

First Report of *Bitylenchus hispaniensis*, *Pratylenchoides alkani*, and *Helicotylenchus vulgaris* in Association with Cultivated and Wild Olives in Crete, Greece and Molecular Identification of *Helicotylenchus microlobus* and *Merlinius brevidens*

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Olive (*Olea europaea* subsp. *europaea* L.) is the most common crop on the island of Crete, Greece, while clusters of wild olives (*Olea europaea* subsp. *sylvestris* L.) are located also in several non-agricultural areas (Tzortzakakis et al., 2014). Surveys for detection of plant-parasitic nematodes were conducted on both cultivated and wild olives during the period 2013 to 2015. Soil samples were collected with a hoe, discarding the upper 5-cm top soil profile, from 5 to 40 cm depth in the close vicinity of active roots from 2 to 5 olive trees randomly chosen in each from 146 orchards. Similarly, soil samples were also collected from the rhizosphere of individual 36 wild olives distributed in various areas. Furthermore, three additional soil samples, where populations of *Helicotylenchus* were detected, were included in this study. One

Abstract

Nematode samplings in cultivated and wild olive in Crete, Greece, yielded the presence of *Bitylenchus hispaniensis*, *Helicotylenchus microlobus*, *Helicotylenchus vulgaris*, *Merlinius brevidens*, and *Pratylenchoides alkani*. With the exception of *H. microlobus* and *M. brevidens*, reports of these plant-parasitic nematode species constitute new records for Greece. *Bitylenchus hispaniensis* is also reported for first time in a country outside of Spain, where it was originally described. *Pratylenchoides alkani* is herein reported for the second time in the Mediterranean area and for the first time in association with olive. Two further populations of *H. microlobus* and *H. vulgaris*, from walnut and goji berry from Greece, were identified. Molecular data for all of these nematode species are provided, resulting in the first integrative identification of these Greek populations.

Key words

28S rRNA, Detection, New geographic record, ITS.

sample was from pots where cultivated olive stock plants were maintained for research purposes (Institute of Olive Tree, Subtropical Crops, and Viticulture, Chania, Crete), the second from the roots of walnut (*Juglans regia* L.) in Evia, Greece, and the third from the roots of goji berry (*Lycium barbarum* L.) in Thessaly, Greece. Nematodes were extracted from several soil samples of 500 g by the wet-sieving and decanting method (Cobb, 1918). Additional samples were collected later from the same sampling sites to obtain sufficient specimens for morphological and molecular identification. Specimens to be observed under light microscopy (LM) were heat killed by adding hot 4% formaldehyde solution and were processed to pure glycerin using De Grisse's (1969) method. Microscopical observations were carried out using a Zeiss

Table 1. Sequenced genes pf plant-parasitic nematodes sampled from cultivated and wild olive in Crete and two other hosts in Evia and Thessaly, Greece.

Nematode species	Sample code	Host and Locality	D2-D3	ITS
<i>Bitylenchus hispaniensis</i>	OLI106	Cultivated olive, Episkopi, Crete	MG770479	–
<i>B. hispaniensis</i>	OLI013	Cultivated olive, Roufas, Crete	*	–
<i>B. hispaniensis</i>	OLE011	Wild olive, Trypiti, Crete	*	–
<i>B. hispaniensis</i>	OLE015	Wild olive, Lentas, Crete	*	–
<i>B. hispaniensis</i>	OLE023	Wild olive, Ag. Ioannis, Crete	*	–
<i>B. hispaniensis</i>	OLE029	Wild olive, Ag. Georgios, Crete	*	–
<i>B. hispaniensis</i>	OLE032	Wild olive, Tsoutsouros, Crete	*	–
<i>Helicotylenchus microlobus</i>	OLI066	Cultivated olive, Vori, Crete	MG770480	MG770406
<i>H. microlobus</i>	OLI002	Cultivated olive, Vori, Crete	*	–
<i>H. microlobus</i>	OLI074	Cultivated olive, Vori, Crete	*	–
<i>H. microlobus</i>	POT017	Potted cultivated olive, Chania, Crete	MG770481	MG770407
<i>H. microlobus</i>	WAL17	Walnut, Evia, Greece	MG770482	MG770408
<i>Helicotylenchus vulgaris</i>	OLI004	Cultivated olive, Petrokefali, Crete	MG770483	–
<i>H. vulgaris</i>	OLI005	Cultivated olive, Petrokefali, Crete	*	–
<i>H. vulgaris</i>	OLI046	Cultivated olive, Gonies, Crete	*	–
<i>H. vulgaris</i>	OLI055	Cultivated olive, Voutes, Crete	*	–
<i>H. vulgaris</i>	OLI071	Cultivated olive, Pentamodi, Crete	*	–
<i>H. vulgaris</i>	OLI129	Cultivated olive, Perama, Crete	*	–
<i>H. vulgaris</i>	OLE026	Wild olive, Agiofarago, Crete	*	–
<i>H. vulgaris</i>	GOBERR	Goji berry, Thessaly, Greece	MG770484	–
<i>Merlinius brevidens</i> ^a	OLI106	Cultivated olive, Episkopi, Crete	MG770485	–
<i>M. brevidens</i>	OLE009	Wild olive, Kefali, Crete	*	–
<i>Pratylenchoides alkani</i> ^b	OLI060	Cultivated olive, Sivas, Crete	MG770486	–
<i>P. alkani</i>	OLI111	Cultivated olive, Amygdali, Crete	*	–
<i>P. alkani</i>	OLE007	Wild olive, Vathy, Crete	*	–
<i>P. alkani</i>	OLE017	Wild olive, Agiofarago, Crete	*	–
<i>P. alkani</i>	OLE018	Wild olive, Agiofarago, Crete	*	–
<i>P. alkani</i>	OLE031	Wild olive, Listis, Crete	*	–
<i>P. alkani</i>	OLE032	Wild olive, Tsoutsouros, Crete	*	–
<i>P. alkani</i>	OLE036	Wild olive, Agiofarago, Crete	*	–

Notes: (*) Sequenced population but not deposited in GenBank database because of its high similarity with previously deposited sequences.

(-) Not obtained.

^aFound in 29 further cultivated olive samples (OLI007, OLI010, OLI030, OLI031, OLI033, OLI050, OLI051, OLI066, OLI070, OLI071, OLI080, OLI084, OLI086, OLI097, OLI100, OLI102, OLI103, OLI104, OLI105, OLI108, OLI110, OLI111,

OLI114, OLI129, OLI131, OLI134, OLI135, OLI142, and OLI146) and in nine further wild olive samples (OLE011, OLE013, OLE015, OLE021, OLE027, OLE028, OLE029, OLE030, and OLE032).

^bMay be a junior synonym of *P. ritteri*, as supported by phylogenetic analyses by Azizi et al. (2016) and noted by some other researchers (Brzeski, 1998; Ghaderi and Karegar, 2014; Ghaderi et al., 2014).

III compound microscope with Nomarski differential interference contrast at up to $\times 1,000$ magnification. Diagnostic measurements were made using a drawing tube attached to the microscope. Specimens for molecular analysis were preserved in DESS (Yoder et al., 2006). Here, we report five species as identified by morphological and molecular analyses of females: *Bitylenchus hispaniensis* (Handoo et al., 2014); *Helicotylenchus microlobus* (Perry et al., 1959); *Helicotylenchus vulgaris* (Yuen, 1964); *Merlinius brevidens* (Allen, 1955; Siddiqi, 1970); and *Pratylenchoides alkani* (Yüksel, 1977; Table 1, Fig. 1). These plant-parasitic nematode species, except *H. microlobus* and *M. brevidens*, are new records for Greece. The morphology and morphometry of the isolated nematode species (Table 2) agreed with original and previous descriptions of them, except for minor intraspecific differences (Kollopanos and Vovlas, 1977; Castillo and Gómez Barcina, 1988; Ghaderi et al., 2014;

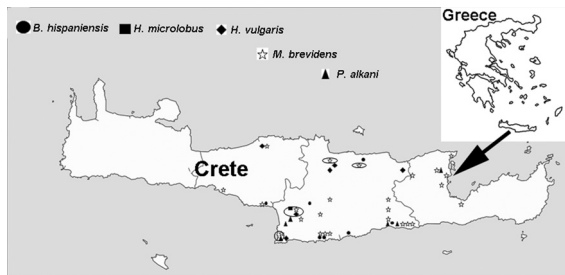


Figure 1: Geographic distribution of plant-parasitic nematodes of the genera *Bitylenchus*, *Helicotylenchus*, *Merlinius* and *Pratylenchoides* in field survey of cultivated and wild olive in Crete, Greece. Numbers of samples for each nematode species are as follows: *Bitylenchus hispaniensis* (seven samples), *Helicotylenchus microlobus* (three samples), *Helicotylenchus vulgaris* (seven samples), *Merlinius brevidens* (40 samples) and *Pratylenchoides alkani* (eight samples). 44 sites are presented, as some samples were derived from spatially close (encircled) areas and may therefore not be independent populations.

Subbotin et al., 2015; Azizi et al., 2016). Nematode DNA was extracted from single individuals and PCR assays were conducted as described by Castillo et al. (2003). Primers and PCR conditions used in this research were specified in Cantalapiedra-Navarrete et al. (2013), and single amplicons of 800 bp and 1,100 bp in length was obtained by sequencing of the D2-D3 expansion segments of 28S and of ITS rRNA genes, respectively. Sequence alignments for D2-D3 from the Cretan *B. hispaniensis*, which showed 99 to 100% similarity (differing in 0 to 1 bp, 0 indels) to the Spanish type population, were deposited in NCBI GenBank (accession numbers MG770479, KJ461547, and KJ461545, respectively). The *H. microlobus* populations from cultivated olive from Crete and walnut from Evia (MG770480–MG770482) showed 99% similarity (differing in 1 to 6 bp, 0 indels) with *H. microlobus* (KM506793–KM506800) and *Helicotylenchus pseudorobustus* populations (HM014264, KU722387) deposited in the NCBI. ITS from populations of *H. microlobus* (MG770406–MG770408) showed 98 to 99% similarity (differing in 13 to 18 bp, 9 indels) to *H. microlobus* populations (KM506864–KM506867) and only 93% similarity (differing in 68 to 69 bp, 26 indels) to *H. pseudorobustus* populations (KM506875 and KM506880), which agree with previous data by Subbotin et al. (2015) and which confirmed the integrative diagnosis of our specimens. Similarly, the *H. vulgaris* populations from wild and cultivated olive, Crete and goji berry, Thessaly (MG770483–MG770484) showed 99 to 100% similarity (differing in 0 to 4 bp, 0 indel) with *H. vulgaris* populations (FJ485650, KU722388, DQ328759–DQ328761) deposited in NCBI. Intraspecific variability for D2-D3 was low for *H. microlobus* and *H. vulgaris* (differing in 5 to 7 bp, 1 indels, and 1 bp, 0 indels, respectively). The D2-D3 sequence of the Cretan population of *M. brevidens* (MG770485) showed 99% similarity (differing in 4 to 9 bp, 0 to 1 indel) to *M. brevidens* populations (KJ585416, KP313844, and KP313847). Finally, the D2-D3 28S expansion segment from the Cretan populations of *P. alkani* (MG770486) showed 99% similarity to *P. alkani* (JX261953 and JX261962) and *Pratylenchoides ritteri* populations (KP313850 and KU855004) (differing in 2–4 bp, 1 to 2 indels, and 4–9 bp, 1–2 indels, respectively). These data support previous suggestions for synonymizing *P. alkani* and

Table 2. Morphometrics of *Bitylenchus hispaniensis* (Handoo, et al., 2014); *Helicotylenchus microlobus* (Perry et al., 1959); *Helicotylenchus vulgaris* (Yuen, 1964); *Merlinius brevidens* (Allen, 1955; Siddiqi, 1970); and *Pratylenchoides alkani* (Yüksel, 1977) from olive in Crete, Greece^a.

Characters/ ratios ^b	<i>B. hispaniensis</i>	<i>H. microlobus</i>	<i>H. vulgaris</i>	<i>M. brevidens</i>	<i>P. alkani</i>
	Episkopi	Vori	Petrokefali	Episkopi	Sivas
	Females	Females	Females	Females	Females
<i>n</i>	3	4	3	3	3
<i>L</i>	722±47 (670–760)	652±31 (609–680)	672±35 (634–702)	564±116 (490–698)	907±69.1 (840–978)
<i>a</i>	32.3±0.6 (31.9–33.0)	25.4±1.6 (24.2–27.7)	30.6±0.4 (30.2–31.0)	26.3±3.8 (22.9–30.3)	35.3±0.8 (34.7–36.2)
<i>B</i>	6.3±0.4 (6.1–6.8)	4.5±0.4 (4.1–4.9)	5.1±0.02 (5.1–5.2)	4.4±0.6 (4.0–5.1)	6.7±0.2 (6.4–6.8)
<i>C</i>	14.9±0.6 (14.4–15.5)	43.7±8.4 (35.8–55.4)	48.1±1.1 (46.8–48.8)	14.3±2.4 (12.9–17.0)	16.7±0.2 (16.5–16.9)
<i>c'</i>	3.0±0.2 (2.7–3.2)	1.1±0.2 (0.9–1.4)	1.1±0.0 (1.1–1.1)	3.0±0.1 (2.9–3.2)	3.1±0.2 (2.8–3.2)
<i>V</i>	55.0±1.0 (54.0–56.0)	61.2±1.6 (59.3–63.2)	64.0±2.0 (62.0–66.0)	54.7±3.1 (52.0–58.0)	52.7±1.5 (51.0–54.0)
Stylet length	17.3±0.3 (17.0–17.5)	26.4±1.2 (25.0–28.0)	24.0±1.0 (23.0–25.0)	14.3±1.5 (13.0–16.0)	23.7±0.6 (23.0–24.0)
Pharynx length	114.0±5.3 (110–120)	145.5±7.0 (139–153)	130.7±6.8 (123–136)	127.7±7.2 (123–136)	135.7±11.2 (123–144)
Max. body diam.	22.3±1.2 (21.0–23.0)	25.7±1.5 (24.0–27.0)	22.0±1.0 (21.0–23.0)	21.3±2.1 (19.0–23.0)	25.7±1.5 (24.0–27.0)
Anal body diam.	16.5±2.2 (14.0–18.0)	14.1±1.4 (12.5–16.0)	13.0±1.0 (12.0–14.0)	13.0±1.0 (12.0–14.0)	17.7±0.6 (17.0–18.0)
Tail	48.3±3.1 (45.0–51.0)	15.3±2.4 (12.0–17.0)	14.0±1.0 (13.0–15.0)	39.3±1.5 (38.0–41.0)	54.3±3.5 (51.0–58.0)

^aMeasurements are in µm and in the form of mean ± SD (range).

^bAbbreviations are defined in Siddiqi (2000).

P. ritteri, as suggested by some other researchers (Brzeski, 1998; Karegar, 2006; Ghaderi and Karegar, 2014; Ghaderi et al. 2014; Azizi et al., 2016). Nevertheless, additional studies with other ribosomal and mitochondrial markers on topotype populations of both species are needed to clarify whether the two taxa are conspecific or cryptic species.

Bitylenchus hispaniensis was found in two fields of cultivated olives and five of wild olives in Crete with low population density (1–10 nematodes per 500-cm³ soil).

The species is widespread in both cultivated and wild olives in Spain (Handoo et al., 2014; Palomares-Rius et al., 2015), and our report provides the second record of this species for the country. *Helicotylenchus microlobus* and *H. vulgaris* are common species in the Mediterranean area (Subbotin et al., 2015; Palomares-Rius et al., 2015). In Crete, low population densities (2–17 nematodes per 500-cm³ soil) of both species were detected in cultivated olive (three fields for *H. microlobus* and six for *H. vulgaris*) and the

former also in walnut (150 nematodes per 500-cm³ soil, Evia, Greece) and the latter in one wild olive sample (Crete) and one goji berry sample (50 nematodes per 500-cm³ soil, Thessaly, Greece). *Helicotylenchus microlobus* was previously found in olive in Greece (Hirschmann et al., 1966), but *H. vulgaris*, despite being a quite common species in Mediterranean area, was not previously reported from Greece. According to our sampling, *Merlinius brevidens* has a wide distribution in both cultivated (30 fields) and wild (10 plants) olives in Crete with low population density (2–12 nematodes per 500-cm³ soil). It is a cosmopolitan species and has been already reported in olive and pear in Greece (Hirschmann et al., 1966; Koliopanos and Vovlas, 1977) as well as from olive in Cyprus and Spain (Phillis and Siddiqi, 1976; Palomares-Rius et al., 2015). *Pratylenchoideus alkani* was found in two fields with cultivated olive and from six wild olives in Crete with low population density (1–22 nematodes per 500-cm³ soil). It was originally described from snap bean in Turkey (Yüksel, 1977), with wheat and almond tree in Iran (Taheri et al., 2013; Ghaderi et al., 2014), and in the only Mediterranean record of it, *P. alkani* was associated with Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis* L.) in Spain (Castillo and Gómez Barcina, 1988). Thus, the occurrence of this nematode in Crete is the second report for the Mediterranean area and the first one indicating an association of the nematode with cultivated and wild olives.

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