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Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Mitteilungen der Schweizerischen Entomologischen Gesellschaft = Bulletin de la Société Entomologique Suisse = Journal of the Swiss Entomological Society**

Band (Jahr): **77 (2004)**

Heft 1-2

PDF erstellt am: **12.07.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-402860>

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Notes on *Platambus* species from Laos, with the description of a new species (Coleoptera, Dytiscidae)

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Platambus incrassatus Gschwendtner is recorded for the first time in Laos and *P. (s.str.) phufahensis* sp. n. is described. These two species and *P. strbai* Hendrich & Balke are the only three *Platambus* species known so far from Laos.

Key-words: Coleoptera, Dytiscidae, *Platambus*, new species, taxonomy, Laos

INTRODUCTION

During my collecting trips to Laos in 2003 and 2004, I collected several specimens of a rather large species of *Platambus* Thomson in Phongsaly Prov., on a small hill named Phufah. This species has proved to be new to science and is related to *P. balfourbrownei* Vazirani. Furthermore, another species, *P. incrassatus* Gschwendtner, originally described from Myanmar, was also collected in that country a few years ago. This is a new record for Laos. Only three species are known so far from this country: *P. strbai* Hendrich & Balke, *P. incrassatus* Gschwendtner and *P. phufahensis* sp. n. Since my revision of the genus *Platambus* (Brancucci 1988) in which I recognised 23 species, 6 species have been added to the genus (Brancucci 1990, 1991; Wewalka & Brancucci 1995; Hendrich & Balke 1998; Nilsson et al. 1997). Including the new species, *Platambus* in the Old World now comprises 43 species: 33 in *Platambus (s.str.)*, 6 in *P. (Agraphis)* and 4 in *P. (Anagabus)*.

The material examined in this study is deposited in the Natural History Museum of Basel (NMB).

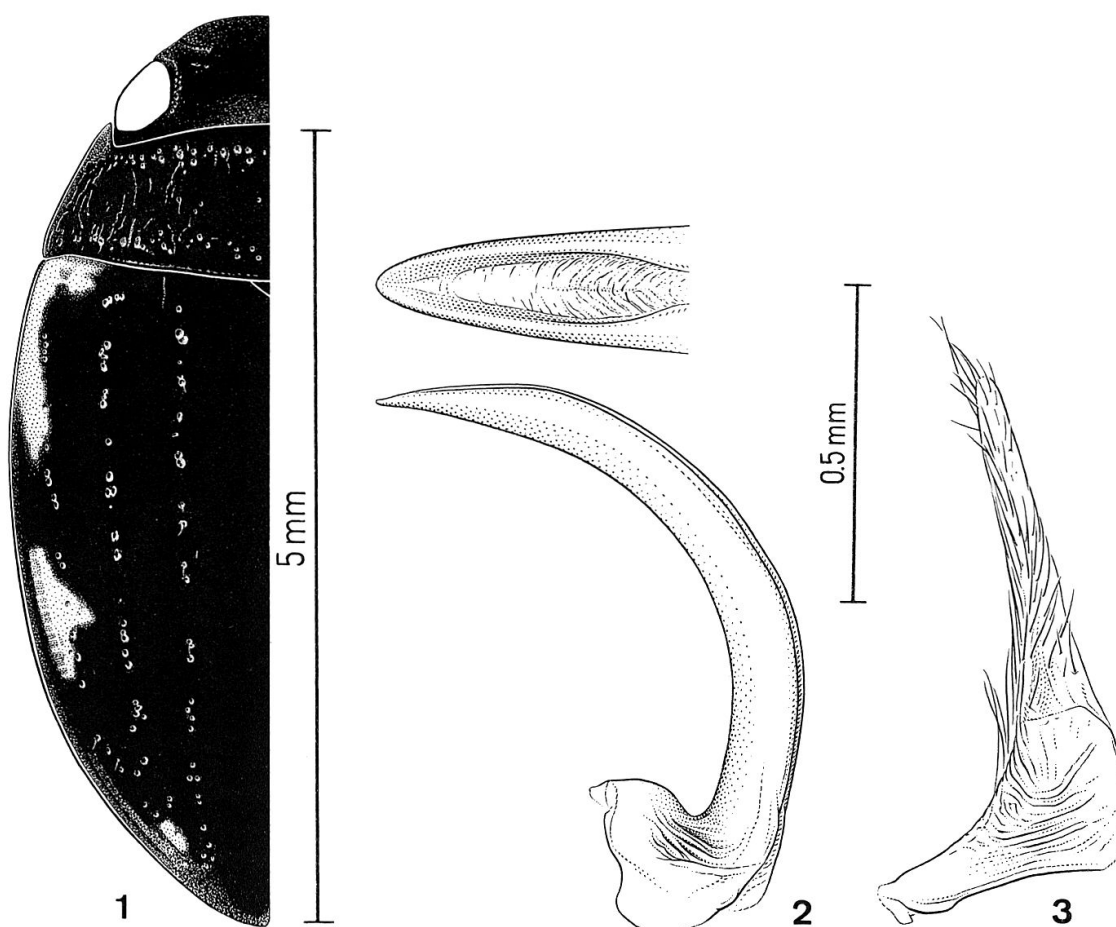
TAXONOMY

Platambus incrassatus Gschwendtner, 1935 (Figs 1-3)

Platambus incrassatus Gschwendtner, 1935, Koleopt. Rdsch. 21: 62 – Gschwendtner, 1935, Rec. Ind. Mus. 37: 370 – Vazirani, 1965, Proc. Zool. Soc. Calcutta 18: 30 – Vazirani, 1977, Rec. Zool. Surv. India, Occ. Pap. 6: 66 – Brancucci, 1988, Entomologica Basiliensia 12: 190.

Additional material: Laos, Louangphrabang Pr., Ban Song Cha, 5km W, 20°33-4'N 102°14'E, 1200m, 24-30.IV.1999, V. Kubáň., 2 ♂ and 1 ♀ (NMB).

Comments. This species was known so far only from the types collected in 1915 in Myanmar (Man Ton, Ruby Mines Distr.). I compared the new material with the types, which are deposited in the OLL, and found no other significant difference than their somewhat smaller body size (total body length: 5.4-5.8 mm; width:



Figs 1-3: *Platambus incrassatus* Gschwendtner; 1, habitus; 2: right paramere; 3: aedeagus in lateral view.

3.2-3.3 mm). Occurrence of this species more than 600 km South-East of its type locality was quite unexpected.

Platambus incrassatus resembles *P. strbai* Hendrich & Balke, from which it can be distinguished by the characters in the modified key given below.

Platambus phufahensis sp. n. (Figs 4-7)

Holotype ♂: Laos, Phongsaly prov., Phongsaly env., Phufah, 21°41-2' N, 102°06-8'E, 1500m, 28.V.-20.VI.2003, M. Brancucci (NMB).

Paratypes (88): same data as holotype, 1 ♀ (NMB); idem, but V. Kubáň, 1 ♀ (NMB); idem, but P. Pacholátko, 1 ♀ (NMB); idem, but 6-17.V.2004, M. Brancucci, 18 ♂ and 17 ♀ in NMB; Laos, Phongsaly prov., 21°21' N, 102°03'E, Ban Sano Mai, 19-26.v.2004, env. 1150m, M. Brancucci, 1 ♂ and 1 ♀ in MHNG, 23 ♂ and 25 ♀ in NMB.

Description. Total body length: ♂ 9.7-10.3 mm, ♀ 8.9-9.7 mm; width: ♂ 5.7-5.9 mm, ♀ 5.1-5.5 mm. Body oval, distinctly convex, completely black with testaceous spots.

Head completely black. Antennae testaceous. Reticulation consisting of well-impressed polygonal meshes, irregular in size, with 1-3 small punctures and here and there some additional very small punctures on their inner sides. Row alongside

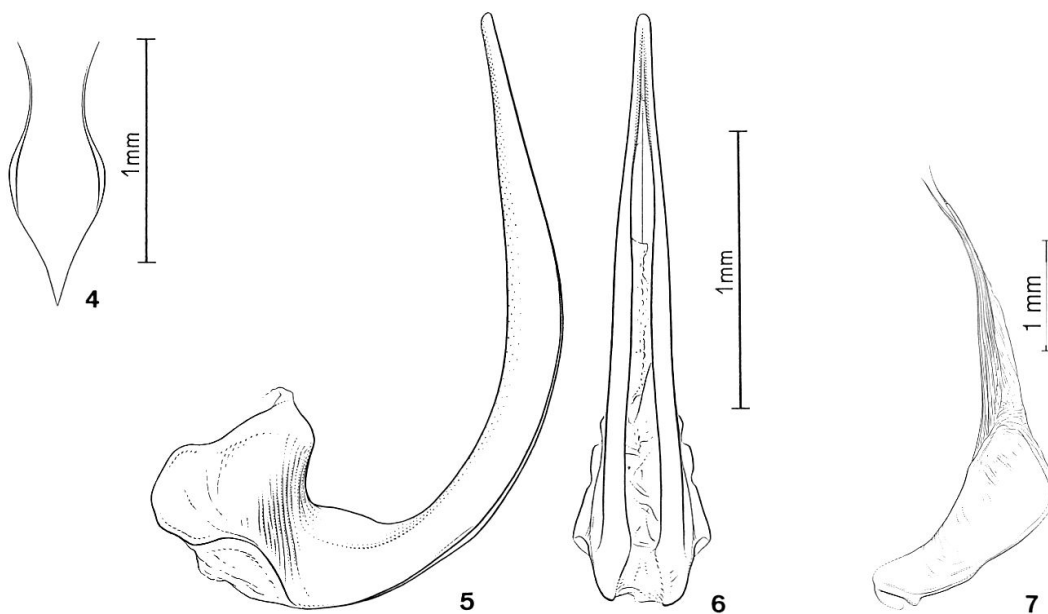
eyes, punctures besides eyes and clypeal grooves consisting of medium-sized and confluent punctures.

Pronotum completely black. Reticulation consisting of well-impressed meshes, irregular in size; meshes often with 1 to 3 minute punctures on their inner sides. Anterior row of punctures irregular but almost complete, leaving just a very small portion at the middle free. Posterior row broadly interrupted at middle; punctures medium-sized and well-spaced, becoming more dense and confluent at sides. Lateral margin distinctly and broadly bordered with some punctures alongside the grooves.

Elytra black with a postmedian and a preapical testaceous spot. Epipleura completely black. Reticulation consisting of weakly but distinctly impressed polygonal meshes, with 1-4 (mostly 2) minute punctures within them. Sutural row restricted to apical quarter and consisting of medium-sized and well-spaced punctures. Discal, sublateral and lateral rows reaching the basal quarter and consisting of well-spaced groups of medium-sized punctures. Epipleura broad at base, rather narrow as far as first sternite and then evenly but slightly tapered as far apical part.

Underside black, legs black, trochanters, digital part of femora, protarsi and mesotarsi with a ferruginous shine. Prosternal process elongate, lanceolate, finely bordered laterally and produced into a long and sharp point (Fig. 4). Metasternal wings moderately broad. Metacoxae longitudinally reticulate. Metatrochanters narrowly rounded at apex. Metafemora with a short row of strong setae at distal posterior angle. Ventral surface of metatibia with rows of coarse punctures along outer margins.

Male. Protarsi and mesotarsi distinctly dilated with numerous rounded pads. Anal sternite with superficial reticulation; meshes large, polygonal, with minute punctures in their inner, apical third with large punctures on both sides of middle. Posterior margin distinctly bordered. Base of paramere transverse, the apical part



Figs 4-7: *Platambus phufahensis* sp. n.; 4: prosternal process; 5: aedeagus in lateral view; 6., idem in dorsal view; 7: right paramere.

elongate (Fig. 2). Aedeagus, in lateral view, narrow, slightly curved, evenly tapered backwards from middle and very narrowly rounded at apex (Fig. 5); in dorsal view it is narrow, regularly tapered from base to apex and very narrowly rounded at apex (Fig. 6). Basal part of the parameres transverse, apical part very long (Fig. 7).

Female. Similar to male, somewhat smaller. Anal sternite similar to that of the male, but the larger punctures on apical third less numerous. Posterior margin strongly bordered.

Affinities. This species comes close to *P. balfourbrownei* from Nepal, India and Assam. However it can be easily distinguished its larger body size and particularly by the aedeagus, which is much more slender and is characteristic in shape.

Derivatio nominis. This species is named after the hill above Phongsaly where it was first collected.

Modified key to the species

Including the modifications proposed by Hendrich & Balke (1998), my key (Brancucci, 1988) should be modified as follows:

- 4 Larger species: 6-8.7 mm. ♂ : aedeagus, in dorsal view, narrowly rounded or pointed at apex 5
 - Smaller species: 5.4-6.2 mm. ♂ : aedeagus, in dorsal view, broad and broadly rounded at apex 5a
 5a Smaller species: 5.4-5.8 mm. Prosternal process produced into a long point. ♂ : aedeagus, in lateral view, evenly tapered
 *Platambus incrassatus* Gschwendtner
 - Larger species: 6.6-7.1 mm. Prosternal process produced into a short point. ♂ : aedeagus, in lateral view, irregular in outline
 *Platambus strbai* Hendrich & Balke
 (...)
 (...)
 10 Smaller species: 7.9-8.8 mm. ♂ : aedeagus, in dorsal view, broad at least at base 11
 - Larger species: 8.4-10.3 mm. ♂ : aedeagus, in dorsal view, narrow along its whole length and pointed at apex 11a
 11a Somewhat larger species. Colour pattern consisting of a postmedian and a preapical testaceous spot. ♂ : aedeagus, in dorsal view, very narrow, needle-shaped. Laos. *Platambus phufahensis* sp. n.
 - Somewhat smaller species. Colour pattern consisting of a rounded postmedian and an elongate preapical patch. ♂ : aedeagus, in dorsal view, narrow. North India, Nepal *Platambus balfourbrownei* Vazirani

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank Vítia Kubáň and Petr Pacholátko for the material that they collected in Laos, and Dr. F. Gusenleitner, Oberösterreichisches Landesmuseum Linz (OLL), for the loan of type-specimens. My thanks also go to Adrian Pont for correcting the English of my manuscript and to Armin Coray for the illustrations.

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(received 25 November 2003; accepted 15 April 2004)