

Sexual dimorphism in the endemic Sardinian cave salamander (*Atylodes genei*)

Authors: Amat, Fèlix, Rivera, Xavier, Romano, Antonio, and Sotgiu, Giuseppe

Source: *Folia Zoologica*, 68(2) : 61-65

Published By: Institute of Vertebrate Biology, Czech Academy of Sciences

URL: <https://doi.org/10.25225/fozo.047.2019>

BioOne Complete (complete.BioOne.org) is a full-text database of 200 subscribed and open-access titles in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences published by nonprofit societies, associations, museums, institutions, and presses.

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Complete website, and all posted and associated content indicates your acceptance of BioOne's Terms of Use, available at www.bioone.org/terms-of-use.

Usage of BioOne Complete content is strictly limited to personal, educational, and non-commercial use. Commercial inquiries or rights and permissions requests should be directed to the individual publisher as copyright holder.

BioOne sees sustainable scholarly publishing as an inherently collaborative enterprise connecting authors, nonprofit publishers, academic institutions, research libraries, and research funders in the common goal of maximizing access to critical research.

Sexual dimorphism in the endemic Sardinian cave salamander (*Atylodes genei*)

Fèlix AMAT^{1*}, Xavier RIVERA², Antonio ROMANO³ and Giuseppe SOTGIU⁴

¹ *Amphibians and Reptiles Research Area, Granollers Museum of Natural Sciences, Palaudàries 114, E-08403 Granollers, Catalonia, Spain; e-mail: felixamat09@gmail.com*

² *Catalan Society of Herpetology, Museum of Zoology, Passeig Picasso s/n, E-08003 Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain; e-mail: xavirivera@yahoo.es*

³ *Department of Biology, University of Rome “Tor Vergata”, Via della Ricerca Scientifica, I-00133 Rome, Italy; e-mail: antonioromano71@gmail.com*

⁴ *Non-profit-making for Wildlife Conservation Zirichiltaggi – Sardinia Wildlife Conservation, Strada Vicinale Filigheddu 62/C, I-07100 Sassari, Italy; e-mail: sotgiuseppe@gmail.com*

Received 10 July 2018; Accepted 6 March 2019

Abstract. Sexual dimorphism in the size and shape of the Sardinian cave salamander (*Atylodes genei*) was analysed using morphometric measurements. Males and females are roughly equal in body size (mean snout-vent length SVL: 53.8 and 53.4 mm, respectively) but differed in body shape. Relative to their SVL, males had comparatively larger heads, longer limbs and tails than females, which agrees with patterns of sexual dimorphism in other closely related species. This suggests the existence of phylogenetic conservatism in sexual differences in body shape. The lack of dimorphism in body size could be an ancestral trait in *Atylodes genei*.

Key words: Plethodontidae, body size, body shape, *Speleomantes*

Introduction

Sexual dimorphism – the expression of different phenotypes in the two sexes – has intrigued evolutionary biologists since Darwin (1871). The main driver for the evolution of sex-specific morphological structures is usually considered to be sexual selection (Rowe & Arnvist 2013). This kind of selection acts either through competition between males to gain access to females or through mate choice, whereby females evaluate the evolutionary fitness of their potential mates according to morphological traits specifically developed for this purpose (Andersson 1994).

However, aside from sexual selection, three further factors may lead to the evolution of sexual dimorphism: (i) fecundity selection, which favours larger bodies in females providing more space for eggs; (ii) competition between sexes, which should lead to sexual dimorphism in body size or food consumption structures (Selander 1972); and (iii) mating performance through intrasexual competition, which favours morphological structures maximizing the number of successful mating attempts (Gvoždík & Van Damme 2003).

Although sexual differences in body size have previously been investigated in many species of salamanders (De Lisle & Rowe 2013), dimorphism in body shape has received much less attention (Malmgren & Thollesson 1999, Kalezić et al. 2000, Romano et al. 2009, Hasumi 2010). Many species of salamanders – as well as frogs – seem to follow the predicted patterns of sexual size dimorphism in ectotherms whose females are larger than males (De Lisle & Rowe 2013). The opposite pattern is rare and may be associated with the existence of contests between males for females (Shine 1979); nevertheless, a large variety of types of behaviour related to inter- and intrasexual interaction exists in salamanders, including scramble competition, mate guarding, courtship, fighting for resources and biting (Levgenius & Parzefall 1992, Mathis et al. 1995, Kawamichi & Ueda 1998).

The plethodontid salamander *Atylodes genei* lives in caves and rocky-outcrops in Mediterranean forests and is geographically restricted to the area of Sulcis-Iglesiente in south-west Sardinia (Lanza 1999). To date, the only study examining sexual dimorphism

* *Corresponding Author*

in this species reported sexual differences in total and body lengths, and provided information about differences in body shapes between males and females based on ratios but lacked any statistical analysis (Lanza et al. 1995). In this study, we used both body size and shape to describe patterns of sexual dimorphism in *Atylodes genei*, which will facilitate comparisons with other available data for this species (Lanza et al. 1995, 2007) and other European lungless salamanders (Salvidio & Bruce 2006).

Material and Methods

Field sampling of *Atylodes genei* was carried out in south-west Sardinia on 23-26 April 2009. A total of 97 individuals were collected, of which, despite the large sampling effort, the sex ratio was severely biased towards males, probably due to differences in activity patterns between the sexes. Salamanders were caught by hand and anaesthetised using tricaine methanesulphonate (MS-222), one of the anaesthetics most commonly used in the field sampling of amphibians (e.g. Schumacher 1996). Sexual determination was based on the detection of the mental gland, a typical male structure; individuals larger than the smallest male and lacking this trait were considered as females. Twelve linear morphometric traits were measured with a digital calliper to a resolution of one millimetre: 1: snout-vent length (SVL), from the tip of the snout to the rear margin of the cloaca; 2: head length, from the tip of the snout to the gular fold; 3: maximum head width; 4: head width between the eye orbits; 5: head width at the gular fold; 6: maximum head height; 7: interorbital distance, equivalent to the minimum distance between the eyes; 8: forelimb length from the point of insertion to the tip of the longest finger; 9: hindlimb length from the point of insertion to the tip of the longest toe; 10: axilla-to-groin length; 11: tail length; and 12: trunk length, calculated as SVL minus head length. All measurements were taken by the same person (F. Amat). Sexual size dimorphism was estimated using an index (Lovich & Gibbons 1992) defined as the quotient between the sizes of the largest and smallest sex -1 . By convention this index is given as a positive value when females are the largest sex and as a negative value when males are largest.

Statistical analyses were performed using the logarithmic value (\log_{10}) of the morphometric variables. Sexual size and shape dimorphism were investigated using a two-way ANOVA with sex and geographical area as factors. In order to maximise the sample size, populations were pooled into three groups

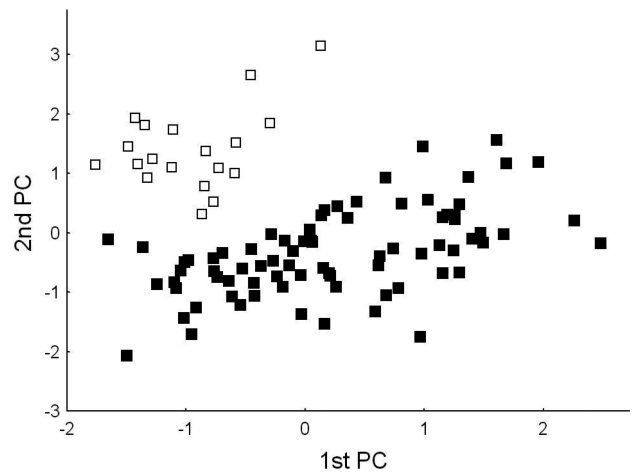


Fig. 1. Plot of the examined individuals of *Atylodes genei* on the two first PC: open squares – females and black squares – males.

Table 1. Means, standard errors of the twelve linear morphometric traits by sexes of sampled individuals of *Atylodes genei*.

| | Mean \pm SE | |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Males | Females |
| SVL | 53.8 \pm 4.2 | 53.4 \pm 2.8 |
| Head length | 14.0 \pm 1.4 | 12.7 \pm 0.9 |
| Trunk length | 39.7 \pm 3.2 | 40.6 \pm 2.6 |
| Maximum head width | 10.6 \pm 1.5 | 8.4 \pm 0.4 |
| Head width at eye orbits | 7.9 \pm 1.1 | 7.3 \pm 0.8 |
| Head width at gular fold | 7.3 \pm 0.9 | 6.3 \pm 0.4 |
| Head depth | 5.3 \pm 0.7 | 3.7 \pm 0.3 |
| Interorbital distance | 5.4 \pm 0.6 | 4.8 \pm 0.3 |
| Forelimb length | 14.4 \pm 1.4 | 13.4 \pm 1.1 |
| Axilla-groin length | 26.6 \pm 2.4 | 27.0 \pm 1.5 |
| Hindlimb length | 16.6 \pm 1.5 | 14.8 \pm 0.9 |
| Tail length | 45.8 \pm 4.9 | 34.9 \pm 2.2 |

based on geographical proximity (Rivera et al. 2015) as follows: Domusnovas (cave and surroundings), 42 salamanders, of which 11 were females and 31 males; Nuxis (two caves), 24 salamanders, of which 8 were females and 16 males; and Fluminimaggiore (three caves), 31 salamanders, of which all were males. In total 78 males and 19 females from these three localities were analysed. Pearson correlations were performed to assess whether the SVL was positively associated with the other 11 morphometric variables (results not shown). In order to evaluate sexual differences in body shape whilst controlling for the effect of body size on the other variables, a two-way MANCOVA test was conducted with SVL as a covariate. An examination of the multivariate

Table 2. Coefficients of linear morphometric variables of the sampled specimens of *Atylodes genei* in the two first factors, corresponding eigenvalues and percentage of explained variance.

| Variable | 1 st PC | 2 nd PC |
|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Trunk length | 0.680 | 0.650 |
| Head length | 0.840 | -0.156 |
| Maximum head width | 0.854 | -0.198 |
| Head with at orbits | 0.672 | 0.041 |
| Head with at gular fold | 0.818 | -0.078 |
| Head height | 0.857 | -0.351 |
| Interorbital distance | 0.792 | -0.029 |
| Forelimb length | 0.718 | 0.073 |
| Axila-groin length | 0.677 | 0.657 |
| Hindlimb length | 0.866 | -0.064 |
| Tail length | 0.855 | -0.260 |
| Eigenvalues | 7.170 | 0.925 |
| % explained variance | 0.608 | 0.084 |

patterns of correlation between the 11 morphometric variables was performed using a principal component analysis (PCA) to visualise sexual differences in shape between sexes (Romano et al. 2009). All analyses were performed using Statistica 4.5.

Results

Sexual size dimorphism was extremely small (males 53.8 ± 4.2 and females 53.4 ± 2.8 mm). Females matured at larger sizes than males (minimum SVL, 49.9 and 44.9 mm in females and males, respectively), but males had larger maximum SVL than females (63.1 and 60.6 mm, respectively). Thus, sexual and geographical differences had statistically a non-significant influence on body size (ANOVA: geographical area, $F_{1,62} = 1.290$, $P = 0.259$; sex, $F_{1,62} = 2.843$, $P = 0.096$; interaction, $F_{1,62} = 0.405$, $P = 0.526$). However, the analysed populations had significant sexual dimorphism in body shape – including mean head width, trunk length and tail length (Table 1, $P < 0.001$) – combined with geographical variation; however, there was no interaction between these two factors (MANCOVA: geographical area, $F_{1,51} = 0.689$, $P = 0.038$; sex, $F_{1,51} = 0.076$, $P < 0.001$; interaction, $F_{1,51} = 0.743$, $P = 0.127$). The PCA had a high total variance accounted for by the first two factors (72.4 %). The first PC had the typical structure of a size vector (Table 2), in which all the variables are positively and strongly weighted. Thus, the first PC only described individual variation in the overall body size, irrespective of sex. The second PC was

positively influenced by the weights of trunk length and axilla-groin length, while the other variables – above all, maximum head width, height and length, and tail length – were both strongly and negatively weighted. Plotting the data of these two PCs revealed a pattern of sexual-shape dimorphism (Fig. 1). Thus, males were characterised by relatively bigger heads in all three dimensions (length, width and height), longer tails and longer hindlimbs. Females, though, had opposing patterns in the relative proportions of their heads and tails.

Discussion

The commonest pattern of sexual size dimorphism in ectothermic organisms is a bias towards larger females (Fairbairn 1997). This is a general rule in amphibians such as salamanders (De Lisle & Rowe 2013, Han & Fu 2013, Amat & Meiri 2017). Nevertheless, our study recorded roughly equal body size between sexes in *Atylodes genei* in agreement with previous studies (mean SVL: males 52.5 mm and females 52.0 mm, Lanza et al. 1995). Male combat has been proposed as one of the main selective factors enhancing sexual size dimorphism biased towards males, especially in frogs (Shine 1979, Han & Fu 2013). Despite the inherent difficulties in observing the behaviour of European plethodontid salamanders, there is no evidence that male *Atylodes* or *Speleomantes* species fight (Zanetti & Salvidio 2006, Sguanci et al. 2010). On the other hand, females of these salamander species have been reported to show aggressive behaviour towards conspecifics or predators when guarding their clutches (Stefani & Serra 1966, Mutz 1998, Oneto et al. 2014). In the case of two continental *Speleomantes* (Salvidio & Bruce 2006), females are larger than males; however, the opposite pattern was observed in the Sardinian *S. sarrabusensis* (Tessa et al. 2008). Remarkably, the most comprehensive and descriptive analysis of morphological differentiation in European lungless salamanders (Lanza et al. 1995) reports widespread sexual size dimorphism biased towards females in all these species with the exception of *Atylodes genei*.

Sexual differences in body size in amphibians are due to faster maturity in one sex rather than to differences in growth rates (Zhang & Lu 2013), although one experimental study carried out with caecilians did show the importance of both factors (Kupfer et al. 2004). There are no available data for the timing of sexual maturity in *Atylodes genei* that could validate this pattern; nevertheless, faster male maturation has been reported in one European lungless salamander

(*Speleomantes ambrosii*: 3.5 and 5 years for males and females, respectively; Salvidio 1993). By contrast, populations of the Sardinian *S. sarrabusensis* showed faster sexual maturation occurring at an identical minimum age in both sexes (two years, Tessa et al. 2008), with males being larger than females. It has been suggested that insularity could affect life history and body size in ectotherms (Novosolov et al. 2013) through selective pressure given that predation and competition for resources acts in differently on islands than in the mainland. Therefore, insular conditions could have modified the patterns of sexual maturity and, in turn, sexual size dimorphism in Sardinian lungless salamanders in relation to continental species. Alternatively, the basal position of *Atylodes genei* in the phylogeny of the European lungless salamanders (Van der Meijden et al. 2009) could be evidence of an ancestral condition of little or no sexual size dimorphism.

Based on our results, *Atylodes genei* exhibits a clear pattern of sexual shape dimorphism characterised by larger heads, limbs and tail in males, albeit with some geographical variation. Previous research (Lanza et al. 1995) found the same pattern of sexual dimorphism in limb proportions but opposite patterns in relative head lengths, as well as sexual differences in head width and tail length that varied between the studied populations. Sexual differences in body shape could have implications for this species' ecology. For example, cave salamanders use their tails as a fifth limb to move up and down vertical surfaces (Lanza 1991) and so if they have proportionally longer tails than females, males may be obliged to avoid steeper slopes. Nevertheless, none of the few available studies of the spatial ecology of cave salamanders have ever found sexual segregation in their use of vertical habitats (Ficetola et al. 2013). Although larger hind limbs in males may increase their climbing ability and compensate for the negative effect of longer tails, it is likely that the magnitude of the

difference we found is not large enough to have any real effect. Another significant sexually dimorphic trait found in our study was head width, which was proportionally larger in males, a pattern shared with most plethodontid salamanders including the closely related *Speleomantes* species (Salvidio & Bruce 2006). Two different hypotheses have been proposed to explain this pattern. Firstly, contests between males to control mating territories may promote the development of proportionally bigger heads with powerful jaw muscles as, for example, in the plethodontid salamanders of the genus *Aneides* (Davis 2002); nonetheless, this behaviour has never been observed in the European cave salamanders (Zanetti & Salvidio 2006). Secondly, sexual differences in head size could be explained by a segregation of trophic niches reducing intraspecific competition since prey size might be constrained by mouth size. However, previous studies on Sardinian cave salamanders have found no support for this hypothesis and only report an ontogenetic effect on diet structure (Lunghi et al. 2017, Salvidio et al. 2017).

Our results suggest that a change in the patterns of sexual size dimorphism in *Atylodes genei* compared to other European plethodontid salamanders has taken place; by contrast, shape dimorphism has remained mostly unchanged. Future research on sexual dimorphism, age at maturation and fecundity in other lungless salamanders could help clarify whether these differences are adaptations to insularity or, alternatively, the result of the conservation of an ancestral condition.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare for the scientific permits (authorization number: DPN/2D/2006/7546) and Salvador Carranza for the logistical and economic support for this research. We are also very grateful to the reviewers for their comments that greatly improved the quality of the manuscript.

Literature

- Amat F. & Meiri S. 2017: Geographical, climatic and biological constraints on age at sexual maturity in amphibians. *Biol. J. Linn. Soc.* 123: 34–42.
- Andersson M. 1994: Sexual selection. *Princeton University Press, Princeton*.
- Darwin C.D. 1871: The descent of man, and selection in relation to sex. *John Murray, London*.
- Davis T.M. 2002: An ethogram of intraspecific agonistic and display behaviour for the wandering salamander, *Aneides vagrans*. *Herpetologica* 58: 371–382.
- De Lisle S.P. & Rowe L. 2013: Correlated evolution of allometry and sexual dimorphism across higher taxa. *Am. Nat.* 182: 630–639.
- Fairbairn D.J. 1997: Allometry for sexual size dimorphism: pattern and process in the coevolution of body size in males and females. *Annu. Rev. Ecol. Syst.* 28: 659–687.
- Ficetola G.F., Pennati R. & Manenti R. 2013: Spatial segregation among age classes in cave salamanders: habitat selection or social interactions? *Popul. Ecol.* 55: 217–226.

- Gvoždík L. & Van Damme R. 2003: Evolutionary maintenance of sexual dimorphism in head size in the lizard *Zootoca vivipara*: a test of two hypotheses. *J. Zool. Lond.* 259: 7–13.
- Han X. & Fu J. 2013: Does life history shape sexual size dimorphism in anurans? A comparative analysis. *BMC Evol. Biol.* 13: 27.
- Hasumi M. 2010: Age, body size, and sexual dimorphism in size and shape in *Salamandrella keyserlingii* (Caudata: Hynobiidae). *Evol. Biol.* 37: 38–48.
- Kalezić M.L., Džukić G., Djorović A. & Aleksić I. 2000: Body size, age and sexual dimorphism in the genus *Salamandra*: a study of the Balkan species. *Spixiana* 23: 283–292.
- Kawamichi T. & Ueda H. 1998: Spawning at nest of extra-large males in the giant salamander *Andrias japonicus*. *J. Herpetol.* 32: 133–136.
- Kupfer A., Kramer A. & Himstedt W. 2004: Sex-related growth patterns in a caecilian amphibian (genus *Ichthyophis*): evidence from laboratory data. *J. Zool. Lond.* 262: 173–178.
- Lanza B. 1991: Faunal notes on the caves of Samugheo and Asuni, and particularly on the cave salamander *Speleomantes imperialis*. In: Bartolo G. & Muzzetto G. (eds.), The castle of Medusa: environment, legends, caves. *Guido Bartolo Editore, Cagliari*: 67–72.
- Lanza B. 1999: Plethodontidae – Lungenlose salamander; *Speleomantes* Dubois, 1984. In: Grossenbacher K. & Thiesmeier B. (eds.), Handbuch der Reptilien und Amphibien Europas, band 4/I Schwanzlurche (Urodela) I (Hynobiidae, Proteidae, Plethodontidae, Salamandridae I: *Pleurodeles*, *Salamandrina*, *Euproctus*, *Chioglossa*, *Mertensiella*). *Aula-Verlag, Wiesbaden*: 77–80.
- Lanza B., Andreone F., Bologna M.A. et al. 2007: Fauna of Italy, vol. XLII, Amphibia. *Calderini, Bologna*.
- Lanza B., Caputo V., Nascetti G. & Bullini L. 1995: Morphologic and genetic studies of the European plethodontid salamanders: taxonomic inferences (genus *Hydromantes*). *Monografie XVI, Museo Regionale di Scienze Naturali, Torino*: 1–366.
- Lengvenus W. & Parzefall J. 1992: The roles of the visual reaction in the behaviour of an epigeal and a cave living population of *Euproctus asper* Duges (Salamandridae, Urodela). *Mem. Biospeol.* 19: 111–118.
- Lovich J.E. & Gibbons J.W. 1992: A review of techniques for quantifying sexual size dimorphism. *Growth Dev. Aging* 56: 269–281.
- Lunghi E., Ceccolini F., Cainferoni F. et al. 2017: Preliminary data on the autumn diet of the geotritons of Sardinia (genus *Speleomantes*). In: Menegon M., Rodriguez-Prieto A. & Deflorian M.C. (eds.), Proceedings XI National Congress of the Societas Herpetologica Italica. *Ianieri Edizioni, Pescara*: 177–182.
- Malmgren J.C. & Tholleson M. 1999: Sexual size and shape dimorphism in two species of newts, *Triturus cristatus* and *T. vulgaris* (Caudata: Salamandridae). *J. Zool. Lond.* 249: 127–136.
- Mathis A.R., Jaeger W.H., Keen P.K. et al. 1995: Aggression and territoriality by salamanders and a comparison with the behaviour of frogs. In: Heatwole H. & Sullivan B.K. (eds.), Amphibian biology, vol 2. Social behaviour. *Surrey Beatty & Sons, Chipping Norton, New South Wales, Australia*: 633–676.
- Mutz T. 1998: Haltung und zucht des Sardischen höhlensalamanders *Hydromantes imperialis* (Stefani, 1969) und einige beobachtungen zur Ökologie der europäischen Höhlensalamander. *Salamandra* 34: 167–180.
- Novosolov M., Raia P. & Meiri S. 2013: The island syndrome in lizards. *Glob. Ecol. Biogeogr.* 22: 184–191.
- Oneto F., Ottonello D., Pastorino M.V. & Salvidio S. 2014: Maternal care and defence of young by the plethodontid salamander *Speleomantes strinatii* (Aellen 1951). In: Capula M. & Corti C. (eds.), Scripta herpetologica. Studies on amphibians and reptiles in honour of Benedetto Lanza. *Edizioni Belvedere, Latina*: 129–136.
- Rivera X., Amat F., Sotgiu G. & Romano A. 2015: Patterns of coloration of salamander *Atylodes genei* (Temminck & Schlegel, 1838) (Caudata, Plethodontidae). *But. Soc. Cat. Herp.* 22: 77–93.
- Romano A., Bruni G. & Paoletti C. 2009: Sexual dimorphism in the Italian endemic species *Salamandrina perspicillata* (Savi, 1821) and testing of a field method for sexing salamanders. *Amphibia-Reptilia* 30: 425–434.
- Rowe L. & Arnvist G. 2013: Sexual conflict. *Princeton University Press, Princeton*.
- Salvidio S. 1993: Life history of the European plethodontid salamander *Speleomantes ambrosii* (Amphibia, Caudata). *Herpetol. J.* 3: 55–59.
- Salvidio S. & Bruce R.C. 2006: Sexual dimorphism in two species of European plethodontid salamanders, genus *Speleomantes*. *Herpetol. J.* 16: 9–14.
- Salvidio S., Pasmans F., Bogaerts S. et al. 2017: Consistency in trophic strategies between populations of the Sardinian endemic salamander *Speleomantes imperialis*. *Anim. Biol.* 67: 1–16.
- Schumacher J. 1996: Reptiles and amphibians. In: Lumb W.V. & Jones E.W. (eds.), Veterinari anesthesia, 2nd ed. *Philadelphia, Williams & Wilkins*: 670–685.
- Selander R.K. 1972: Sexual selection and dimorphism in birds. In: Campbell B.G. (ed.), Sexual selection and the descent of man. *Adine, Chicago*: 180–230.
- Sguanci S., Corti C., Berti R. et al. 2010: Defense of territory of *Speleomantes italicus* (Dunn, 1923). In: Di Tizio L., Di Cerbo A.R., Di Franoso N. & Cameli A. (eds.), Proceedings XI National Congress of the Societas Herpetologica Italica. *Ianieri Edizioni, Pescara*: 253–258.
- Shine R. 1979: Sexual selection and sexual dimorphism in the Amphibia. *Copeia* 2: 297–306.
- Stefani T. & Serra G. 1996: The oviparity in *Hydromantes genei* (Temm. et Schl.). *Bol. Zool. Torino* 33: 283–291.
- Tessa G., Sotgiu G., Repetto R. et al. 2008: Longevity and population dynamics in *Speleomantes imperialis sarrabusensis* (Southern Sardinia, Italy). In: Corti C. (ed.), Herpetologia sardiniae. Societas Herpetologica Italica. *Edizioni Belvedere, Latina*: 1–5.
- Van der Meijden A., Chiari Y., Mucedda M. et al. 2009: Phylogenetic relationships of Sardinian cave salamanders, genus *Hydromantes*, based on mitochondrial and nuclear DNA sequence data. *Mol. Phyl. Evol.* 51: 399–404.
- Zanetti L. & Salvidio S. 2006: Preliminary data on the territorial behaviour of *Speleomantes strinatii*. In: Bologna M.A., Capula M., Carpaneto G.M. et al. (eds.), Summaries of the 6th National Congress of the Societas Herpetologica Italica. *Stilgrafica, Roma*: 160–161.
- Zhang L. & Lu X. 2013: Ontogenetic mechanisms underlying sexual size dimorphism in Urodela amphibians: an across-species approach. *Curr. Zool.* 59: 142–150.