



Revision of the genus *Sinopoda* Jäger, 1999 in Laos with discovery of the first eyeless huntsman spider species (Sparassidae: Heteropodinae)

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Abstract

The genus *Sinopoda* Jäger, 1999 is recorded for the first time in Laos. Nine new species are described: *Sinopoda steineri* **spec. nov.** (female; Luang Nam Tha), *S. tham* **spec. nov.** (male, female; Oudomxai), *S. sitkao* **spec. nov.** (female; Luang Prabang), *S. taa* **spec. nov.** (female; Luang Prabang), *S. suang* **spec. nov.** (female; Huaphan), *S. peet* **spec. nov.** (female; Huaphan), *S. guap* **spec. nov.** (female; Khammuan), *S. soong* **spec. nov.** (female; Khammuan), *S. scurion* **spec. nov.** (female; Khammuan). All species have been collected from caves. *Sinopoda scurion* **spec. nov.** represents the first record of an eyeless huntsman spider, *S. guap* **spec. nov.** exhibits only small lenses of six eyes (AME lacking), *S. soong* **spec. nov.** has only two small eye lenses. Four immature individuals (*Sinopoda* sp. indet. A–D) exhibited a reduced size or number of eyes, they are listed including their localities although they could not be identified to species level.

Key words: taxonomy, systematics, new species, troglomorphy

Introduction

The spider genus *Sinopoda* Jäger, 1999 is distributed in East Asia and in the northern parts of South East Asia with 40 species described so far, 31 of which are known from China (Jäger 1999, Platnick 2012). Representatives live in humid habitats in leaf litter, on tree bark and grass, in rock crevices and in caves (Jäger 1998, 1999; Liu *et al.* 2008; Zhang *et al.* 2007). Liu *et al.* (2008) reviewed briefly Sparassidae occurring in caves. The authors listed twelve species reported from caves, nine species of the genus *Heteropoda* Latreille, 1804, and one each of the genera *Berlandia* Lessert, 1921, *Sinopoda* and *Spariolenus* Simon, 1880. Moreover, they described nine new *Sinopoda* species, all occurring in caves in southern China. Bayer and Jäger (2009) recorded two new and one described species of the genus *Heteropoda* from Laos (*H. aemulans*, *H. steineri*, as well as *H. maxima* Jäger, 2001), whose occurrence is apparently restricted to caves, whereas another species *H. simplex* Jäger and Ono, 2000 occurred in caves and also humid habitats outside of caves. Moradmand and Jäger (2011) described four *Spariolenus* species from Iran, two of them collected in caves, the other two from crevices near river banks. All 25 cave-dwelling Sparassidae have their eyes with developed lenses and pigments, only in rare cases body and leg pigmentation is reduced (e.g., in *Sinopoda semicirculata* Liu *et al.*, 2008). The strongest eye (size) reduction known so far occurred in *Heteropoda steineri* Bayer and Jäger, 2009 from the Xe Bang Fai cave in Khammuan Province in Laos, and in *Sinopoda microphthalmia* (Fage, 1929) from Batu caves in Malaysia. All cave-dwelling Sparassidae but *Berlandia tenebricola* Simon and Fage, 1922 belong clearly to the subfamily Heteropodinae, whose representatives generally prefer humid habitats like forests or stream valleys (Jäger 2001, unpubl. data). *Berlandia* was assumed to be related to the Heteropodinae genus *Spariolenus* (Jäger 2004).

The first completely eyeless species of huntsman spiders described in the present paper exhibit neither eye lenses nor any pigments. It occurs in a cave system 100 kilometres west of Xe Bang Fai cave. From this larger Khammuan region other cave-dwellers with striking adaptations have been recorded (Lourenço 2007, 2012; Kottelat & Steiner 2010; Yeo & Ng 1999): the scorpions *Troglokhammouanus steineri* Lourenço, 2007 (in Xe Bang Fai cave) and *Vietbocap lao* Lourenço, 2012 (in Nam Lot cave), a blind cave fish, *Bangana musaei* Kottelat and Steiner, 2010 (Grotte des Nuages, Xe Bangfai cave system), and a yet undescribed freshwater crab of the