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Description of a new species of *Sinocaulus* Fairmaire from China (Coleoptera: Dascillidae)

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Abstract

A new species of the genus *Sinocaulus* Fairmaire, 1878, *S. truncatus* sp. nov., is described from Guizhou, China. Based on the strongly protuberant eyes, the new species is similar to *S. omiensis* Jin, Ślipiński & Pang, 2013 from Sichuan, but differs from that species in the truncate phallobase of the aedeagus and ventral lobes slightly shorter than dorsal lobe. Distributional data and a key to all four species of *Sinocaulus* are provided.

Key words: Oriental region, taxonomy, Dascillinae, Dascilloidea

Introduction

Dascillidae are a small and rarely studied family that, jointly with the Rhipiceridae, form the superfamily Dascilloidea among the elateriform polyphagan beetles. Dascillidae include nine currently recognized genera (Lawrence 2005; Ivie & Barclay 2011; Jin *et al.* 2013) and about 80 described species divided into two poorly defined subfamilies—a free-living Dascillinae and variously morphologically modified Karumiinae, some of which are apparently associated with subterranean termites. Karumiinae are known from arid and semi-arid regions of western North America, Mexico, Africa, central Asia and temperate South America, while Dascillinae inhabit mostly forested areas of the Northern Hemisphere and Australia (Lawrence 2005). The current subfamilial and generic classifications are in need of review, and there remain many undescribed species.

The genus *Sinocaulus* Fairmaire, 1878 is the only member of the family Dascillidae endemic to China and includes four cryptic species found in higher elevations of southwest China from Chongqing, Sichuan to Guizhou, and also in Guangxi. Fairmaire (1878) established *Sinocaulus* for his new species *S. rubrovelutinus*. He distinguished *Sinocaulus* from *Dascillus* by the former having a flat, weakly convex body; anterior angles of pronotum obtuse, posterior edge almost straight; scutellar shield triangular; divided membranous ventral lobes on tarsomeres 3–4. Although Fairmaire's diagnostic characters are notoriously variable and do not sufficiently distinguish both genera, we believe the genera are distinct based on the weakly costate alternate elytral intervals and the genital characters discussed in Jin *et al.* (2013). Subsequently, Fairmaire (1891) described another new species, *S. laticollis*, based on a female. No modern revision existed, nor new species reported until Jin *et al.* (2013) illustrated the diagnostic characters of *Sinocaulus*, regarded *Haematoides atriceps* Pic as a synonym of *S. rubrovelutinus* and described two new species, *S. omiensis* and *S. clypeatus*, found in Sichuan and Guizhou, respectively.