A new *Tearchus* Kraatz, 1880 (Coleoptera: Tenebrionidae: Stenochiinae: Cnodalonini) species from Laos

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Abstract. A new *Tearchus* Kraatz, 1880 species from Laos is described under the name of *T. phongsalyensis* sp. nov.

INTRODUCTION

Among the collection of the Natural History Museum, London (formerly British Museum, Natural History, BMNH), we found a unique species belonging to the *Hemicera*-group and have been examining its taxonomic position for these two years.

Members of the genus *Tearchus* Kraatz, 1880 have the pronotum with front angles strongly produced. Ando (1998) revised these members, which consist of 8 species known from Southeast Asia. We concluded that our unknown species belongs to this genus and that it is new to science. Thus, we are going to describe it herein as a new species.

Before going further into detail, we would like to express our cordial thanks to Shigeaki Kondo (Urayasu City, Chiba, Japan) for offering bibliographical support, and Makoto Kiuchi, (Tsukuba City, Ibaraki, Japan) for taking clear photographs in this paper.

TAXONOMY

Tearchus phongsalyensis sp. nov.

(Figs. 1-3)

Type material. Holotype (♂): "LAOS, Phongsaly Prov., / PHONGSALY env., Phu Fa, h: 1450-1600 m, // 27. VII, 2006, leg. M. Geiser, / Bergregenwald. *Hemicera* sp., det. SCHAWALLER. 2008 // BMNH{E} / 2013-134. / M.F. Geiser." (BMNH).

Description of holotype. Body subovate, 11.3 mm in length, 6.2 mm in width (widest part across elytra), length/width 1.8, moderately convex dorsally; coloration almost dark brown with feeble reddish tinge, medial parts of intervals greenish reflection under the light attached to the microscope, hairs mostly brownish yellow; dorsal surface strongly shining, ventral surface gently shining; body almost glabrous, antennae fairly densely haired, tibiae on apico-ventral faces and tarsi on ventral sides densely haired.

Head transversely subtrapezoidal; clypeus short and subtrapezoidal, weakly convex medially, weakly depressed in lateral parts, fairly closely, minutely punctate, with apex widely truncate; clypeo-genal borders obliquely, clearly sulcate; genae triangularly dilated, gently raised anterior-laterally, depressed before eyes, microsculptured, minutely punctate, with exterior margins

weakly rounded; fronto-clypeal border nearly straight; frons rather wide and gently raised posteriorly, weakly microsculptured, irregularly scattered with small punctures, which are sparser than those on clypeus; ocular grooves clear along anterior and posterior parts of eyes. Eyes transverse, gently convex laterally, slightly obliquely, roundly inlaid into head; distance between eyes / eyes diameter: 2.2. Antennae subclavate, seven apical antennomeres forming club, tip of antennomere XI reaching basal part of elytra. Length of each antennomere from I to XI as follows (in mm): 0.25, 0.13, 0.32, 0.21, 0.22, 0.23, 0.26, 0.27, 0.25, 0.28, 0.34.

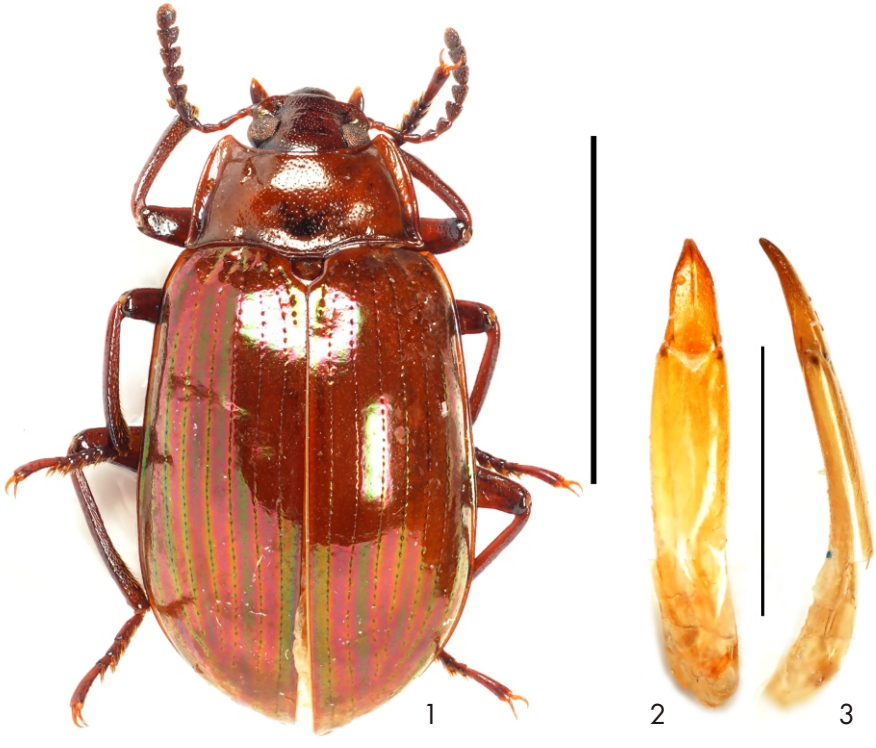
Pronotum subtrapezoidal, though the front angles are produced forwards, 2.0 mm in length, 3.4 mm in width, width / length: 1.7, widest at base; apex widely, roundly emarginate, finely grooved and weakly reflected, the groove and reflection becoming obscure in medial part; base bisinuous, with area opposite to scutellum weakly produced and slightly emarginate, bordered and ridged; front angles strongly produced, apical parts reaching the level of anterior margins of eyes; hind angles subrectangular, with corners weakly acutely produced; disc gently convex, highest at the middle, with a pair of weak subelliptical depressions at anterior 1/3 and also with a pair of transverse, weakly rugose depressions at basal 1/4; surface very weakly microsculptured, scattered with small punctures, the punctures mostly round, a little larger than those on frons; sides gently inclined and explanate, the explanations becoming a little wider anteriorly, with lateral margins weakly sinuous in basal 1/4, reflected and easily visible from above. Scutellum short-linguiform, slightly depressed, flattened, weakly microsculptured, sparsely scattered with minute punctures.

Elytra subovate though the basal portion is truncate; 8.9 mm in length, 6.2 mm in width; length / width: 1.4; elytral length / pronotal length: 4.5; elytral width / pronotal width: 1.8; widest at apical 1/3, gently narrowed anteriorly and roundly so posteriorly from widest point; dorsum rather strongly convex, highest at slightly behind basal 1/3; disc with rows of small punctures, those closely set and often connected by fine striae in two interior rows, those in row III to VI becoming larger and sparser, those in row VII and VIII (=lateral most one) becoming smaller, irregular, and striated; the punctures and striae generally indefinite in posterior portions. Intervals wide and flat, nearly smooth, partly weakly microsculptured, sparsely scattered with microscopic punctures; sides steeply, roundly declined to lateral margins, which are boldly grooved, finely reflected, and easily visible from above, with area of anterior 2/5 compressed from sides; humeri moderately swollen, weakly microsculptured and sparsely scattered with minute punctures; apices weakly produced.

Terminal palpomere of maxilla subrectangular, with exterior side gently curved. Mentum subhexagonal, strongly raised anteriorly, inclined and microsculptured in anterior 1/3, nearly smooth in posterior 2/3, sparsely clothed with fine, long decumbent hairs. Major basal portion of gula hidden under prosternum, weakly microsculptured, with a pair of curved impressions in apical parts.

Prosternum rather short, longitudinally ridged medially, the ridge connected with prosternal process; apex bisinuate-emarginate; apical parts divided by the ridge, steeply inclined laterally, microsculptured; medial part (=area between procoxae) flattened and smooth, grooved along lateral margins; posterior part (=prosternal process) noticeably, triangularly produced, slightly depressed in medial part, margined by punctulate-grooves. Mesoventrite short; anterior part strongly depressed, with a longitudinal ridge medially; posterior part narrow, strongly raised in U-shape opposite to prosternal process, irregularly scattered with minute punctures. Metaventrite rather short; major medial part gently convex longitudinally, finely impressed on median line in posterior half and elliptically impressed at apical 1/3, weakly microsculptured, irregularly rugulose and scattered with minute punctures; lateral parts weakly depressed, noticeably

microsculptured, scattered with minute punctures. Abdomen moderate-sized, gently convex medially, depressed with lateral portions; sternite I to III very weakly microsculptured, rather longitudinally ruguloso-punctate; sternite IV weakly microsculptured, scattered with very minute punctures; sternite V rather noticeably microsculptured, fairly noticeably clothed with small punctures, with apex rounded.



Figs. 1-3. *Tearchus phongsalyensis* sp. nov.; 1- habitus in dorsal view (holotype, male); 2- aedeagus in dorsal view; 3- aedeagus in lateral view.

Femora subclavate, weakly microsculptured, scattered with fine punctures, those becoming closer apically, each puncture with a minute hair. Tibiae gradually becoming broader apically, closely punctate and finely haired; protibiae slightly curved interior-ventrally, fairly densely clothed with setaceous hairs in apical 3/5 on interior-ventral face; mesotibiae slightly curved interiorly, coarsely punctate, setaceously haired in apical 2/3 on interior-ventral face, the hairs becoming longer and denser apically; metatibiae very slightly curved interiorly, coarsely punctate, setaceously haired in apical half interiorly, the hairs becoming longer and denser apically. Tarsi rather stout; tarsomere I to penultimate one densely clothed with short hairs on ventral faces, terminal tarsomere sparsely clothed with longer hairs; lengths of tarsomeres I to III in mm: 0.26, 0.21, 0.26, 0.26, 0.67; 0.25, 0.20, 0.18, 0.17, 0.73; 0.74, 0.26, 0.20, 0.75.

Aedeagus elongate-subfusiform, 1.98 mm in length, 0.27 mm in width (widest point across basale), weakly curved in lateral view; basale 1.49 mm in length, widest at the middle, weakly longitudinally convex, scattered with minute punctures; apicale elongated triangular, 0.49 mm in

length, gently narrowed in basal 3/5, rather strongly narrowed apically and weakly bent ventrad in apical 2/5.

Diagnostic notes. This new species superficially resembles a member of the genera *Hemicera* Laporte de Castelnau et Brullé, 1831, or *Euhemicera* Ando, 1996, but the shape of the pronotum is quite different. It has the characteristics of the genus *Tearchus*. Among the known species of this genus, *T. xantusi* Kaszab, 1943, distributed in Sumatra, Malaysia, and Borneo, is the most similar species to the new one by the body relatively small, the dorsal surface with similar coloration and the elytral intervals entirely flat. The new species can be easily discriminated from *T. xantusi* by the body obviously slender, the head larger and legs monochromatic and the aedeagus differently shaped.

Etymology. The specific name, *phongsalyensis*, is given after the place where the holotype was collected.

Distribution. Phongsaly Province is in the extreme north of Laos, adjoining North Vietnam and Yunnan, China. The holotype was collected in 'Bergregenwald' (montane rainforest). Phu Fa Hill has an altitude of 1450-1600 meters, and is covered with humid subtropical secondary montane forest.

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