



## A new species of the genus *Paratus* Simon (Araneae: Liocranidae) from Thailand

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The spider genus *Paratus* Simon, 1898 was recently revised by Marusik *et al.* (2008). It comprises squat spiders with a high, almost round carapace strongly narrowed in front, uniform leg length, anterior tibiae and metatarsi with several pairs of strong ventral spines and some lateral spines, and abdomen almost globular. The genus was placed with some hesitation in Liocranidae by Marusik *et al.* (2008), in its own subfamily, Paratinae. Only three species have been described in the genus, all known from a few samples from the type locality or nearby areas: *P. reticulatus* Simon, 1898 from Sri Lanka is known only from the female holotype (Deeleman-Reinhold 2001). *Paratus sinensis* and *P. indicus*, from China and India respectively, were recently described based on a few specimens of both sexes (Marusik *et al.* 2008). It seems that *Paratus* species are very rare in collections, as Deeleman-Reinhold had access to intensive samplings of spiders in regions where the genus occurs.

A male specimen belonging to this genus was found in a survey of spider fauna from Thailand, which does not correspond to any of the known species. This new species was collected in lowland rainforest near the border with Malaysia, extending considerably the known range of the genus, as anticipated by Marusik *et al.* (2008: 52; see their fig. 30), which may be widespread throughout South East Asia.

Despite the presence of a conductor in the male palp, as in *P. indicus*, this specimen presents 7 pairs of spines on tibiae II (instead of 6), thick embolus, not gradually tapering, and different shape of the tibial apophysis. Marusik *et al.* (2008) showed that spination in *Paratus* species is variable between sexes, even within individuals of the same sex. The male of *P. reticulatus* remains unknown, so the comparison with this specimen is only based on the differences in the number of spines and teeth, which can actually correspond to sexual dimorphism.

The specimen was photographed using a digital camera Leica DFC290 on a Leica M165C stereomicroscope. The extended focal range images integrating several focal planes were produced with Helicon Focus version 4.62. Drawings were made using a camera lucida mounted on an Olympus BH-2 compound microscope. The male copulatory bulb was cleared in clove oil to reveal the trajectory of the sperm reservoir. Measurements are expressed in millimeters.

### *Paratus halabala* sp. nov.

Figs. 1–13

**Type material: Holotype:** male, Thailand, Naratiwat Province, Waeng District, Hala Bala WS, Research Station, 190–200 m [N5°47'44.8", E101°50'4.2"], 13–14 October 2003, ATOL Expedition 2003, deposited in Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales, Buenos Aires (MACN-Ar 25051; curator Cristina Scioscia).

**Etymology.** The specific epithet is a noun in apposition that refers to the type locality.

**Diagnosis.** *Paratus halabala* sp. nov. is similar to *P. indicus* in having a conductor on the male copulatory bulb, but can be distinguished from this and from *P. sinensis* by the short, thick embolus and short retrolateral tibial apophysis. It can be distinguished from *P. reticulatus*, whose male is unknown, by having 7 pairs of ventral spines on tibia I (instead of 5 pairs).

**Description. Male (holotype):** Total length 2.60. Carapace: 1.43 long, 1.37 wide, 0.63 high. Clypeus low, 0.07. Eyegroup width 0.62. Eye sizes and interdistances: Anterior median eye (AME) 0.10, anterior lateral eye (ALE) 0.07, posterior median eye (PME) 0.13, posterior lateral eye (PLE) 0.08, AME-AME 0.07, AME-ALE 0.05, AME-PME 0.05, PME-PME 0.05, PME-PLE 0.10, ALE-PLE touching. Anterior eye row straight, posterior eye row procurved, slightly wider than anterior one. Chelicerae 0.70 long, coloured as carapace, without pattern, with 6 promarginal teeth, gradually decreasing in size towards the fang. Carapace light brown, with two lateral darker bands. Pars cephalica without bands or