. nat. Torino 5(1), 1987). All referred to *Liolaemus rothi.* (fp - femoral patch).

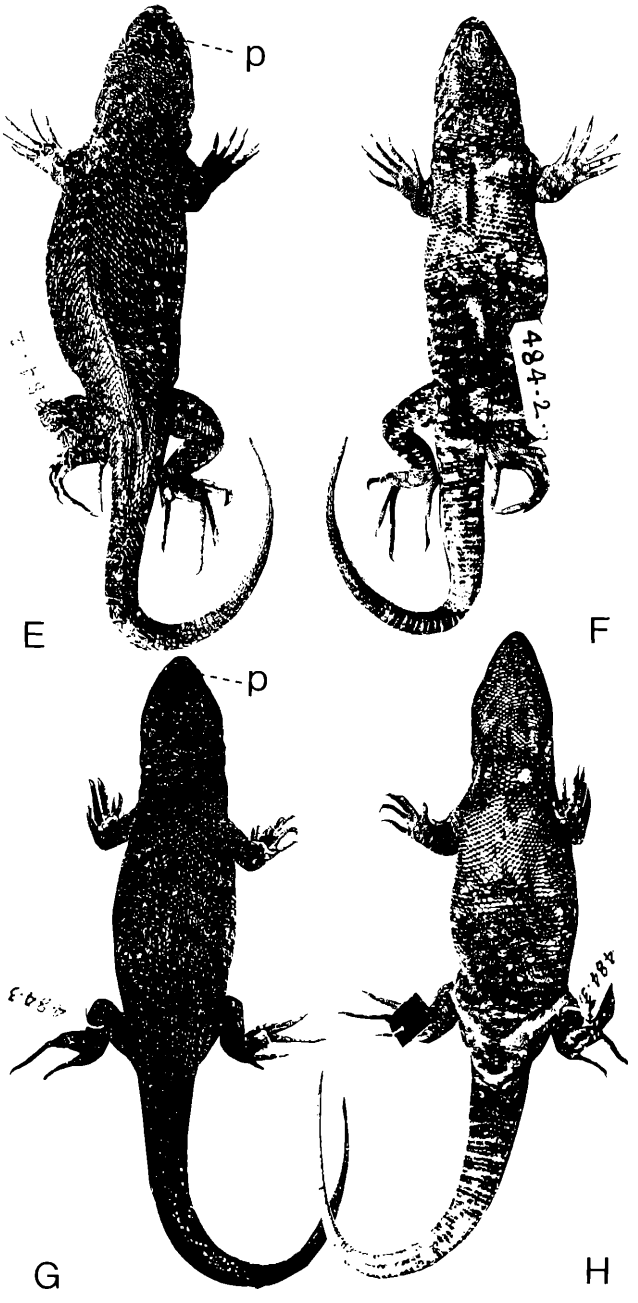

Fig. 2 - E. Paratype of *Liolaemus ruizleali* (female) N° 484-2. IBA-UNC: dorsal view; F. ventral view. G. Paratype of *Liolaemus ruizleali* (female) N° 484-3. IBA-UNC: dorsal view; H. ventral view. (E, F: referable to the living specimen of Fig. 5b, p.183, Boll. Mus. reg. Sci. nat. Torino 5(1), 1987). (G, H: referable to the living specimen of Fig. 4b, p. 183, Boll. Mus. reg. Sci. nat. Torino 5(1), 1987). All referred to *Liolaemus kingi somuncurae.* (p - pileus).

8. temporal scales smooth, ear opening vertically oval; 6 supralabials, 6 infralabials: all characters present in *L. rothi*, but in the holotype IBA-UNC 483, supralabials are really 8, infralabials 6.

9. sides of neck strongly folded; no antehumeral fold: all typical characters of *L. rothi*.

10. dorsal scales small, triangular, weakly keeled, without terminal points, keels forming longitudinal lines; scales on neck granular: all typical characters of *L. rothi*.

11. caudal scales triangular at base of the tail, quadrangular and diagonally keeled elsewhere; limb scales smooth;

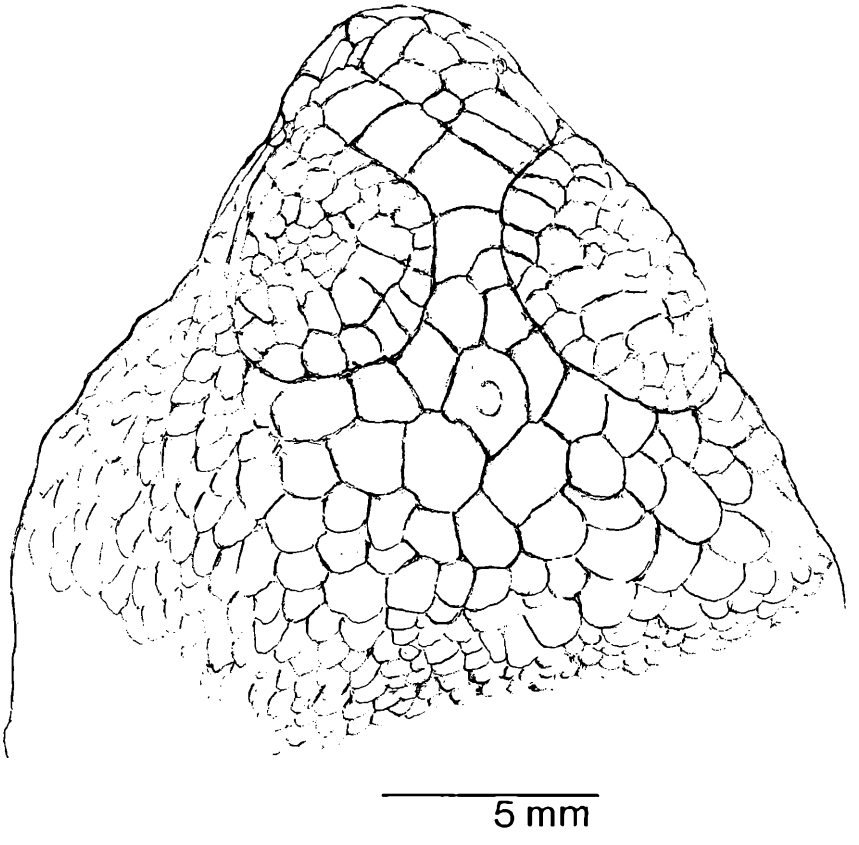

Fig. 3 - Cephalic lepidosis of the holotype of *Liolaemus ruizleali* (IBA-UNC 483): frontal, frontoparietals, interparietal and parietals are evident. (drawn from the preserved specimen).

scales on tibia weakly carinate; flank smooth, triangular; ventral scales rounded, smooth, imbricate, larger than dorsal: all characters present in the lepidosis of the *L. rothi.*

12. length of head contained in 21 middorsal scales; 81 scales around middle of body; rear of thighs granular; 6 preanal pores: all characters consistent with the characters of *L. rothi*, but the length of head contained in 21 middorsal scales is probably a subjective impression, really being contained in 17-18 middorsal scales in the holotype, and the preanal pores being really 7 in the same specimen (Fig. 1B and Fig. 4).

13. living animal with a dark brown ground color, transversally dotted with white: a very general, approximate color pattern of *L. rothi* (cf. color plate 1b; Cei and Scolaro, 1987).

14. pileus black: in this case a mistake or a very subjective impression, no pileus black being present in the specimen IBA-UNC 483 (cf. color plate

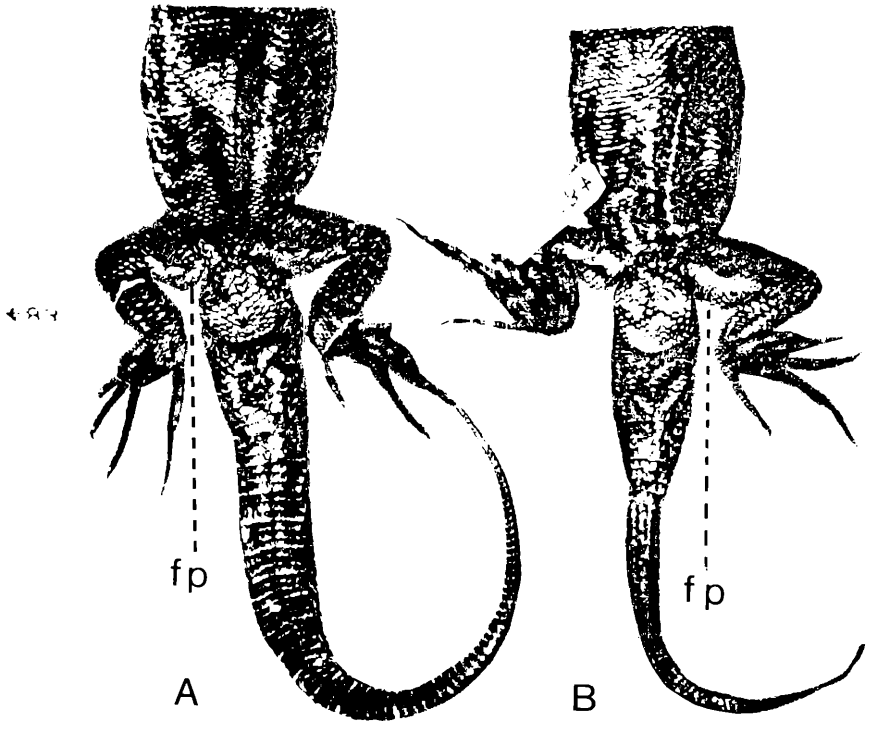

Fig. 4 - Femoral patches (fp) of *Liolaemus ruizleali*: A - Holotype IBA-UNC. 483; B - Paratype 482-1 IBA-UNC.

1b; Cei and Scolaro, 1987), but only in the specimens referred to *Liolaemus kingi somuncurae* (Fig. 2 E-G) (cf. color plate, 4b, 5b and 6 b; Cei and Scolaro, 1987).

15. sides of snout white dotted; sides of body with narrow, vertical white lines; limbs white streaked; belly black pigmented; lower jaw white anteriorly; posterior border of thighs pale: a very general, subjective chromatic impression, giving only a superficial description of the real color pattern of the "living" holotype, whose only evidence is the slide reproduced in the color plate 1b (Cei and Scolaro, 1987).

A very important character was omitted in tne original description: the femoral patch present in the specimen IBA-UNC 483 (Fig. 1 B-D and Fig. 4). It is a typical character of *Liolaemus rothi* and its group.

About the metrical characters: snout/vent length and head length are 95 mm and 21 mm respectively, both in the description and our measurements; head width was omitted in the description, but 18.4 mm in our measurement; hind leg and fore leg length are 41 versus 54 mm, and 33 mm versus 29 mm, respectively (measurements depending upon accidental or technical factors of personal appreciation); the number of lamellae under fourth finger and toe was omitted in the original description.

CONCLUSIONS

Concluding this short note and commentary, we recall that no particular discordance may be pointed out between the description of the holotype of *Liolaemus ruizleali* and the morphological paradigm corresponding at present to the currently accepted taxon *Liolaemus rothi.* Thus, we hope that any eventual doubt arosing from a preliminary or subjective impression of the original description of the synonymyzed *Liolaemus ruizleali* would be easily got over on the basis of the most rational evidence.

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